Session/Meeting Name: Museum Division
Saturday, April 27, 4:15-4:45pm

Moderator: Doug Litts, Smithsonian American Art/National Portrait Gallery Library
Vice Moderator: Allison Hausladen, Art Institute of Chicago
AWS News Contributor: vacant due to resignation – Allison Hausladen took minutes

Incoming Vice Moderator: Catherine Petersen, Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art
Incoming AWS News Contributor: Meg Black, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

Meeting minutes:

The Museum Division meeting opened with three presentations on the following theme:

In Our Own Back Yard: Library Instruction for Museum Docents

1. Linda Seckelson, Principal Reader Services Librarian, the Metropolitan Museum of Art
   • Three main challenges to successful library training for museum docents:
     a. Administrative buy-in--build relationships to get this mandate
     b. Access to resources--give docents remote access to recourses, but objects access is still hard to come by (thankfully some are now online in the Met Publications collections database)
     c. Docent capabilities--research skills, technological savvy
   • Of the 1200 volunteers at the museum, 400 are docents who go through mandatory docent training with librarians. Despite this training, the online catalog still proves difficult for them.

2. Louis Adrean, Senior Librarian for Research and Public Programs, the Cleveland Museum of Art
   • Their docent program started in 1999. Before that, the docent responsibilities were performed by paid staff who were part of the department of education. These docents mainly research objects at their own museum, so the library training focuses mainly on their own documents. The library provides research guides and reserves shelves for special exhibitions.

   • Previously, four reference librarians provided one-on-one instruction with 60 docents, but now they provide a mandatory annual series of 2 hour classes in the summer, covering the OPAC, internal publications indexes, museum collections online/collections database, and JSTOR/Oxford Art Online. They pick one example artwork and research it using all 6 resources. They’ve found this to be very successful and provide it as a refresher course as well.
3. Melanie Emerson, Head of Reader Services, The Art Institute of Chicago

- As docent coordinators change, the most successful approach to training docents changes as well. The AIC provides a rigorous year-long training for new docents, but do not provide continuing education for current docents.
- Every three years, there is a new class of 30-35 docents who take two library instruction courses. The first two months of the program is the most intensive. The first library instruction session is 3 hours long and covers how to use their online collections and collections database, how to read a citation and find periodicals, etc. They receive a homework assignment in which they are asked to trace their steps, even if they were not successful in answering the questions. The second class is 1.5 hours and happens two weeks later.

**Questions for the presenters:**

1. How best to provide docents access to images pertaining to temporary exhibitions, aside from ARTstor?
   1. Make a separate reserve shelf on those topics for easy access.
2. What do you do when you have a docent library that is separate from the main library?
   1. Try to add them to the main library. Gets the docents into the library and better utilizes resources.
3. How do you handle training book-averse people (in this age of free, online access)?
   1. Note some and caution against other non-proprietary databases.
   2. Tell them that the internet is a great starting place for research if they are at home and cannot get into the library. You don't want to discourage them from starting their research.
4. Any advice on how to handle getting a new docent coordinator?
   1. Take that person out to lunch and "cultivate" him/her.

**Museum Libraries Division Business Meeting**

1. Museum Libraries Division survey
   1. This was sent to anyone in the directory who was associated with a museum.
   2. Overwhelming response for more activity from the Division than just the meeting at the annual conference. Interest was shown in webinars and lunchtime chats, especially important since traveling isn't possible for those experiencing new budget cuts.
2. Doug Litts read some comments from several colleagues who couldn't make it to the conference due to recent budget cuts. Their concerns looked at:
   1. Operating budget cuts and staff cuts in the library's centennial year
   2. The need for increased IT support to enable exciting library projects to keep the library relevant
   3. The primary purpose of the museum library is to support museum staff, not administrators, so how do we make it clear to administrators that we are important?
   4. When society thinks that all information is available online for free, and we've made our valuable local items available online for free, how do we justify the sustained cost of the library?
   5. What are museum directors looking for in libraries? Programming, development, and flashiness are what they are focused on as they de-emphasize research, so how can we adapt?
3. Open discussion
   1. Galina Lewandowicz at the Cincinnati Art Museum--the library was in prime real estate so administrators wanted to close it. Donors rose to the challenge to make a new, much smaller space, but she chose to go with the flow and to try to adapt to the new reality. Her take on the situation is that administrators do what they need to do, so don't be too upset about the change, but go with the flow.
2. Eric Woolf, The Menil Collection, Houston--Before he came to his library, there was no head librarian for 2 years, staff dropped from 5 to 1.5 librarians. They are only open to the public by appointment, but he sees their work as a success and stressed the idea of "library as a service, not a place."

3. Karen McKenzie, Art Gallery of Ontario--Museum administrators talk to each other across the globe, not to us. They do what each other is doing, and they seem to not understand the importance of libraries. Can we bring a museum director into the discussion to educate them about our services and to learn about how we can better serve their needs?

4. Those interested in becoming next year’s Vice-Moderator and AWS News Coordinator gathered after the meeting to express interest.