UPDATE FOR MEMBERS: CAM CONTINUES TO WORK ON ESTABLISHED PROGRAMS TO MOVE PROJECTS FORWARD AND NOTES SOME NEW INITIATIVES ON THE WEBSITE

If I was a thoroughly modern president you would hear from me on a continuous basis via blogs and twitters, "Facebook" and "Myspace"... etc... Alas I am not. However it has been too long since I have updated you on CAM activities, so with apologies I offer the following.

Despite what often seems silence from our end, projects old and new are gradually moving forward despite our very small budgets and consequently lack of time and staff to get things done.

Our Assistant Secretary General Barbara Winters has been on tour. She has visited museum personnel across India and Sri Lanka, Malaysia and Singapore, with a view to CAM holding a meeting in India, and has also been assessing interest and obtaining advice on the redevelopment of our distance education course. In Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia she attended and participated as speaker and /or moderator for the meeting of the Commonwealth Consortium for Education (CCIE) of which CAM is a member, followed by the Stakeholder’s Forum of the 17th Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers.(see Barbara’s reports.)

Timothy Mason continues to represent our interests in London and has accepted the responsibility of being International Treasurer for CAM. He is Signing Officer of the London account and has been for several years. Tim also represents CAM at ICOM on many occasions and is thoroughly familiar with the ICOM organization and its operations.

Lois is at work on a first revision of the Distance Course. There has been a flurry of interest (particularly from Guyana) so she has been mailing out course materials. We are also in discussions with an international company that is interested in assisting us develop an electronic version of the course. They have offered to help raise the funds to do this. I believe we will have a concrete proposal to share with you soon.

Our annual general meeting. This is a requirement under Canadian law (and our constitution). It took place in Vancouver on August 28 at the Museum of Anthropology. Minutes will be distributed.

Rooksana Omar has generously offered to host GCAM at the Luthuli Museum in Stanger SA, October 24-29, 2009. The call for papers has met with an overwhelming response. The selection of presentations and delegates is underway and as always it is difficult because of the small budget with which we work. See the CAM website: http://www.maltwood.uvic.ca/cam/activities/upcoming_conferences/index.html (Report in Next Bulletin)

After the Guyana conference at which it was first discussed, Michael Gondwe and his group did a lot of work attempting to set up a series of conservation workshops in Africa with the assistance of the Government of Cuba. Alas, this does not seem feasible at the present time. We will investigate other alternatives.
CAM organized a session at the annual Canadian Association of Museums conference in Toronto on March 6, 2009: "Museums & Diversity: Museums in a Pluralistic Society". Barbara Winters, Catherine Cole, and Lloyd Kandasammy presented papers. I chaired. We had very good attendance. The papers are posted on the CAM website: http://www.maltwood.uvic.ca/cam/activities/past_conferences/cam_tor

CAM has just launched The Commonwealth Association of Museums On-Line International Journal. This is a compilation of papers presented at various conferences and meetings over the past few years. The contents can be sorted by title, author, and date. Lois and Barbara deserve credit for intensive work over the last six months editing and preparing these for posting. See the journal at: http://www.maltwood.uvic.ca/cam/publications/cam_journal.html

CAM received funding from The Commonwealth Foundation some considerable time ago to work on a Cultural Property Project to undertake a review of the state of heritage/cultural protection law in Commonwealth countries, particularly smaller states. This is not with the intent of duplicating work already done but rather to obtain a broad overview of the status of law, enforcement, awareness and understanding in each country. Most recently we have been in discussion with the Commonwealth Association of Lawyers, the Commonwealth Association of Judges and Magistrates, and the University of McGill Centre for Sustainable Development Law in order to develop a collaborative approach to this very complex subject. We hope to have formulated a research and education project that could go forward to funding agencies for support by 2010.

Within a few weeks I hope to be able to announce a new feature of our website. That is a discussion forum for issues, events and news. I hope this will interest and engage CAM members.

Best wishes to you all, Martin.

