

President's Letter

Daniel Cull

Dear Membership,

Well it's spring again! I wonder what changes this year will bring. Is anyone counting down to December 21st? My advice, don't bother, a far better date to count down to would be October 22nd and the start of the WAAC annual meeting, but more about that later.

For the WAAC board the year began with a board meeting at the Autry Center in LA.

I'd like to share a big thanks for the generous use of their space. For WAAC the first change to report was within the board itself, we were glad to welcome Claire Gerhard as the new secretary, and of course at this time I'd like to pass on the thanks of the whole board to Brynn Bender who did a fantastic job during her tenure as secretary.

It'll come as no great surprise to most of you that one of the big topics of conversation at the board meeting was the stupid economy. Yep, I'm sad to say that WAAC isn't any more immune than anything else. What we've witnessed in the last few years is a drop in membership, which in turn of course results in a drop in our finances. WAAC has long held a tradition of keeping costs low to allow the greatest possible participation, and this commitment was upheld at the last board meeting. The simple solution to our financial difficulties is to get more members. So if you're reading this but haven't paid a membership fee this year, please consider doing so, and if you are a member, please suggest to other conservators you know that they might want to check their current membership status.

With the 'bad news' over I can move on to the more fun stuff. One of the great things that came out of the discussions of the board meeting was the realization that we haven't undertaken a membership survey since 1990. (By the way you can read the results of that survey online at: cool.conservation-us.org/waac/wn/wn12/wn12-3/wn12-309.html.) Since then much has happened and so it seemed like the perfect time to take stock and to draw together the thoughts and feelings of the membership about what you all like about WAAC, and what other things you'd like to see happen under the WAAC umbrella. Remember WAAC isn't the board, WAAC is you the membership; so please also consider how the organization can help facilitate the ideas you have.

This process of looking back in order to look forward also fits with an idea we've been discussing for a 40th anniversary conference, so get your thinking caps on for that too! Please do take a few minutes to respond to the questionnaire. I'm really looking forward to seeing the responses and to providing at least a preliminary report on them at the annual meeting.

The survey isn't the only areas we're seeking your feedback and involvement. It's time for nominating a new Vice President and two new Members-at-Large. Please make suggestions to the nominating committee. I can say that all suggestions are really appreciated, and if you're at all interested in running in the election that will be held this summer, please feel free to self-nominate, or to contact your Vice President Nicholas Dorman to find out more about the different roles and how you might be able to serve WAAC.

One additional area in which WAAC is always looking for membership assistance would be in our social media presence. In addition to being on Facebook – where you're encouraged to post information about conservation events in your area – WAAC is also now on Wikipedia: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Western_Association_for_Art_Conservation. Although the entry is very basic right now, I hope that it will grow over time. It can serve as the perfect place for us to tell the collective history of our organization, as well as teaching the public what it is we do as conservators in the Western United States. Please consider adding pertinent information to the entry or helping with the more boring, but incredibly useful, tasks such as improving the style and consistency of the citations.

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President's letter, continued

I can't believe it's really spring, but the months seem to be flying by. It's only a matter of time before we'll be meeting in Palm Springs, and of course I couldn't let this newsletter go without mention of the annual meeting. In my last letter I reported that there would be some collaboration with the Western Museums Association (WMA) who happen to be having their conference in the same location this year. I was recently able to meet with the WMA's Conference Organizing Committee to discuss in person some of the possible avenues of collaboration.

The simplest way to understand the conferences is to consider that they will be separate, but linked. Which means in terms of the talks the WAAC conference will be essentially the same as any other year. However, we also hope to have reciprocal speakers at each other's conference – those you could consider to be 'keynote' in style. However, the conference is more than just the talks, so even more fun for attendees of both conferences this year the banquet will be a joint event, themed around 'Día de los muertos,' and hosted by several Palm Springs cultural institutions including; the Palm Springs Historical Society, the Agua Caliente Cultural Museum, and the Palm Springs Art Museum.

The call for papers was recently issued, and in addition to calling for papers on anything to do with the conservation field, it specifically seeks to develop a section of the conference that will deal with so-called "ethnographic" collections and issues, ideas, case studies, and experiences of working with, and within, ethnographic collections. Not only is this a personal interest, it also seemed an appropriate approach given that Palm Springs lies within the borders of the Agua Caliente Band of the Cahuilla Indian Reservation. In related news I am very excited that the Agua Caliente Cultural Museum (<http://www.accmuseum.org/>) has agreed to be the hosts of this year's WAAC Angels Project. We look forward to developing an interesting Angels Project with them as they're in the process of moving their collection in advance of having a new museum built.

If intellectually stimulating conservation papers aren't enough to draw you to Palm Springs, then no worries, because there's a lot more to do besides the conference, so why not stay a while!? Whether you're interested in the cultural sights and sites, hiking, mid-century modern architecture, golfing, gambling, spas, or sipping Mai Tais by the pool, do try to remember there's also a conservation conference going on! For a longer list of the fabulous things to do, places to see and be seen, as well as places to eat, drink, and shop, there's a visitors guide to Palm Springs article elsewhere in the *Newsletter*, and don't forget the conference website is rapidly filling up with information.

I look forward to seeing you in Palm Springs.

Cheers, Dan

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Deadline

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