Maori Film to Premiere in Hawaii

Mary Morioka, Waikiki Aquarium

How valuable would you find a film shot during actual construction of the great pyramids? Perhaps such a juxtaposition of time and technology is a bit exaggerated, but this sense of time travel and curiosity compelled me to trek to Los Angeles to witness a film on the construction of war canoes of New Zealand made back in the 1930s.

This summer the State of Hawaii will sponsor screenings of the film Mana Waka, (War Canoe). As an educator, I am fascinated by opportunities to observe process — how something is done. Seeing is only one vehicle for learning, but it’s a significant learning style. And since I knew of the Bishop Museum’s canoe construction project, the significance of having footage of the building of Hawaiian canoes seemed obvious.

The Hawaii Museums Association’s rationale for sponsoring these screenings falls along similar lines: to inform viewers of the value of historic preservation. Mana Waka’ footage was shot back in the 1930s when moving picture technology was in its infancy. R. G. H. Manley, a still photographer by training, shot over 20,000 feet of 35mm nitrate film with a hand-held camera. This incredible technological feat aside, I wonder about the visionary who commissioned this project. Back in the 30s, Princess Te Puea Herangi’s tribe commissioned filming of the construction of seven sacred canoes to commemorate the seven ancestral canoes that brought the Maori people to Aotearoa/New Zealand. Only three of the canoes had been completed when funds ran out, and no further work was done on the film until 1980.

That 20,000 feet of nitrate film survived until the 80s is so exceptionally uncommon that the Maori people attribute this to some spiritual connection. The film was restored with the help of Merata Mita and Annie Collins of the New Zealand Film Archives who coordinated and undertook the task of reprinting and editing and creating a sound track for the edited film. This orchestration involved more than editorial interpretation. Mita was particularly influential in convincing one of three surviving craftsmen to consult on the production. The result is a unique historical and cultural record that celebrates the Maori people. New Zealand’s rich tribal history, and the significance of preservation.

Mana Waka”, an 85-minute documentary film, records the construction of three great waka taua (war canoes) in New Zealand during the late 1930s. The waka taua project was the vision of Princess Te Puea Hirangi, and the film chronicles the monumental job of building these canoes — felling the huge kauri trees, dragging the slightly hollowed trees through mountainous terrain down to the coast, executing the intricate ceremonial carvings, and the final glorious launch.

The greatest respect will be accorded these screenings for both the film and the canoes are regarded as prized cultural treasures or taonga. Therefore, the film will be royally escorted here by Queen Arikinui Dame Te Atairangiakahau and her entourage and presented as a gift to the people of Hawaii.

Mana Waka Show Times

The film “Mana Waka” will be screened at the following times and places:

Tuesday, July 30, 1991, UH Art Auditorium, 7:00 p.m. and 9:00 p.m.
Friday, August 2, 1991, Molokai
Saturday, August 3, Molokai
Sunday, August 4th, 1991, Hilo, Hawaii, Palace Theatre
Friday, August 9th, 1991, Kauai, Convention Center
Saturday, August 10th, 1991, Maui, Kahului Holiday Theaters
Sunday, August 11th, Hana, Helene Hall
News From Your HMA Board

Museums Alive

Congratulations and mahalo to board member Mary Morioka, chairperson, for all the planning and hard work that resulted in the highly successful spring conference. A sincere mahalo also goes out to the many helping hands from the Waikiki Aquarium staff who kept things moving smoothly.

Your Board

Ruth Tamura was re-elected HMA president at the spring general membership meeting. Buddy Norwood (Kona Historical Society board member) was elected to replace outgoing Big Island board member Jerry Shimoda. (See letter from Jerry elsewhere in this issue.) We will miss Jerry, and thank him for serving “to da max” (four years). The following officers were elected at the June board meeting:

Vice president: Gaylord Kubota (Maui)
Secretary: Ginger Alexander (Kauai)
Treasurer: Barbara Dunn (Oahu)

The remaining board members will chair the following committees: David Cox, Membership; Alice Guild, Marketing; David Kemble, Programs; Mary Morioka, Education; and Buddy Norwood, 1992 Fall Conference.

