



## **Council for Museum Anthropology Secretary's Report to the Business Meeting 2010**

*NOTE: This report includes highlights from the 2009 CMA annual meeting and notes on CMA Board activities and decisions in 2010.*

### ***Election Results***

At the 2009 meetings, the proposed CMA Bylaws Amendment was adopted, and CMA members were introduced to incoming officers and board members serving 3 year terms: Alex Barker, Director of the University of Missouri's Museum of Art and Archaeology, was elected as the new CMA President. Margaret M. Bruchac, Assistant Professor of Anthropology and Coordinator of Native American and Indigenous Studies at the University of Connecticut, was elected as Secretary. Incoming Board members are Kathleen M. Adams, Professor of Anthropology at Loyola University of Chicago, and I. Morgan Perkins, Assistant Professor of Anthropology and Art Director, Weaver Museum of Anthropology, State University of New York at Potsdam.

### ***CMA Communication:***

CMA members can take advantage of several electronic venues for posting and receiving news. Daniel C. Swan maintains the CMA website, maintains basic data and contact information at: <http://museumanthropology.org/>. In addition, Chip Colwell-Chanthaphonh and Stephen E. Nash, editors of *Museum Anthropology*, maintain a blog at: <http://museumanthropology.blogspot.com/>. This is the prime location for breaking news, calls for positions and fellowships in museum anthropology and timely commentary. President Barker also initiated a query with Lisa Myers at AAA about creating a listserv for CMA members to discuss topics of mutual interest and concern.

### ***Meeting Location Issues***

In March of 2010, CMA was approached to support a proposal that would ask AAA administrators to consider using a different conference planning group in the future. This recalled concerns raised in 2007, while selecting locales for the 2010 AAA meeting, with regards to the lack of unionized hotels and conference facilities in New Orleans. In April, the AAA Section Assembly agreed to consider a resolution that would emphasize the importance of union-friendly conference planners and give INMEX close consideration.

CMA board members discussed, via email, how best to publicly address issues of exploited labor and social responsibility, especially given the economic boost that large AAA meetings provide. Some interesting ideas emerged. Bruchac suggested AAA solicit bids for conference hosting from Native American Nations, to provide a means of re-circulating the wealth. Board members supported the concept of union-friendly firm and Native venues, so long as AAA is not limited to any specific firm and the venue has sufficient resources. Barker and Bruchac will draft a column, at a later date, discussing the rationale and opportunities afforded by using a tribal venue for future meetings.

### *CMA Sessions*

AAA announced a new program for registration fee waivers to be used specifically for community-based scholars and international participants who, even if not members of AAA, would advance and enliven discussions. Each section was invited to request one waiver. Candace Green received a waiver to support Jim Enote, an invited participant in Kimberly Christen's Executive Session.

#### *CMA Executive Panel: After the Return*

CMA board member Dr. Kimberly Christen (Washington State University) developed an Executive Panel Session for AAA, titled "After the Return: Digital Repatriation and the Circulation of Indigenous Knowledge." Participants include Jane Anderson, Chip Colwell-Chanthaphonh, Mark Turin, Jennifer O'Neal, Jim Enote, Cory Willmott, Crystal Migwans, Haidy Geismar, and Timothy Powell. The panel explores institutional responses to calls to integrate Indigenous curatorial models and knowledge into mainstream museum and archive practices, from cataloguing to display modes. "With the growth of new digital technologies, anthropologists, museum professionals and Indigenous communities have collaborated to produce dynamic new models for creating, circulating and reproducing knowledge and cultural materials... This newly animated digital terrain poses both possibilities and problems for Indigenous peoples seeking to manage cultural heritage... The literature and research has focused on the *act* of giving back, with little attention paid to *what* happens once digital objects are returned. How do communities put these newly formed cultural objects to use? How are digital objects understood, circulated, and re-mixed within communities, individually and collectively? How do digitally repatriated objects facilitate new knowledge creation and the revitalization of endangered languages and cultural practices? This roundtable panel brings together anthropologists, archaeologists, linguists, museum scholars, and institutional representatives to explore the process of repatriation after the return.

