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OMA DISPATCH

Post Office Box 1718, Portland, OR 97207 www.oregonmuseums.org

The newsletter of the Oregon Museums Association, *Dispatch*, is published four times a year: Spring, Summer, Fall and Winter. Oregon Museums Association is a statewide membership organization serving the needs of museums and related institutions, large and small, across Oregon. OMA holds meetings and workshops around the state, advocates for the interests of its members in legislative and other matters, publishes a bi-annual *Guide To Oregon Museums*, and a periodic directory of all known museums in the state. Historic houses, aquaria, interpretive centers and sites, zoos, heritage sites - all are potential members of OMA. OMA is a nonprofit organization; contributions are tax deductible. OMA provides scholarships to members for professional development. OMA is an affiliated state organization of the Western Museums Association. Send news about your museum to Katherine Huit (research@viclink.com). Digital files are preferred, but hard copy can be sent to Katherine Huit, 7020 SW Lebold Road, McMinnville, OR 97128.

Editor: Katherine Huit

Editorial Board: Connie Nice, David Porter and Julie Reese
Spring Issue Deadline: February 1, 2008

Mark Your Calendar!

OMA UPCOMING MEETINGS

Spring 2008
March 16 & 17
Douglas County Museum
Roseberg

Fall 2008 (Annual Meeting)
October 5 & 6, 2008
OMSI
Portland

Members,

Is there a topic or issue you would like to present or see covered at an upcoming OMA meeting? If so, contact OMA Program Chair David Porter: 503.657.9336 or trlboss@att.net.

Dear OMA Friends,

Sometime in the next few days give yourself a well-deserved gift: a few minutes to thoughtfully review your 2007 activities and to prepare for the opportunities that the new year will bring.

- ❏ Pat yourself on the back for your achievements-large and small, personal and institutional. Make sure each person involved knows that his / her efforts and support are appreciated.
- ❏ If you had challenges in 2007, devise a way to make them work in your favor (that whole lemons to lemonade thing) or, at the very least, a way to avoid repeats in the coming year.
- ❏ Get organized so that you're ready to take advantage of whatever comes your way in 2008.
- ❏ Renew your membership in the Oregon Museums Association!

Your Board of Directors looks forward to collaborating with you in 2008 to benefit Oregon's museums, staffs, and visitors. The *Dispatch*, the website, an upgraded *Guidebook to Oregon Museums*, and information-packed programs are a great start - together we'll build from there.

Along with your pondering, allow yourself a short winter's nap so that you'll be refreshed and ready for action!

Wishing each of you a **Merry Christmas** and **Happy New Year!**

Sincerely,

Julie Reese

For the Love of Oregon's Museums

by Katherine Huit

My love of history has its roots in conversations with members of my family about 'things' in their homes. The stories that accompanied the 'things' inspired me. The idea that grandma or grandpa spent time using a paint brush, a recipe book, a camera, a wood-working or gardening tool made the 'thing' special, and connected me with their past - my heritage. This inspiration led me to a career working in the wonderful world of museums.

After 9-11, museums provided a place of peace and relief from the world's cruel realities. For a majority of Americans, visiting a museum or historic place provides them with a sense of purpose and being. Americans place museums at the very top of the list of places they most trust for information about their past - before grandma and grandpa, history professors, books, movies and television!

Visitation to Oregon's museums reached 3.4 million in 2006. Representing the diversity of culture and heritage found in our state, Oregon's museums include more than 200 institutions, large and small, which focus on art, science and heritage. Located in rural and urban settings in each of Oregon's 36 counties, they create jobs and tourism opportunities for the state's economy. Perhaps most importantly, today's museums provide educational opportunities for life-long learning, and they serve as gathering places for citizens desiring to engage with others and learn more about the world in which they live.

Have you ever donated a family keepsake to a museum? If so, have you given any thought to what happens to the item after dropping it off? Did you assume that the organization would house and care for the item in a similar manner as you?

(Continued on page 6)

If you are interested in submitting a 500 word article of professional, scholarly or political relevance to Oregon museums and museum professionals please contact the Editor. All submissions will be screened by the Editorial Board. Deadline for the Spring 2008 issue is February 1, 2008.



Kotoji Doro (harp tuner) Lantern. Photo: David M. Cobb © 2005, courtesy Japanese Garden, Portland, Oregon.

Culture

has many rewards ...

Claim yours.

Contribute to any of Oregon's 1,200 heritage, arts and humanities nonprofits. Match your donations with a gift to the Oregon Cultural Trust. Then, claim a 100% tax credit, reducing your Oregon taxes owed.