Legislature

The State History Center/Museum project has received funding for 1991-1992 under capital improvement projects: $1,000 for planning and $199,000 for design. This is separate from, and appears intended as the next step after, the feasibility study being carried out by Franklin Odo and the Governor’s Advisory Committee for the study. The study is funded through this year and the final report is due in November. The Alexander and Baldwin Sugar Museum’s DOE resource teacher position was funded for two more years and expanded to become the Maui district museum resource teacher. Waipahu Cultural Garden Park received legislative funding for a construction coordinator for its “Hawaii’s Plantation Village” project.

“Mana Waka: Building the Great Canoes”

This epic film about the building of three gigantic Maori war canoes in the late 1930s — from tree selection through launching — will be shown as part of the UH Summer Session film festival on July 30 at 7:00 p.m. in the Art Building auditorium at the University of Hawaii, Manoa. The screening is free, with tickets available from HMA, which is cosponsoring the screening and is trying to arrange neighbor island screenings. Filmmaker Merata Mita, who edited and completed the film from restored 1930s footage, will be at the Honolulu screening. The film will be accompanied by Dame Teata, regarded by many Maori as their queen, and her entourage. According to Ruth Tamura and Mary Morioka, who saw the film at its U. S. premiere in Los Angeles, this is an “awesome film that is not to be missed. Ticket requests will be handled on a first-come-first served basis. Neighbor island HMA members should contact their board member regarding efforts to have the film and the royal party come to their island. Your ideas and assistance are welcome!

WMC

HMA has been offered a booth or table space at the upcoming Western Museums Conference in Las Vegas. In deciding whether to accept the offer, and how the table will be used and staffed, we need to know who from HMA will be going to the meeting. Please let Ruth know as soon as possible if you’re planning to go (235-5134).

New Exhibit at Whalers’ Village

The estate of James Campbell has announced that Pacific Museums Inc., a Hawaii-based company, has been awarded the contract to design and build a new exhibit for Whalers’ Village at Kaanapali, Maui.

Lynn Okamoto, business manager for Whalers’ Village, said: the “Whalers’ Village Museum”, which is housed within the resort shopping center, has enjoyed great visitor acceptance. The museum, centered on Hawaii’s whaling history, attracted more than 200,000 visitors in 1990.

The new exhibit, The House of the Whale (Hale Kohola), will explore the biology and physiology of the great whales, and in particular the Hawaiian humpback whale. We believe this new exhibit will be even more popular than our Whalers’ Village Museum.

Lewis Eisenberg, president of Pacific museums, said: "The new ‘House of the Whale’ will be a very different exhibit from the Whalers Village Museum which we built for the Campbell Estate in 1984. A greater emphasis will be placed on the entertainment aspects of the exhibits. There will be greater visitor involvement with interactive and exploratory displays.

The exhibit is planned to open in the spring of 1992. It will be housed in a new addition and visitors will enter by a walkway from the existing Whalers’ Village Museum. The 3,500 square foot exhibit will cost in excess of one million dollars and is being funded entirely by the estate of James Campbell."
From An Ex-Board Member

I've just completed four years as Hawaii director of the Hawaii Museums Association's board. It's been a good four years in which the Association has shown much growth. I urge members to serve on the board to gain understanding of what the Association does and how procedures are carried out. One will learn a lot about everything from grant proposals to sponsoring workshops to our affiliation with the Western Museums Association. In particular, my last two years on the board, under the able leadership of president Ruth Y. Tamura, have been very profitable. Many new programs were carried out, and the conferences have been well laid out.

However, the president of an organization and the board of directors should not be expected to function as an executive secretary or executive director. Any well-operating nonprofit museum organization has a paid staff to do the business of the organization and give consistency to its operations.

The Hawaii Museums Association is today a large enough organization with broad and complex programs to deserve and executive secretary or executive director and small staff. I hope that our membership will support the idea of a staff, to provide consistency rather than continuing to have "fits and starts" with each change of officers.

Also, the Hawaii Museums Association needs a home, a base of operations, rather than having to move from place to place for the board meetings with each change in administration. Some day, we may not have a place to meet. It is only through the goodness of heart of some board members that the Hawaii Museums Association has had place to meet.

