

# ARLIS *focus*

## NEW ENGLAND *Fall 1999 vol.12,no.2*

### **First Fall Meeting: Currier Gallery of Art, Manchester, NH, October 1, 1999**

ARLIS/NE members assembled at the Currier Gallery of Art in Manchester, New Hampshire on October 1, 1999, a beautiful autumn day for the chapter's first fall meeting. Participants were greeted with coffee and pastries on the gallery's entrance terrace and were invited to tour the completely renovated galleries. The featured current traveling exhibition, "Linda McCartney's Sixties: Portrait of an Era," enticed many viewers throughout the day. The program also offered tours of the Isadore J. & Lucille Zimmerman House, the only Frank Lloyd Wright Usonian house in New England open to the public. Docents presented a very informative orientation to the house, which is currently undergoing the final stages of an extensive restoration.

Following a vegetarian lunch buffet composed of recipes from Linda McCartney's cookbook, Stephen Nonack, acting president, led the business meeting. Agenda items included thanks to Kathy Ritter and Adeane Bregman for the day's program. The July 1999 election of officers undertaken by the Nominating Committee (Jennifer Hegarty, Katy Poole and Linda Zieper) on the occasion of the resignation of Caron Carnahan as president, resulted in the election of Adeane Bregman as vice-president/president-elect and Anne Shankland as treasurer. A membership update noted that current members number 119 (109 personal and 10 institutional memberships). Announcements of the Wolfgang Freitag ARLIS/NE Professional Development Award were distributed. The second fall meeting is planned for November 5 at the Clark Art Institute in Williamstown and will include a program at the MassMOCA in nearby North Adams, MA. Hugh Wilburn initiated a lively discussion of the upcoming IFLA 2001 conference to be held in Boston and the possible participation of ARLIS/NA and ARLIS/NE.

During the afternoon's program Gary Samson, manager of photographic services at the University of New Hampshire spoke on portrait photography

with special emphasis on the McCartney exhibit and Andrew Spahr, curator of the Currier Gallery, focused on the procurement of the McCartney exhibition.

*Submitted by Katy Poole, 10/12/99.*

### **ARLIS/NE Board Meeting, October 1, 1999 Currier Gallery, Education Center. Present: S. Nonack; A. Bregman; K. Poole; L. Zieper**

The board reviewed current policies and procedures for the Freitag Award award with a view towards encouraging a greater response. It also discussed any limitations on applying or re-applying, for instance: is the award open to A/NE officers? How many years before an award winner can re-apply?

The group then discussed ARLIS/NA's current practice of soliciting donations for the annual conference and whether the chapter should make a contribution.

conference, and whether A/NE should follow suit.

There followed a discussion of the program for the second fall meeting, to be held November 5 at the Clark Institute in Williamstown and Mass-MoCA in North Adams.

The group then read and discussed Secretary Andrea Frank's proposal regarding officers' responsibilities for processing and maintaining membership records. Andrea's memo addressed the overlapping responsibilities of the secretary, who is the de facto membership officer, and the treasurer, who is currently in charge of initial membership processing. She recommended some changes to the membership procedure which would necessitate modifications to the bylaws (Article IV, section B, number 2) and, therefore, a chapter ballot.

*Submitted by Katy Poole, 11/22/99.*

### **Second Fall Meeting, Clark Art Institute and Mass MoCA, Williamstown and North Adams, MA, November 5, 1999**

Forty-five ARLIS/New England members and guests gathered at the Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute in Williamstown, MA, on November 5, 1999 for the chapter's second fall meeting.

ARLIS/New England Acting President Stephen Nonack welcomed attendees, outlined the day's schedule, thanked hosts Nancy Spiegel and Susan Roeper, and introduced Laura Heon, curator at MassMoCA (the Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art). Ms. Heon then presented an illustrated introduction to the world's largest center for contemporary art.

MassMoCA, which opened in the spring of 1999, is comprised of 27 buildings on 13 acres (a total of 700,000 square feet). It occupies about 1/3 of the area of North Adams, an industrial town of 15,000 inhabitants just east of Williamstown. The museum is housed in renovated portions of an industrial complex previously occupied by Sprague Electric Company, which vacated the site in 1987.