#### *Other CMA Sessions: Circulating Objects, Histories, and Theories*

"The Circulation of Museum Objects," a double session organized by Chris Wingfield of the Pitt Rivers Museum (Oxford University), will bring together an international panel of speakers to explore how museums seek to restrict and block the circulation of their objects, while also channelling the circulation of objects in particular directions through particular spheres. Wingfield suggests that the resources of anthropological exchange theory may be useful in understanding museums in relation to the networks in which they operate, rather than as isolated monolithic institutions.

"Things in Motion: Object Histories, Biographies, and Itineraries," a session co-sponsored with the Archaeology Section, has been organized by Rosemary Joyce (University of California at Berkeley) and Susan Gillespie (University of Florida). Building from the concept of object biographies, this session proposes that object histories may alternatively be viewed as itineraries, strings of places where objects come to rest or are active, routes through which things circulate and the means by which they move. Networks composed by circulating objects are transformed into itineraries unfolding in time.

"Applying New Theories to Old Things: Museum Research Today" is a poster session, organized by Daniel Swan (U Oklahoma). Anthropologists engaged with museums will illustrate how theoretical advances have been applied in museum settings. Contributions include an emphasis on reflexive discourse and multi-vocality, examinations of authority and representation, and a re-focusing of the anthropological lens on contemporary western societies. Topics include reorientations in academic and professional training, collaborative research initiatives with source communities, and innovations in exhibitions and interpretive programs.

### *Museum Anthropology Awards*

At the 2009 meetings, the CMA Board voted to institute two new awards to recognize scholarship in museum anthropology. Applicants were asked to submit material via postal mail, but committee members quickly discovered that e-mail was more efficient for receiving applications and reviewing materials. For the future, applicants will be asked to submit information electronically.

The “Michael M. Ames Prize for Innovative Museum Anthropology” will be awarded annually to professionals for innovative work in museum anthropology (e.g., outstanding single or multi-authored books, published catalogues, exhibitions, repatriation projects, collaborations with descendant communities, educational or outreach projects, multimedia, and other endeavors). Evaluation Criteria: 1) Creativity: Is the project a unique and creative exploration of museum anthropology’s central themes, tensions, and histories? 2) Timeliness: Does the project say something important about museum anthropology’s current predicaments and unknown future? 3) Depth: In what ways does the project penetrate into the complexity of material culture and the study of it through novel methods and theories? 4) Impact: Does the project have the potential to make broad and lasting impacts in museum anthropology? Chip Colwell-Chanthaphonh, Kimberly Christen, and Catherine S. Fowler served on the 2010 professional award committee.

Two “CMA Student Travel Awards” will be awarded annually to support travel for graduate students and recent Ph.D.s to the annual AAA meeting to present papers and/or posters. Evaluation Criteria: 1) Creativity: Is the paper or poster a unique and novel contribution to museum anthropology? 2) Commitment: Does the student demonstrate a commitment to the field of museum anthropology? 3) Impact: Does the paper or poster have the potential to develop into a work that could more broadly impact the field of museum anthropology? Joshua Bell, Daniel Swan, and Margaret Bruchac served on the 2010 student travel award committee.

At the 2010 annual meeting, two students will receive \$500 each for travel awards, and one museum anthropologist will receive the distinguished scholar award. The awardees are:

#### *2010 Michael M. Ames Prize for Innovative Museum Anthropology:*

Jim Enote, Executive Director of the A:shiwí A:wán Museum and Heritage Center. Situated within the Pueblo of Zuni, in western New Mexico, the A:shiwí A:wán Museum and Heritage Center is a private not-for-profit museum that works “for the people and by the people.” Mr. Enote has been at the center of the Museum’s innovative programming, which focuses on preserving and perpetuating Zuni traditional knowledge. Moving beyond the museum’s small public exhibit and collection, Mr. Enote has imagined and implemented a string of ground-breaking projects that connects youth to elders, and ancient life to modern ways. One major project undertaken by the Museum is the “Pathways to Zuni Wisdom,” an after school and summer program that uses the traditional farming and gardening to help students learn about the environment and scientific principles. Another endeavor is the “A:shiwí Map Art Project,” which uses local Zuni artists to render the Zuni cultural landscape, thereby creatively combining Zuni language, aesthetics, and historical knowledge. Still another pioneering project is the “Kechiba:wa Digital Collection” project, a collaboration with the Cambridge Museum of Anthropology and Archaeology. This project enabled Zunis in New Mexico to have access to a collection located in England through a culturally-sensitive digital database, and even worked to allow Zunis to contribute their own voices and perspectives to the museum’s catalogue. This project was especially distinctive in its attempt to create a real and equal two-way dialogue between the museum and the community. This project has now been expanded to include four museums, and is being funded by a significant IMLS grant. These projects—and still others being undertaken by the Museum—all fit the prize’s rigorous criteria of creativity, timeliness, depth, and impact. In addition to doing it all as a director of a small, rural museum, Mr. Enote is active as