NEWS AND NOTES

The CAM publications are slowly moving forward but due to my computer crash last year, we have had to rebuild some. The papers from CAM '99 Museums, Peace Democracy and Governance in the 21st Century are now up on the website and the papers from the Guyana conference in 2008 Museums and Diversity: Museums in Pluralistic Societies are also there. In addition see the online international journal where we have added a few miscellaneous papers that have been prepared for other conferences or publications.

The discussion site on the website is open! You are welcome to login and contribute to current discussions or start your own.

GUYANA CONFERENCE A SUCCESS

NEW COUNCIL ELECTED

The 2008 Commonwealth Association of Museums (CAM) conference and meeting was hosted by the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sport of Guyana and the National Museum of Guyana. The conference and related events were held in the Umana Yana conference centre, a conical palm thatched “meeting place of the people” constructed using traditional methods by WaiWai Amerindians in Kingston, Georgetown. Sixteen international delegates from Canada, Africa, the United Kingdom, and the Caribbean, and seventeen local delegates attended the conference. The conference Museums and Diversity consisted of two parts: Museums in Pluralistic Societies and World Watch One: Biodiversity and Conservation.

CAM President, Martin Segger with Minister of Culture, Youth and Sport, Dr. Anthony and delegate Richard Benjamin

Dr. Rex Nettleford with Assistant SG, Barbara Winters

The themes and tone of the conference were well set at the opening ceremony by the eminent keynote speaker, Professor Rex Nettleford, Vice-Chancellor Emeritus, University of the West Indies. In his presentation, entitled Respect and Understanding: Engaging Creative Diversity, the Caribbean Experience, Professor Nettleford spoke of his work on the Commonwealth Commission on Respect and Understanding and urged the Commonwealth Association of...
Museums and its members to base its programmes on the principles outlined in the Commonwealth Commission’s report, Civil Paths to Peace. Using the Caribbean experience as an example, he proposed that engaging “creative diversity,” using a positive approach to embrace diversity, is a productive means to achieve peaceful development and cooperation.

International delegates to the CAM meeting in front of Umana Yana.

In their turn, delegates stressed how museums, as civil society organizations, must move beyond their conventional mandates to play a vital role in addressing major contemporary issues of national and international concern: ethnic violence, gender inequality, the spread of malaria, HIV/AIDS and other diseases, climate change, environmental degradation. Using the resources of cultural heritage and traditional knowledge available to them and through collaboration with diverse communities, museum workers are developing programmes in and beyond the museum to engage, educate and unite the communities they serve. For example:

- Freda Nkirote spoke of the recent post-election violence in Kenya, and discussed ways in which the National Museums of Kenya, a neutral civil society institution representing all ethnic groups, is well placed to assume key roles in prevention, mitigation and recovery, now and in the future.
- Michael Gondwe described an international collaborative project funded by SIDA (Sweden) entitled Safeguarding Traditions, in which the Museums of Malawi worked with partner museums in the Philippines and Guatemala to bring attention to the vital role of museums in pluralistic societies to preserve the intangible heritage of its communities. In accordance with its mandate to be an agent of change for sustainable development, the Museums of Malawi’s component of the project centered on the endangered tradition of growing cassava, a drought-resistant food crop used in konjowale, once a staple of the Malawian diet.
- Lucina Shayo described the transition of the national museum in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, to the House of Culture to stress its focus on community participation and programmes to foster peace, harmony and cultural understanding. She discussed recent outreach projects designed to engage disadvantaged children and women in educational and empowerment programmes. One project, Maskini Almasi (“lost diamond”), centred on providing a space for children in which they could freely voice and share issues of abuse; another was a workshop for people living with HIV/AIDS to raise awareness of the disease and the cultural practices that lead to its spread through communities.
- Richard Benjamin gave an overview of the new International Slavery Museum in Liverpool. He described its activist work with the Black community and other local, national and international stakeholders on a broad range of contemporary issues such as racial prejudice and intolerance, indigenous rights, the social, economic and political condition of many developing countries, child labour, and sex trafficking.
- Rachel Thomas discussed the development and work of the Iwokrama International Centre for Rainforest Conservation and Development, an ecological reserve of one million acres of tropical rainforest in the heart of Guyana. Iwokrama conducts research and sustainable development projects in conjunction with the local aboriginal communities and can serve as a global model for the preservation and use of conservation areas.