Thomas Krens first conceived of the idea for a facility capable of displaying large-scale contemporary work when he was director of the Williams College Museum in the 1980s. Western Massachusetts, with its thriving cultural community and 2.5 million tourists a year, seemed a good place to situate such a museum; the abandoned industrial complexes of northern Berkshire County seemed to provide an excellent opportunity to site it. Moreover, it was hoped that the museum would provide employment for local citizens, and bring tourists and their wallets to this part of the county, which was not experiencing much of the "Massachusetts Miracle."

Michael Dukakis, then governor of Massachusetts, earmarked \$35 million for the "Museum as Economic Development Project," though the money was not released until well into the administration of Dukakis's successor, William Weld. In the meantime, the director of MassMoCA, Joseph Thompson, raised funds locally for the procurement and renovation of the Sprague Electric complex.

The original plan, by Frank Gehry and Denise Scott-Brown, was realized by the firm of Bruner/Cott & Associates of Cambridge. Of the 27 buildings on the site, 5 (comprising a total of 220,000 square feet), are now occupied, and include Gallery 5, the largest gallery in the United States at 300x 60 feet. In addition to the galleries, there are theaters, a dance studio, and outdoor performance art spaces. Also, some space is rented to business tenants, who provide income for the museum.

MassMoCA, which currently has no endowment, also has no intention of building a permanent collection. All works on view in the museum are on loan, or are installations commissioned specifi-

cally for the site. Because of the demands involved in showing works of this type and size, only one major exhibition is planned for each year.

During the first six months of its existence, MassMoCA had 75,000 visitors. The success of its summer performing arts series was especially notable, with events often selling out.

Throughout its gestation and as a new arrival on the Berkshire County cultural scene, MassMoCA has depended upon the support of nearby institutions, especially the Clark Art Institute and the Williams College Museum. The nature of this alliance was explored in a lively panel discussion moderated by Stephen Nonack, and including Susan Roeper, librarian at the Clark Art Institute, and Marion Goethals, assistant director of the Williams College Art Museum, as well as Ms. Heon.

The successful realization of MassMoCA was due in large part to the efforts of alumni and staff of both Williams College and the Clark Art Institute. MassMoCA's director, Joe Thompson, is a Williams College alumnus, as is Ms. Heon; other Williams College alumni responded generously to fundraising efforts to get the new institution off the ground. At the same time, the Clark Art Institute provided--and continues to provide--support for MassMoCA in the form of library resources (MassMoCA does not have its own library) and graduate student interns. In return, both Williams and the Clark are able to expand their offerings in the area of contemporary art through collaborative programming and development with MassMoCA.

Following the morning's presentation, attendees were treated to an elegant and delicious luncheon prepared by chef Scott Avery of the Clark Art Institute. During dessert, Stephen Nonack called to order a chapter business meeting. [A report follows.]

In the afternoon, chapter members and guests were invited to take advantage of informative guided tours of the dramatic new MassMoCA facility. Currently on view is an exhibition entitled "Test Site," which includes works by Joseph Beuys, Mario Merz, Bruce Nauman, Carl Andre, Dan Flavin, James Rosenquist, Robert Mangold, Robert Morris, and others. Also on view in Gallery 5 was a Robert Rauschenberg exhibit.

*Submitted by Andrea Frank*

**ARLIS/NE Business Meeting, Clark Institute  
Williamstown, MA, November 5, 1999**

The chapter held a business meeting during lunch at the chapter's meeting on Friday, November 5, 1999 at the Clark Art Institute.

Acting President Stephen Nonack began the business meeting at 12:45 by thanking Susan Roeper and Nancy Spiegel for their assistance in planning and hosting the chapter meeting. Stephen noted that the day's program was briefer than usual because of the large number of chapter members who had to travel long distances to attend. Stephen suggested that we could expand our chapter's repertoire of meeting venues by occasionally adopting a 2-day format, with members gathering at a meeting site on Friday evening, staying over at local accommodations, and attending a program on Saturday. Stephen will send out a member survey to gauge people's willingness to do this, and also to encourage input regarding ideas for programs.

