

# ARLIS *focus*

## NEW ENGLAND *Spring 2002* *vol.15, No 1*

### **From the President**

It is impossible to find an art institution that is more a part of a city's fabric and identity than the Wadsworth Atheneum is with the city of Hartford. Its location at the city center, its powerful neo-gothic old façade and its proximity to the Old State House and the various insurance towers create a character that is Hartford's alone. The Atheneum is the second oldest art museum in the country and its collections contain a richness that is exceeded only by our largest art museums. It is renowned for its nineteenth-century American painting and its American decorative arts collections. But its Baroque gallery contains some of the finest examples of Italian and Spanish works of that period. A surprise is a fine group of Surrealist works set in their Modernist courtyard plus a room each dedicated to Alexander Calder, as well as the large stable at the entrance, and one to Sol LeWitt, both long-time Connecticut residents.

ARLIS/NE was blessed with a dazzling spring day on May 10, when we convened at the Wadsworth Atheneum for our first meeting of 2002. Our journeys to Hartford were tours of springtime blossoming with forsythia, apple and cherry at their lush peaks.

We were very fortunate to have two curators graciously offer to introduce us to a pair of treasures of the museum. Tom Denenberg, curator of decorative arts, provided a stimulating tour of the unique Wallace Nutting Collection of 17<sup>th</sup>-century American furniture and a revealing insight into the work and character of this original American celebrity. Denenberg's book *Wallace Nutting and the Invention of Old America* is soon to be released by Yale University Press.

The other gem was the Chick Austin House, home of the Atheneum's prodigy director from 1930-1952. Eugene Gaddis, Atheneum archivist and curator of the house, guided us through this culturally significant home with engaging wit and informative anecdotes. The house was built by Austin and his wife as a stage setting for the social performances of a cultural high priest as well as a fitting reflection of Austin's flamboyant personality. Gaddis' book on Austin is entitled *Magician of the Modern: Chick Austin and the*

*Transformation of the Arts in America*, published by Alfred A. Knopf.

John Teahan, librarian of the Auerbach Art Library, arranged all the activities, speakers and lunch at the Atheneum. We all express our deepest gratitude to John for his hard and thorough work that made our visit so stimulating and worthwhile.

Our business meeting centered on the activities of the chapter over the last six months. Helaine Davis, secretary, reported our membership is now at 113 with 10 new members this so far this year. Susan Myerson, treasurer, stated our financial balance totaled \$10,748 in a checking account and savings certificates.

First time attendees included Nancy Smith, Trinity College; Debby Aframe and Tanya Semo, Worcester Art Museum; and Cameron Caswell, Simmons College.

Adeane Bregman spoke on the first Elmar Seibel Scholarship and introduced the recipient, Cameron Caswell, who graciously read part of her fine application essay.

Laurie Whitehill Chong reported as our ARLIS/NA Northeast representative on her activities at the national conference. She spoke on the efforts of the board of officers to reorganize and focus the society at the division, interest group and round table level with the aim to use conference time more efficiently and encourage participation in developing programs.

Winners of the Wolfgang Freitag Professional Development Awards were announced. Tom Jacoby, recently retired Art Librarian at the University of Connecticut, received a \$500 grant to support his attendance at the St. Louis national conference. Tom also spoke on his activities as co-editor of *Art Documentation*. Bob Garzillo, RISD, was awarded \$250 towards attending the Rare Book School, University of Virginia this July.

Future meetings were discussed. Tentatively scheduled are a September meeting at the Cape Ann Historical Society, home of the largest collection of Fitz Hugh Lane paintings and collections related to the Rockport and Gloucester art colonies, along with a visit to Cogswell Grant, the home of Bertram and Nina Fletcher Little and their premier collection of American folk art.

The spring 2003 meeting is scheduled at the new art center at Smith College as a joint meeting with ARLIS/Western New York. Stephen Nonack also volunteered to host a meeting at the expanded Boston Athenaeum after it has settled into its renovated quarters.

Paul Dobbs, acting library director Massachusetts College of Art, announced that state college and university libraries received no funding for acquisitions from the legislature for this fiscal year and encouraged all members who are Massachusetts residents to contact their state elected officials and express support for funding these institutions.