To be a solid, statewide organization, I believe that an executive secretary or executive director to fund raise and run the routine operations of the Hawaii Museums Association is a must. Some day, the individual members of the board may refuse to carry out programs personally. That will be a sad day, but it could happen.

Frankly, I have never served on a statewide board where directors are expected to carry such a heavy load of the operations of the organization. Perhaps this is why we have so much difficulty in getting members to serve on the board.

Please do not misunderstand. As I said in my opening statement, it's been a good four years on the board, but we can have a better organization that is well-oiled, and can serve our constituents better.

Jerry Y. Shimoda
Puuhonua o Honaunau
National Historical Park
June 27, 1991

Landmark Legislation for Museums

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) has been described as the most comprehensive and far-reaching civil rights statute passed in twenty-five years. The legislation was enacted to ensure that disabled people have the same rights and privileges accorded the non-disabled. Virtually all aspects of a museum's operations, from how it exhibits its collections to how it hires its staff, will have to be reexamined in light of this legislation and the implementing regulations.

The ADA goes into effect on January 26, 1992 and affects the five major areas of employment, public accommodations (museums), transportation, telecommunications and state and local government.

Here are a few highlights of what the act requires of public accommodations:

- Reasonable changes in policies, practices, and procedures must be made to avoid discrimination. For example, modifications in existing practices must be made to permit the use of guide dogs and other service animals in areas open to the general public.
- Physical barriers in existing facilities must be removed if removal is readily achievable (i.e. easily accomplished and able to be carried out without much difficulty or expense). If not, alternative methods of providing the services must be offered, if those methods are readily achievable.
- Auxiliary aids and services must be provided to individuals with vision or hearing impairments or other individuals with disabilities to that they can have an equal opportunity to participate or benefit, unless an undue burden would result.

"Auxiliary aids" include such services as sign language interpreters, assistive listening devices, television decoders, telecommunication devices for the deaf (TDD's), readers, taped texts, braille materials, and large-print materials. Signage must be able to be read by everyone and letters must be a certain height to be visible to the visually impaired. The auxiliary aid requirement is flexible. For example, a braille brochure is not required if a guide will read it to blind customers.

Individuals may bring private lawsuits to obtain court order to stop discrimination, but money damages cannot be awarded. Individuals can also file complaints with the attorney general who may file lawsuits to stop discrimination and obtain money damages and penalties.

For additional information contact: Coordination and Review Section, Civil Rights Division, U.S. Department of Justice, P.O. Box 66118, Washington, D.C. 20035-6118

Submitted by Lani Maa,
Executive Director, Judiciary History Center
Hawaii Nature Center

Ten years ago, when the Hawaii Nature Center was born, words like ecology, endangered, biodegradable, fluorocarbons, recycling, reforestation, and environmental education were the realm of scientists, radicals and “special interest groups”.

Today, those words are part of nearly everyone’s vocabulary. Today the future health and well-being of our planet has become of “special interest” to much of the world. In our own nation it is considered to be the topic about which most Americans are concerned; at the Hawaii Nature Center it is our mission.

Under the watchful eyes of a nurturing Board of Directors, the Nature Center’s first ten years were diligently focused on developing the programs, resources, support and leadership required to accomplish its goals. And, in one short decade, the Center has reached the minds and hearts and hands of more than 147,000 children and their families, passing on to each person the idea that the stewardship of their island home is more than a “special interest”; it must be a common pursuit.

Now, like most ten-year-olds, the Hawaii Nature Center is on the threshold of new growth and undertaking challenges for the decade ahead.

Now, like most ten-year-olds, the Hawaii Nature Center is on the threshold of new growth and undertaking challenges for the decade ahead.

Committed to a bold new ten-year strategic plan developed by an inspired board of directors, the Hawaii Nature Center plans to expand its elementary school programs from their current capacity of serving 20,000 children at one site on Oahu to serving 76,000 children at sites throughout Oahu, Hawaii, Maui and Kauai by the year 2,000.

Even now, two areas of expansion are already well underway.

First, steps are being taken to establish a Nature Center on the island of Maui which will eventually serve all of Maui County. A field site has been obtained. Encouraged by great community interest, it is our hope that the Maui Center will begin preliminary operations as early as next fall and will ultimately bring unique nature adventures to more than 9,000 Maui young people.