Stephen then read a brief treasurer's report from Scott Kehoe, who was not able to attend. The chapter's assets totaled \$4162 as of November 2. Andrea Frank, secretary and membership officer, reminded attendees that chapter membership renewals would be mailed out soon, and that they should be returned as quickly as possible to insure inclusion in the 2000 membership directory. Non-members in attendance were invited to join the chapter by downloading an application from the chapter Web site, picking up a membership brochure at the registration desk, or contacting any chapter officer.

The remainder of the business meeting focused on the topic of a possible chapter program in conjunction with the IFLA conference to be held in Boston in August 2001. Hugh Wilburn, chair of the ARLIS/NA IFLA 2001 Task Force, reviewed the task force's proposal to ARLIS/NA for a 3-day ARLIS/NA "satellite" conference consisting of presentations, workshops and tours, immediately preceding the IFLA conference. The programs would be geared toward members of IFLA's Art Section, as well as ARLIS members who were able to attend.

The task force's proposal was considered by the ARLIS/NA Executive Board at the midyear meeting on September 24. The board's decision was that it could not provide financial or planning support for a second national conference during any particular year. The board proposed instead that the satellite conference be sponsored as a chapter or regional conference, which would make the event eligible for chapter special funding; funding might also be obtained from the International Task Force. Moreover, the board advised that all fundraising ac-

tivities for such a conference must be coordinated so as not to conflict with fundraising efforts underway for the 2001 ARLIS/NA, to be held in Los Angeles, and that programming planning similarly be coordinated so as to complement, rather than overlap, programming at the Los Angeles conference. Finally, ARLIS/NA may be able to provide funding for a reception during a satellite conference.

Thus, Hugh explained, it is now up to the chapter to decide what level of support it can provide for such a conference. The task force has proposed two possible scenarios for the conference: a 1-day event, or a 3-day conference. The 1-day event would involve a program, a tour or choice of tours, and end with a reception. The benefit of a 1-day event is that it would require fewer planning challenges. The down side of a 1-day event is that it would draw fewer attendees from outside the immediate Boston area. A 3-day event would, of course, require more planning, but would provide opportunity for more substantial programs, and perhaps draw a larger number of ARLIS members from outside the Boston metropolitan area.

An informal discussion of the two proposals followed, with members suggesting various ways in which costs might be minimized in order to encourage greater local participation. Hugh proposed polling the chapter membership for feedback on the proposals, either via the chapter listserv or by including relevant questions on Stephen's membership survey, which the chapter board hopes to include in the renewal mailing to be sent out by the end of November.

*Submitted by Andrea Frank*

### **News of Members**

Susan Waddington announced retirement from Providence Public Library in August 1999

Susan Roeper reports that her friend, colleague, and predecessor as librarian of the Clark Institute, Sarah Ann (Sally) Gibson, the former librarian of the Clark Art Institute died August 13, 1999 a brief illness.

Mrs. Gibson was a graduate of Smith College, began library school at Kent State University and earned a combined masters degree in art history and library science from Case Western University.

After positions with the Central Intelligence Agency, the Batelle Institute, and Dennison University, she joined the library school faculty of the University of Michigan. She earned a Ph.D. in library science at Case Western Reserve in 1974 and joined the library school faculty there, later serving as assistant dean and acting head of the school.

In 1986 she moved to Williamstown, MA and began work as an associate editor for the Bibliography of the History of Art. In 1987 she was appointed librarian of the Clark Institute and held that position until her retirement in 1996, the year

Following her move to Williamstown, Mass. in 1986, she was employed as an associate editor for the Bibliography of the History of Art, housed in the Clark Art Institute. In 1987, she was appointed librarian of the Clark Art Institute, a position she held until her retirement in 1996, the year *Art Libraries and Information Services: Development, Organization and Management*, which she co-authored with Lois Swan Jones was published. Her many colleagues and friend in ARLIS mourn her passing.