At the end of the day, Trudy Jacoby hosted a reception at Trinity College, closing a rich and rewarding visit to Hartford.

At this point I would like to encourage all members to consider whether this is the time to volunteer for an ARLIS/NE office. It is a wonderful experience working with colleagues and friends in new ways, developing interesting programs and activities. The willingness of everyone to contribute time and effort makes all the work easier and more pleasant. This fall we will hold elections for vice-president and secretary. So please step forward. I promise it will be rewarding and enjoyable. Linda Zieper, Susan Passman, and Barbara Rockenbach will make up the Nominating Committee, so feel free to contact them if you are willing to serve.

Finally I would like to remind members that we are an integral chapter of ARLIS/North America and our members are required to be members of the national society as well. I would like to encourage all New England members to be sure to join ARLIS/NA. It is through their structure and efforts we exist and the benefits are both personal and professional. Check the ARLIS/NA web site for the sliding dues schedule as well as special rates for students and retirees. So Enjoy! And see you all next meeting!

*Richard McElroy, President*

### **Executive Board Meeting, January 11, 2002, Bapst Library, Boston College.**

In attendance: Richard McElroy, president; Adeane Bregman, past president; Susan Lewis, vicepresident/president-elect; Susan Myerson, treasurer; Anne Haas, past treasurer; Helaine Davis, secretary/ membership officer; Linda Zieper, newsletter editor; Pamela Born, Freitag Award Committee., Laurie WhitehillChong ARLIS/NA regional representative.

Richard began the meeting by having everyone introduce themselves. New to the board are

Susan Lewis who is the incoming vice president/resident elect, and Susan Myerson, who is incoming treasurer. Pamela Born, Freitag Award CommitteeRep. and Laurie Whitehill Chong ARLIS/NA Northeastern regional representative were also introduced.

The board reviewed the chapter's calendar and the tasks that need to be accomplished during 2002. The first task is for Susan Lewis and Helaine Davis to prepare and to send-out a letter to all members who have not renewed and then prepare the 2002 directory.

Helaine presented the secretary's report: there are currently we have 90 members, 87 are returning members and 3 new members. The chapter has also received \$465 in contributions, over \$350 designated for the Freitag award.

Anne Haas presented the treasurer's report: the chapter has about \$8,000 on hand in the checking account and about another \$3,700 in our two CDs. Anne also prepared some budget suggestions which were discussed.

Richard asked Anne, Susan, and Helaine if they would agree to work with him as a committee to plan a budget, look at the chapter's expenses and to also project what will be done with the money in the future. Adeane suggested that we also put into writing what each member's dues support. Laurie suggested connecting with ARLIS-NA board in order to look at examples of other chapter budgets and current dues fees.

Pam Born reported that this year there would be two Freitag winners. Tom Jacoby, now retired, has been a member of ARLIS/NE and ARLIS/NA for over 20 years and is presenting at the next annual meeting. In addition, Robert Garzillo will receive money toward the costs of a one-week course at the Rare Book School at the University of Virginia.

Adeane announced that Simmons student Cameron Hall will receive the first Seibel Award. The board also voted to give all students applying for the scholarship one-year free membership in our chapter.

Adeane reported on events for 2001: programs at both the Museum of Our National Heritage and Yale, participation in the IFLA conference, and the establishment of the Seibel scholarship, all highlights for the year. Richard thanked Adeane for all her efforts and dedication and asked that she please stay an active part of the board. Laurie stated that she will be writing a report on IFLA for the *Art Documentation* and she will forward copies to Adeane and Richard. Linda asked that Laurie also forward a copy of

the report to Don to post on the chapter Web site as well.

Susan Lewis reported on a reception that the Boston Architectural Center will host on February 8 from 5:30-7:30. The featured speaker will be Martha McNamara who wrote a chapter on "The Architects Library of Boston, 1809-1850" featured in the book *American Architects and their books to 1848*. The BAC still holds three of the known eight surviving books from the earlier Boston collection. ARLIS members are invited to the event. Linda suggested that Susan post the invitation on the ARLIS/NE listserv. Susan also spoke about a January 29 meeting of the Boston Design Librarians (formerly known as the Downtown Design Librarians). The Design Librarians are interested in joint programming possibilities in the future with ARLIS/NE.