the president of the board of Zuni A:shiwi Publishing, a board member of the Grand Canyon Trust, the associate director of the Indigenous Communities Mapping Initiative, and a high altitude traditional farmer. It is with great honor that the CMA's first Ames Prize is awarded to Mr. Enote.

*2010 CMA Student Travel Awards:*

Suzanne Godby Ingalsbe, a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Folklore and Ethno-musicology at Indiana University, has been granted a CMA Student Travel Award for her paper "Circulating the Past and Future Through Museum Artifacts." Professor Jason Baird Jackson, her advisor and mentor for the Smithsonian Institution Summer Institute in Museum Anthropology, described her work as a focus on "points of slippage and interdigitation between American museums and churches...her SIMA project will be both a contribution to the history of collecting in museum anthropology and an analysis of the social life of (museum) things over a considerable expanse of space, time, and cultural difference." This paper, along with two related others ("Authoring Authority: Ethel-Jane Westfeldt Bunting Collecting for the Smithsonian" and "Ethel-Jane Westfeldt Bunting's Lasting Impact from In-Between Spaces") that consider the social authority of museums and contexts.

Danielle Merriman, Masters Student in Cultural Anthropology at the University of Denver has been granted a CMA Student Travel Award for her paper "Community Museum or Tourist Shop?: Local Contestation of Museum Meanings in Costa Rica." This effort draws from field research in the rural community of San Vicente de Nicoya, Costa Rica from 2008-2010. She notes that this work will contribute to the growing literature on community museums and ecomuseums, and the need for a nuanced understanding of indigeneity. "Although the contemporary population recognizes a connection to the past indigenous population—namely through the continued creation of ceramics—they do not claim an indigenous identity. Thus, the creation of the Ecomuseum of Chorotegan Ceramics reveals an interesting process in which local community members communicate complex and possibly unexpected concepts of identity, history and culture through the medium of museum exhibition spaces to local, national and international audiences."

***Column in Anthropology News***

In 2010, CMA published four columns in *Anthropology News*, for the months of February, March, April and May; one more column is forthcoming for December (please see the list of column topics on the following page).

President Alex Barker contributed one CMA column; Secretary Margaret Bruchac contributed four columns. More contributors are needed, and would be greatly appreciated. The Secretary invites board members, anthropologists, and museum professionals to contribute columns and notices of relevant exhibitions, conferences, and other issues relevant to museum anthropology for consideration. The *Anthropology News* column articles are limited to 700 words each. Please send your column ideas to the CMA Secretary at [margaret.bruchac@uconn.edu](mailto:margaret.bruchac@uconn.edu).

Respectfully submitted,

Margaret Bruchac, Secretary  
Council for Museum Anthropology  
American Anthropological Association Meeting  
New Orleans, November 2010



**Council for Museum Anthropology**  
**Section Columns in *Anthropology News* 2010**  
CMA Contributing Editor Margaret Bruchac

<b><i>AN</i> Issue</b>	<b>Title of Column</b>	<b>Author</b>
February	Increasing the Relevance of Museum Anthropology	Alex W. Barker
March	Issues of Ownership, Representation, and Repatriation in the Museum World	Margaret Bruchac
April	Announcing New Awards for Museum Anthropology Michael M. Ames Prize for Innovative Museum Anthropology, CMA Student Travel Award	Margaret Bruchac
May	Modes of Circulation: CMA Sessions for the AAA Meeting, CMA Executive Panel: After the Return, Circulating Objects, Histories, and Theories	Margaret Bruchac & Kimberly Christen
June-August	[No issues over summer]	
Sept.-Nov.	[No section news included]	
December	First Recipients of New CMA Awards for Museum Anthropology	Margaret Bruchac