The papers generated productive and passionate discussion, through which those in attendance were able to share concerns, provide support and offer creative ideas around issues presented. All the delegates felt strongly in favour of crafting resolutions at the conclusion of the conference to record and carry forward the results of their discussions. Recommendations of the delegates were debated, agreed upon, and recorded in the “Georgetown Declaration” of April 22, 2008.

In addition to the conference, delegates participated in the general meeting of the Commonwealth Association of Museums. Elections were held for a new executive council to serve for three years from 2008 to 2011.

Delegates also attended a session to discuss the development of a new CAM distance course in museology. Several of the delegates had taken the current CAM course or had mentored students through their studies and thus were able
Networking generated by the conference led to fruitful opportunities to share expertise. A contact list of all delegates and attendees was circulated to encourage continued networking for mutual support.

The Minister and his representatives from the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sport and CAM’s partners from the National Museum of Guyana and other heritage organizations in Guyana were gracious and generous hosts. The opening and closing ceremonies were wonderfully planned, exciting events thoroughly enjoyed by all who attended. In addition, international delegates were provided with guided tours through many heritage sites, museums and galleries in Georgetown and environs, and had the opportunity to travel by boat down the Essequibo River to the site of historic Dutch fortifications on Fort Island. After the conference concluded, ten delegates travelled to Iwokrama for four days, to see firsthand the work of this internationally renowned rainforest conservation organization.

DISTANCE LEARNING PROGRAMME NEWS

We are very pleased to congratulate Tamika Boatswain and Lloyd Kandasammy from Guyana, and Charlotte Spink, Mel Smith and Fiona Young from the Oriental Museum, University of Durham, on their completion of the CAM Distance Learning Programme. Minalini Venkateswaren, who began the programme at the Oriental Museum and completed it in India, and Lucy Cofie of Ghana graduated with distinction in the last few months.

New enrolments have followed over the past months while we are doing a further revision and there are now 14 participants in the newer programme. We welcome Elford Liverpool, Mohamed Khan, Simone Prowell-Thomas, Louisa Daggerts, Jabaun Correia, Shebana Daniels, from Guyana, Sheila Storrar, Alison Percival, Jackie Tervit, Philip Smith, Lisa Woodward from the UK, Dennis Greffard and Christine McCuaig from Canada. Adriana Contreras, Canada and Sonika Soni, India are getting ready to begin the programme.

The distance course continues to fill a niche in the variety of training opportunities available so we continue to try and improve the programme, its accessibility and its content. Some funds are currently designated for this purpose and we intend to use some of the rich material that CAM has generated over the years from both themes conference proceedings and the Distance learning programme itself.
We have made contact with a firm specializing in producing internet-based programmes and are in serious discussions to produce a course accessible in that mode without dropping the paper-based format for those who are not able to access internet sufficiently to work with that model. CAM is currently working out a method of proceeding which will involve members from around the Commonwealth for all further development of the programme.

NEW CONNECTIONS: INDIA, SRI LANKA, MALAYSIA - Barbara Winters

[CAM was quite active in India in earlier years but had gradually lost many contacts through changing personnel and difficulties in communication. A renewal project was envisioned for India and at ICOM in Vienna, several new members were enlisted to add to the few we already had. Once again movement of staff became a problem for communication and CAM decided that it would be best to schedule an actual person to person tour and at the same time attend the Commonwealth Consortium for Education meeting in Kuala Lumpur as well as the Stakeholders forum for the 17th CCEM (Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers. Barbara Winters, CAM's Assistant Secretary General, agreed to go and her report follows]