It's that simple.

Learn more or donate at www.culturaltrust.org.

Oregon Cultural Trust

775 SUMMER STREET NE, STE 200 SALEM, OR 97301 (503) 986-0088 CULTURAL.TRUST@STATE.OR.US



MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

All OMA memberships are on a calendar year and expire on December 31st.

NEW RENEWAL Today's Date: _____ Date Received: _____

All OMA members receive the quarterly newsletter, *The Dispatch*, discounts on registration fees to OMA meetings and workshops, and e-mail notifications of OMA news and events. Each member is entitled to one vote at OMA business meetings.

Student/Volunteer and Individual memberships are for individuals only. Museum staff, volunteers, board members, college students, and the interested public can join at these rates with the benefits listed above.

Corporate/Business memberships are for individuals or companies who do business with museums or wish to support the OMA and its activities. A Corporate/Business membership is entitled to one vote at OMA business meetings and to a listing on the OMA website page for "Museum Related Services."

Student/Volunteer \$15.00 Individual \$25.00 Corporate/Business \$75.00

Institutional memberships are for museums. Each museum is entitled to one vote at OMA business meetings, to a free listing in the OMA *Guidebook to Oregon Museums* and on the OMA website, and to receive free copies of the *Guidebook to Oregon Museums* for distribution at their museum. Each museum may send up to five staff members (paid staff, volunteers, or board members) to OMA meetings and workshops at the discount rate. OMA institutional members should qualify as a museum by the definition of the American Association of Museums, available at: <http://www.aam-us.org/aboutmuseums/whatis.cfm>

<input type="checkbox"/> Institutional (operating budget less than \$50,000)	\$75.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Institutional (operating budget \$50,000-\$200,000)	\$120.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Institutional (operating budget \$200,000 and above)	\$180.00

First name: _____ Last name: _____

Title: _____

Museum's name: _____

Organization name (if different): _____

Street Address: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Work: _____ Fax #: _____ Alt #: _____

E-Mail address: (used *only* for OMA-to-Member communications): _____

E-Mail address: (contact address for the public; will appear on the OMA web page for your institution): _____

Website: _____

Please send completed OMA Membership application form and check (payable to Oregon Museums Association or OMA) to: Oregon Museums Association, PO Box 1718, Portland, OR 97207-1718.

If you have questions, please contact the OMA at info@oregonmuseums.org, or call Ray Vandiver, OMA Membership Chair at (503) 797-4540.

Last Minute Gift Ideas . . .

Need to get that last minute gift?



Give an OMA membership to a student or volunteer . . .



Give an Oregon Museums Association Tee Shirt



Provide for sustained cultural heritage - contribute to the Oregon Cultural Trust in someone else's name . . .



Happy Holidays!

OMA Successfully Launches New Website

SITE NOW SERVES AS INFORMATION RESOURCE

OMA's website has a wonderful new look. It provides a web presence for thirty-five percent of our membership with no web presence of their own! OMA's website also serves as an outstanding resource for people seeking information about Oregon's museums!

The website project would not have been possible without the hard work and dedication of Board Members MJ Koreva and Richard Engeman, who spent many, many hours compiling the information and then placing it into the newly formatted site. Many thanks to them for taking on this monumental task.

Members attending OMA's Fall meeting learned about the wonderful new website and its benefits. Something to keep in mind is that a website can quickly become out-dated and must be updated regularly to remain informative. Member Institutions must keep information as current as possible.

Please review your current listing on the website (www.oregonmuseums.org) and in the OMA's *Guidebook to Oregon Museums*. Is it current and accurate? By now member institutions should have received a mailing from OMA, which contained membership renewal information along with a Membership Profile. If you wish to update your OMA website listing, please fill out the Membership Profile form and return it to us. **New Institutional Members:** Upon receipt of your Membership dues and Membership Profile, we will ask you for a brief description of your Institution to help us build your page on the OMA website. Questions? Send an email to info@oregonmuseums.org.

ONE MORE THING: As we continue to move more of our OMA based communications into a web based, email delivered format, we have been experiencing some difficulty in reaching you. Please inform your Internet Service Provider to remove info@oregonmuseums.org from their 'grey list' and / or 'black list'. Many of your ISP's are returning emails to the OMA as 'undeliverable'.