The ARLIS/NA annual conference will be the first joint conference with Visual Resources Association and will be held March 20-26<sup>t</sup> in St. Louis. Laurie stated that members may have not received their renewal applications from ARLIS/NA but can print out an application from the Web site in order to renew their membership. Future meetings include Baltimore in 2003 and New York in 2003. Every year our chapter donates items for the Silent Auction at the conference. This year both Laurie and Susan Lewis agreed to look into craft items in Boston and Providence to donate to the auction.

Richard announced that the spring 2002 meeting will be held in Hartford. Members will have the chance to visit both the Wadsworth Atheneum and the Chick Austin House. Members will probably carpool between the two locations. The Hill-Stead Museum and Trinity College are other possible visitation sites. John Teahan will be coordinating the meeting for May 10<sup>t</sup> or 17<sup>t</sup>. John has suggested that the program include tours of both the Austin House and of the Nutting Collection. For next fall, Richard stated that we will most likely meet at Brandeis to visit the renovated Rose Art Gallery. For the late fall meeting we possibly may have a joint meeting with the Western NY chapter for a visit to Smith College. Other ideas for future meetings included: Worcester Historical Society, Sandwich Glass Museum and Heritage Plantation, Strawberry Banke, and an meeting that focused on issues of interest to art librarians such as "solo librarianship" and library management.

Richard reported that Don stated that the Web site is doing well but that for some reason browsing the Web site through Netscape works better than Internet

Explorer. Any changes that are recommended should be communicated through Don directly or Richard.

Adeane will be taking over the moderation of the ARLIS/NE listserv from Andrea Frank.

Linda noted that she got the fall issue of *Focus* distributed. Suggestions were made to interview Elmar Seibel for the next issue as well as the Freitag and Seibel award winners. A few board members noted that some issues were received somewhat mangled. Linda will insert the issues in envelopes for next time.

Adeane stated that she received a very lovely thank-you note from Merrill Smith for the flowers that we had sent after her recent illness. Reports from other members are that Merrill is doing well and spending some recuperating time at her home in Marion.

Respectfully submitted,

*Helaine Davis, Secretary/Membership Officer*

### **Cameron Hall Caswell awarded first Elmar Seibel Scholarship**

Cameron Hall Caswell has been awarded the chapter's first scholarship, named in honor of Life Member Elmar Seibel. Cameron, who will finish her MSLIS at Simmons College this spring, was introduced and congratulated at the chapter's Hartford meeting. She graciously agreed to read from her winning application and to permit its publication here:

I feel very fortunate to have discovered art librarianship as a career, for it is a profession intimately tied with my interests and values. As a highly visual person fascinated by the history, philosophy, and creative processes of art, I have always been drawn to art-related professions. Looking back on my early professional experiences, I can see now that I came in close contact with art librarianship without recognizing at the time its potential as a career. For example, after graduating from college I worked in a print collection where I classified the collection's library using the Dewey Decimal System (Now, I shudder to think of the untrained quality of my work on that particular project!) Later, as a volunteer in the American Decorative Arts collection of the Museum of Fine Arts I worked on an index of heraldic information found in their silver collection. These were both extremely satisfying projects for me, but I didn't then make the connection to the profession of art librarianship.

It wasn't until I had the good fortune of meeting a very enthusiastic spokesperson for the library field that my career plans began to take shape. This reference librarian recounted many of the wonderful things about librarianship: the satisfaction of helping people, the thrill of the detective work involved in reference, and the constant high-level learning that comes from working with a subject you love. I was also intrigued by the complex problems that need to be solved in the field, including the dilemma of fair use in the digital age and the conflicts in differing approaches to preservation. Her account appealed to me deeply, for I had always loved books for their own sake, and I was inspired by the loftier goals of librarianship such as the

protection of intellectual freedom. This serendipitous encounter launched me in my current career path.

... With each step I take into this profession, I feel my enthusiasm and commitment grow. Last summer I was able to attend one day of the pre-IFLA conference, "How do I find a picture of..." and was inspired not only by the myriad of solutions our field is offering for image research, but also by the talent and variety of interests represented by the constituents of the field. I hope to contribute to progress in the work of art librarianship by being an active member in organizations like ARLIS/NE. It is through the work of this kind of organization that fellow professionals can contribute to a shared learning. The generous assistance of the Elmar W. Seibel Scholarship will support my pursuit of the one vocation that unites my fervent interest in librarianship with my love of art.