Between May 16th and June 21st, I travelled on behalf of CAM to India, Sri Lanka, Malaysia and Singapore to strengthen and develop the CAM network of museums in these countries. In Kuala Lumpur, I participated in a Commonwealth Consortium for Education (CCfE) conference and the 17th Commonwealth Conference of Education Ministers. I visited museums in five cities in India: Delhi, Udaipur, Mumbai, Bhopal and Kolkata. The first stop was Delhi, where I met with Dr. B. Venugopal and his staff at National Museum of Natural History; Director Amita Shaw and Curator Rashmi Sharma at the National Bal Bhavan and Children's Museum; Curators Ramdas Iyer and Subrata Sen and other staff at the National Science Centre; Mr. J. Dawson, Curator of Archaeology, at the National Museum and Dr. Manvi Seth, Head of Museology, at the National Museum Institute; and Dr. Ramesh Gaur at the Indira Gandhi Centre for the Arts. During these and others meetings in India, I was warmly welcomed and had informative and fruitful conversations with museum staff.

In Udaipur, I was a guest of Shri Arvind Singh Mewar, Maharana of Udaipur, at the City Palace Complex. This magnificent royal complex comprises interlinking palaces, several of which house a museum featuring an extensive collection of art and other historic treasures. My informative and delightful host was Mrinalini Venkateswaran, a recent CAM Distance Learning Program graduate, who is currently working on contract at the museum.

In Mumbai, I had the great pleasure to meet Dr. Sadashiv Gorakshkar, past-president of CAM and former director of the Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya (former Prince of Wales Museum). He kindly arranged for me to visit with current museum director, Sabyasachi Mukherjee, and his curatorial staff, at which, among other topics, we discussed potential plans for the 2010 CAM conference in India. The following day I visited the Nehru Science Centre, where Director Anil Manekar and his staff gave me a tour and overview of the high-tech, interactive exhibits and the operation of the science museum.

Last stop in Mumbai was the Dr. Bhau Daji Lad Museum, the oldest museum in the city, which recently won a UNESCO award for its spectacular renovation and the conservation of its collection. Senior curator Poulomi Das showed me the galleries and described new initiatives for a range of programs.

Vikas Bhatt, Director of the Indira Gandhi Rashtriya Manav Sangrahalaya (National Museum of Mankind), was my genial host for two days in Bhopal. The IGRMS, situated on 200 acres, is a unique museum that documents, preserves and promotes the cultures and traditions of the diverse ethnic and tribal groups of India. At Mr. Bhatt's request, I was pleased to give a public presentation on CAM, which had good attendance and provided me with an opportunity to meet many people in the local museum cultural community. In addition, I toured the State Museum, the Regional Science Centre and the Barat Bhavan, a cultural centre.

Kolkata was my final destination in India. At the National Council of Science Museums, Director General G.S. Rautela, detailed the Council's work with science museums throughout the country and its training program for science centre staff, which offers a M.Sc. in communications. I also
had excellent meetings with Bishor K. Basa, Director of the Indian Museum, and Prof. Panda, Director of the Victoria Memorial Hall, both major national government museums with important collections. These two colonial-era museums soon will be undergoing extensive restorations to the buildings and collections.

My meetings in India centred on four main topics for discussion: the major issues and concerns that museums are facing; expanding the CAM network to support Indian museums; the use of and revisions to the CAM Distance Learning Program in museology; and planning for a CAM conference in India in 2010. While museums in India constantly deal with same challenges as other museums in the Commonwealth, several key issues were highlighted during the meetings. Cultural and heritage museums are struggling to maintain and increase audiences, and are looking to new exhibit design and community programming to build attendance. Conservation is an ongoing concern. Museums need more trained conservators on staff and better facilities and resources for in-house conservation and maintenance of collections. Limited access to training, in general, is a problem throughout the museum community, and the lack of training impacts on all aspects of museum work and exacerbates the other problems museums face. The CAM conference in India in 2010 will be designed as a forum to address these issues.