For the Love of Oregon Museums (continued from page 1)

Most people are not aware that American Treasures placed in the public trust at many institutions are at high risk of vanishing due to inadequate care. Collecting institutions in the United States house more than 4.8 billion artifacts. According to the results of the *Heritage Health Index Survey*, many of America's treasures are in jeopardy (*A Public Trust at Risk: The Heritage Health Index Report on the State of America's Collections*, 2005).

Think about this: 1.7 billion rare books, periodicals and scrapbooks; 800 million natural species; 700 million photographs, 48 million historic objects, 21 million paintings, sculptures, and other objects of art - housed in the 30,827 institutions responding to the survey. The statistics resulting from this survey absolutely astounded me!

Working as a curator, I learned that museums collect artifacts of all types - small, large, man-made, natural, works of art, machines, textiles, photographs - and they document the artifacts collected. Part of the documentation process involves collecting the stories that accompany the artifacts, without which we lose the knowledge about original use of the items. Artifacts are assets held in the public trust - used for research, scholarly study and exhibits. Artifacts help tell a story - they help museum patrons visit a different time and place.

So, if Americans value museums as the most trustworthy places to discover their past, why do we find the permanent collections of our nation's museums, libraries and archives at risk?

The answer could be the lack of both long range planning and an understanding about the preservation process.

As a museum professional, I have faced the assumption by many donors that when they contribute artifacts or archive materials, the donation somehow remains in its same state of condition perpetually. Most donors are amazed that funding and procedures are not in place to care for their treasures automatically. Poor environmental and storage conditions, lack of emergency or disaster planning, untrained staff and inadequate funding - all of these factors contribute to the state of our historic treasures.

While over 90 percent of history organizations in America cite 'preservation' in their mission statements, only a fraction have a written, long-range, up-to-date preservation plan and even less have written disaster or emergency preparedness policies and procedures! Consequently, many of these establishments operate in 'crisis mode', funding options become limited and our cultural treasures suffer.

The foundation of most history organizations is their permanent collection, yet the work performed by curators and collections managers caring for these collections is, for the most part, invisible. Most of their work is behind the scenes and not well understood - even by other museum staff, administrators or trustees - and this alone can have serious ramifications when it comes time for budgeting and allocating funds for collections care over paying for the necessary operations to keep the door open.

Heritage organizations should include in their long-term planning education for their members, volunteers, staff,

and trustees about collections care, even if it is just the basics. As a community resource, museums should provide an experience with the past - illustrated with objects connected to stories told by those who lived it and to whom we all can relate. This 'connection with the past' should also contrast and compare with today's activities in business, industry and infrastructure, which in turn will inspire a dialog about the future ways we will live, work and play. In essence, a museum should inspire the future by connecting with the past through the treasures in its collection.

Thus, by investing in our cultural heritage, we invest in our future.

Inspiring future generations with an understanding and appreciation of our local history, we can shape the character of tomorrow's civic leaders, innovators and educators.

This is why I feel so fortunate to belong to the Oregon Museums Association. By playing an active role in the museum community, I am doing my part to educate future artifact donors about collecting and documenting today's history, including tangible and intangible heritage. I also feel fortunate to be assisting the Yamhill County Historical Society (YCHS) in its quest to build and sustain a new facility, which will enhance the organization's ability to adequately care for the County's local heritage. Over the past 50 years, Society members have amassed a phenomenal Permanent Collection consisting of more than 15,000 items that tell the story of Yamhill County - its people, places, events and activities.

Like many organizations across America, the YCHS Museum is bursting at the seams with artifacts, archive materials, and a research library. The blessing of land and seed money for a new facility in which to house Yamhill County's treasures brought with it huge changes and challenges for this local organization. Therefore, YCHS has increased its focus on long-term planning, which includes development of infrastructure and organizational responsibilities. While watching the new Yamhill County History Museum facility materialize is extremely exciting, the heart of the project involves creating the internal structures that will sustain programs and exhibits, which, in turn, will provide intellectual stimulus for members and visitors as well as a sense of belonging.

I love Oregon's museums because they connect me to the past, but also because they inspire a dialogue and camaraderie among people that, in most cases, leads to future activities. I urge you all to support Oregon's museums beyond what you do in your day to day activities. If you are reading this newsletter, you may be an OMA member (if not, join today!). As a member, did you know you can match your membership dollars with an equal donation to the Oregon Cultural Trust? Also, think about contributing your Oregon tax 'kicker' refund to the cause of Oregon's cultural treasures. Exhibit halls of Oregon's museums in the future will echo with the voices of patrons thanking those of us who loved Oregon's museums today.