### **Freitag Award Winner: Tom Jacoby**

I am very happy to be the recipient of the Wolfgang Freitag Professional Development Award of the ARLIS/NE Chapter in 2002. The award helped underwrite the costs of attending the St. Louis annual conference, the first joint conference of the Visual Resources Association and ARLIS/NA, which was an historic event. The St. Louis conference is the first conference I have attended as a retiree without any institutional support for conference attendance so the travel grant was especially welcome. ARLIS/NE members probably know that among the responsibilities of the content co-editors of *Art Documentation* are attendance at the annual conference and listening to as many session papers and presentations as possible with an ear toward publishing them in *ArtDoc*. The Wolfgang Freitag Professional Development Award allowed me to fulfill this responsibility. Accordingly, I am grateful to have received the award.

*Thomas Jacoby,  
Art & Design Librarian,  
UCONN, Storrs (retired).*

### **ARLIS/NE Treasurer's Report as of May 10, 2002**

Checking account, Cambridgeport Bank, current balance: \$6,842.77.

Recent expenses:

\$152.00 for items for the silent auction at the joint ARLIS/NA/VRA Annual Conference in St. Louis, March 2002

Wolfgang Freitag Award for travel to ARLIS/NA 2002 Conference: Tom Jacoby, \$500;

Robert Garzillo, \$250

Elmar Seibel scholarship: Cameron Hall, \$500

### **Certificates of Deposit, South Adams Savings Bank, balance as of May 8, 2002:**

Account no. 71-13218:

\$1,317.67

Account no. 71-13586:

\$2,588.60

### **From the Members**

**Linda Callahan** writes that the Art Building at Mount Holyoke College has undergone a renovation, which included enlargement and other space improvement in my area, the slide library. For the first time ever, there is a separate office (which actually looks like an office) for the slide curator (me). We are still waiting for the door to this office to have a window put in it, and we are waiting for a ceiling leak to be repaired once and for all (it dates back to before the renovation). We're also waiting for some HVAC problems to be addressed, so that we will indeed be air conditioned when summer weather comes to stay for a while. But all in all, we are pretty satisfied with the renovation, especially the view of a beautiful garden that we never had before, along with a lot of natural light coming through the new expanse of windows. These windows had always been in the building, but they were in a room that was used for something else. When the slide room expanded into that room, we got the windows and the view.

**Helaine Davis** sends this announcement: The Museum of Our National Heritage has a new name. As of March 2002 it is officially the National Heritage Museum. We are still located at 33 Marrett Road, Lexington, MA. On display now through the fall: *Lions & Eagles & Bulls: Early American Tavern and Inn Signs from the Connecticut Historical Society* (through January 5); *The Banjo: the People and Sounds of America's Folk Instrument* through August 1); and opening June 1, *To Build and Sustain: Freemasons and American Community*.

**Richard McElroy** and Ann LeRoy, his wife, enjoyed a week visiting Florence during April. "We spent the visit walking the streets and hills walked by Michelangelo and Dante to our complete contentment. We visited the church after church where so much of western art was born and saw the works in their original and intended context. Our hotel was next to the Mercato Centrale, a lively bustling center. I would be happy to talk with anyone planning trip who is seeking ideas. Ciao!"

**Ruth Thomas** reports that a description of her "Finding Images on the Web" training class is a chapter in *Library Instruction for Students in Design Disciplines: Scenarios, Exercises, Techniques*. Compiled by Jeanne M. Brown. Kanata, Ontario, Canada : Art Libraries Society of North America, 2002

**Sheryl Wilhite** was named head of the Rotch Visual Collections, MIT on December 26. She can be reached at swilhite@mit.edu, telephone 617 253-7098. She was previously the visual resources curator at Wellesley College.

**Jae Williams** was married on April 27, 2002 in Bethesda, Maryland, to Corey Rossman. Jae is currently the Special Collections Librarian at the Yale Arts Library. She will be changing her name to Jae Rossman, and will make an announcement when her new e-mail address goes into effect.

## Corrections to 2002 Membership Directory

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