From India I travelled to Colombo, Sri Lanka, to meet with Dr. Nanda Wickramasinghe, Director of the Department of National Museums, which oversees nine government museums in the country. Museums in Sri Lanka deal with the same issues as those in India, but there is a particularly urgent need for expertise in conservation for textiles and paper and for the natural history collections. Dr. Wickramasinghe is interested in CAM and the potential for collaboration and assistance through the CAM network. The CAM DLP could be of some assistance in general museology training, but English language only materials may be difficult for Sri Lankan students.

I was able to briefly visit four wonderful museums while in Kuala Lumpur for the conferences and in Singapore on my way back to Canada. I was delighted to meet Janet Tee Siew Mooi, Deputy Director, and Kiew Yeng Meng, Curator, at the newly renovated Muzium Negara (National Museum), Kuala Lumpur. Janet Tee is on the executive committee for ICOM in Malaysia and has offered to use that network to help raise the profile and membership for CAM in the country. At the Islamic Arts Museum, an impressive private museum that opened in 1998, I met curator Ros Mahwati Ahmad Zakaria. Both here and at the national museum there was interest in opportunities through CAM and in the museology course for the general training of staff.

In Singapore I met Heidi Tan, curator at the Asian Civilisations Museum, which showcases the cultures of Singapore’s multicultural population. It also manages the new Peranakan Museum, housed in an early twentieth-century Chinese school. Both are dynamic institutions with well-designed exhibits and progressive programs developed in collaboration with community groups. CAM will continue to develop a more formal relationship with Singapore’s museums.

In summary, I would like to thank all those I met for their warm hospitality. The time I had was far too short and only allowed for cursory visits and conversations, but I sincerely look forward further collaboration through CAM and its activities.

CAM & The Commonwealth: 

With support from CAM and the Commonwealth Foundation I was able to participate in two conferences in
Kuala Lumpur in June that were held in conjunction with the 17th Conference of the Commonwealth Education Ministers (17CCEM). The theme of this CCEM was Education in the Commonwealth: Towards and beyond global goals and targets.

The first conference was hosted by the Commonwealth Consortium for Education (CCfE) in partnership with the Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM). The CCfE is comprised of two-dozen Commonwealth civil society organizations, including CAM, that are dedicated to the development of education throughout the Commonwealth. The CCfE conferences are held prior to the triennial CCEM conferences, on a theme relevant to the ministers’ meetings, in order to advocate for policies on Commonwealth educational co-operation. The theme of this conference was Learning to Live Together: Education for Social Cohesion and the sessions encompassed a wide range of topics of current concern to those in fields of non-formal and formal education. Over one hundred delegates attended this conference. It was the first time CAM had been represented, and I was pleased to be able to contribute by chairing a plenary session. Throughout the discussions it was apparent that museums as life-long education providers can play a vital role in addressing issues that were raised on such topics as peace building, fostering social cohesion, and inclusiveness and universality in education. The conference theme meshes with CAM’s mandate and principles and many of the conference topics have been addressed in CAM forums. By continuing to build collaborative partnerships with community and civil society groups, CAM and its members can make significant contributions to the Commonwealth goals we share with other CCfE organisations.

At the final meeting of the delegates, a statement to be presented to the Commonwealth Ministers was debated and edited. Information about the conference, the full program, and the final form of the statement to the ministers, Learning to Live Together, can be found on the Consortium’s website at http://www.commonwealtheducation.org/conference.htm. Following the CCfE conference, I attended the Stakeholders’ Forum, one of the four parallel forums that accompanied the 17CCEM. The Stakeholders’ Forum brought together over two hundred and thirty delegates from civil society organisations, the private sector and academia to focus on four sub-themes: “Making inclusive access and learning a reality”; “Achieving a continuum in education”; “Redefining quality in education”; and “Realising the potential of non-state actors.” The sessions and panel discussions were inspiring and thought-provoking, and provided insight into new initiatives and partnerships for meeting the challenges of improving educational opportunities for all throughout the Commonwealth, particularly in developing countries.