Katherine Huit recently joined Yamhill County Historical Society and Museum as its first Executive Director. An accomplished writer and photographer, her hobbies include bird watching and documentary work. She also edits the OMA Dispatch.

In 2006, 3.4 Million People Visited an Oregon Museum

This is one of the most interesting facts extrapolated from the 2006 Oregon Museums Survey, conducted by the Oregon Heritage Commission in conjunction with the Oregon Museums Association. Share the news by wearing the colorful **Oregon Museums Association Tee Shirt!** You'll find OMA Institutional Museums listed by the seven regions of Oregon on the back side. These Hanes Beefy-T 100% cotton, short sleeved white T-shirts are available for the excellent price of \$10 each plus shipping & handling.

Great Gift Idea! Sell them in your Museum's gift shop; use them for a fundraising item for your Museum; give them as 'thank you gifts' to your museum's Donors or Volunteers; send one to your local 'celebrity' and ask them to wear it at your next community event, fun-run, festival, parade or gathering. It's a great way to show people you care about Oregon museums! To order quantities of 100 or more, please contact the OMA for special pricing (info@oregonmuseums.org or at the address listed below).



Adult Sizes only
 \$10 x _____ Small (34-36)
 \$10 x _____ Medium (38-40)
 \$10 x _____ Large (42-44)
 \$10 x _____ X-Large (46-48)
 \$10 x _____ X-Large (50-52)

Shipping & Handling fees
 \$12.00 S&H for quantities of 1-10
 \$17.00 S&H for an order quantity of 11-25
 \$23.00 S&H for an order quantity of 26-50
 \$46.00 S&H for an order quantity of 51-100

Orders will be fulfilled upon receipt of payment. The OMA is unable to process credit or debit card purchases at this time. Mail your completed order form and checks (made payable to Oregon Museums Association or OMA) to:

Oregon Museums Association
 P.O. Box 1718
 Portland, OR 97207-1718

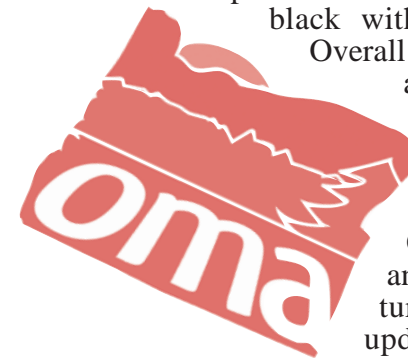
Fall 2007 Meeting Takes Place in Astoria

OMA Members came together for the Fall Meeting Reception in Astoria at the Clatsop Heritage Museum. Thank you to the Clatsop County Historical Society for hosting Sunday's reception activities!

Monday's activities took place at the Columbia River Maritime Museum. Executive Director Jerry Ostermiller welcomed OMA Members to the recently renovated and expanded Museum.

DIRECTORS GIVE ANNUAL REPORT

During the OMA business meeting, Board Members reported that OMA is operating in the black with positive cash flow. Overall committee strength and activity has increased.



Membership numbers are strong. OMA has a stronger presence on the Internet. OMA also has a new and colorful logo, featured on the recently updated Guidebook to Oregon Museums. A distribution grant from Travel Oregon helped with delivery of the Guidebook to our members.

Members attending OMA's fall meeting in Astoria heard a positive annual report and elected new directors to OMA's Board.



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NEW DIRECTORS JOIN THE BOARD

The Membership elected new directors for its Board, including Secretary Keni Sturgeon, and Directors-at-Large Gardner Chappell and Peggy Schorsch. Congratulations! To retiring directors Secretary Connie Nice, and Directors-at-Large Kyle Jansson and Tracy Thoennes we offer a huge "Thank You!"



Speaker Betsy Ellerbroek of the Columbia River Maritime Museum, shares images from recent education programs that promote problem solving activities.

PROGRAM SESSIONS FOCUS ON LIFE-LONG LEARNING

Members attending the morning and afternoon program sessions heard about changes in State education standards, successful life-long learning programs at museums around the State.

The message for museum educators: don't just focus on 4th graders; design programs that appeal to all ages. Programs should be designed to meet State standards, promote problem solving, and provide interactive, hands-on learning. Encourage questions! Develop curriculum that can evolve with the needs of your learning community. Educators should also include an evaluation for teachers to fill out, which will provide program developers with needed information for refining and defining future exhibits, events, and activities.



Speaker Andrea Morgan of the Oregon Department of Education pauses to answer a question about State education standards.