I am grateful for the opportunity to represent CAM at this important gathering of representatives from organisations from around the world. The Commonwealth Foundation introduced a new session at the forum on the role of culture and creativity in education, which I was honoured to chair. This session was a component of the Foundation’s growing emphasis on culture as a human right and as a pillar of development, as evidenced by its establishment of the Culture Program in 2005, its recent document Putting Culture First, and the convening of the Commonwealth Group on Culture and Development. The Foundation and education organisations and providers recognize that museums, as heritage institutions with expertise in culture and social engagement, can contribute significantly to current education and development agendas.


I will continue to follow up on new connections and possibilities that could be of interest to CAM and its members as a result of these conferences and I will post updates on the CAM website.

NATIONAL COUNCIL OF SCIENCE MUSEUMS

Note: India is well-known for the large number and quality of its science museums. During Barbara’s trip she had the opportunity to see some of them and speak to Science Museum personnel. CAM believes strongly in the value of all types of museums and is planning a workshop in Mumbai which will include the Science Museum as one of its partners. As a new member, the National Council of Science Museums was invited to write a short introduction to that strong association.

National Council of Science Museums (NCSM) is the
premier institution in the country, under the Ministry of Culture, Government of India, which has developed a strong Culture, Government of India which has developed a strong network of 27 Science Centres nationwide. NCSM is the largest network of science centres in the world under a single administrative control. About nine million people visited the centres of NCSM last year.

Activities:
Setting up of new Science Centres, Science Cities, Planetariums and Panoramas in India and abroad.

› Developing Travelling Exhibitions on contemporary scientific and technological themes.
› Conducting Mobile Science Exhibitions (MSE) carrying the messages of S& T that reaches to the population in remote villages. It is in the process of introducing Vsat connectivity for the MSE buses.
› Extending Catalytic Support in the form of Exhibits and Travelling Exhibitions to like-minded institutions in India and abroad.
› Organising Educational Programmes in supplementing formal science education system in the schools that provide an experiment-based learning ambience.
› Intensive networking with scientific research institutions to facilitate the Science Centres of NCSM as the public interface of S& T institutions to project their R&D and its social benefits to the public.

The expertise of NCSM is now recognized internationally. Considering a growing national and international demand, marketing of facilities and expertise of NCSM has been intensified. The Council receives several proposals from various state governments, public sector units and research institutions for setting up of Science Centres and Science Cities.

The Research activities of the Council are rapidly expanding for innovative exhibits and activities under the guidance of a Research Advisory Board, consisting of eminent scientists from R&D as well as scientific organizations. As an outcome of the efforts of NCSM scientists, a host of novel hardware and software programmes, developed in the last few years, have been registered as patents and copyrights for new kind of exhibits, displays and designs.

NCSM has launched a two-year MS Course in Science Communication in collaboration with BITS, Pilani and with support from Smithsonian Institution, USA, iIT, Mumbai, Jadavpur University.

ICOM 2010
The next general conference of ICOM to which many of you belong is being held in Shanghai from Nov. 7 to 13, 2010.

Those of you who may be interested in attending a CAM meeting while there, please contact me at the Secretariat.

Amareswar Galla has been appointed Scientific Advisor for the Chinese government for that meeting.

What Peace Means To Me!

Children’s Art Exhibit created from the contest following the CAM 99 Programme on Peace and Museums

This exhibition was completed in 2006 after the initial one had been sent to Nigeria where it was misplaced due to the untimely passing of our President. It opened at the Faculty of Education at the University of Victoria in October and was well-received by the Department and a guide and several articles were written.

CAM would like to circulate this exhibition to those interested and we have a small amount to assist but matching funds would be needed at the museum location for local expenses. For further information visit the CAM website: www.maltwood.uvic.ca/cam. Please feel free to contact me even if you do not yet have the funds but are interested. Lois Irvine