Secondly, working in collaboration with the Department of Land and Natural Resources, the Nature Center is renovating an old Nike Missile Control Center on Oahu’s North Shore. When complete, the facility (which has access to the Pahole Natural Area Reserve), will be the first program of its kind to immerse sixth grade children in a native forest setting for a full two and a half day field experience. In addition to site renovation, curriculum development and scheduling is already underway for this highly innovative program. When fully operational, the Pahole Project will serve 5,500 students, or 64% of Oahu’s sixth graders.

For the Hawaii Nature Center, the next ten years will be a decade dedicated to bringing nature education to all of Hawaii’s keiki—a decade committed to creating a new level of understanding about the environment—a decade that will make a difference to the future stewardship of our island home.

Staff News and Notes

Mary Jane Knight, head librarian at the Hawaiian Mission Children’s Society for fifteen years, has left that position to take on the job of Reference Librarian at Kaimuki Regional Library. Lela M. Goodell, retired assistant librarian for the HMCS, has returned to the library to assist with new staff training and transition.

Marilyn Reppun is the new head librarian for the Mission Houses Museum and Library, formerly the HMCS library. Reppun received her Master of Library Studies (MLS) in December of 1990 and has experience as a worker for Hospice Hawaii. The library, organized in 1908 as the Hawaiian Mission Children’s Society Library, recently underwent a board-approved name change to the Mission Houses Museum & Library, and will no longer be cited in Hawaiian literature as “HMCS Library”.

Laura Word, director of the Pacific Regional Conservation Center, is moving to Washington, D.C. to accept a position with the National Endowment for the Humanities. Laura will be a program officer in the Office of Preservation, working with the National Heritage Preservation Program, which supports material culture collections.

Ann Klaus, chairman of education at Bishop Museum, is leaving the museum for another position.

Merrill C. Rueppel is the new director for the Contemporary Museum. Rueppel has been an art consultant for the last fifteen years, and was the director of the Boston Museum of Fine Arts.
Making it through the Big One: 
Museums and Natural Disasters: 
AAM Denver, 1991

Report by Deborah Dunn, 
The Contemporary Museum

The natural disasters session focussed on the experiences of speakers who rode out an earthquake, a tornado and a hurricane at their respective institutions. All speakers showed slides of the aftermath of these disasters at museums, and offered sound advice which they are qualified to give.

Lawrence Francell was a curator of Witchita Falls Museum and Art Center in 1979 when a tornado hit the area. He stressed five important factors about disaster planning and response. First, don’t let lack of a deadline cause procrastination in developing a plan. The seemingly complicated task can be divided into manageable parts. Customize the plan by focusing on the types of natural disasters that are likely to happen in your part of the country, identify supplies and services, establish recovery priorities and train staff. Second, no matter how much networking you have done with other institutions, plan to respond and recover independently. In this case, his community was so hard hit the museum received minimal outside assistance for two weeks after the tornado. Third, help your community and staff recover. He rightly said he could not expect staff to show up for work if their personal lives were in chaos. Fourth, identify fundraising sources for the purchase of emergency equipment. After assessing damage to the building, the Witchita Falls Museum purchased a portable building to keep administrative operations running. Fifth, maintain a sense of humor, even in the face of disaster!

Sharon Bennett, archivist at the Charleston Museum in South Carolina, saw her museum go through Hurricane Hugo. Sharon is part of a disaster preparedness network named CALM (Charleston Archives, Libraries and Museums), formed because of Charleston’s extreme vulnerability to earthquakes, flooding and hurricanes. While the weather service kept watch on Hugo, CALM members notified each other and began preparations three days before the hurricane hit the area. Depending on the predicted severity of the storm, CALM members moved through the phases of their response plan, initially by backing up computers and checking supplies. They eventually progressed to securing the building and making initial contact with disaster relief agencies. Another important phase provided time for staff to evacuate their homes.

Bennett pointed out that building design and construction materials are extremely important if a museum and its collections are to survive. Staff should be involved in final decisions, as architects left to make these decisions may no be completely aware of the correlation between design and disaster prevention. At the Charleston Museum, a large glass facade, previously questioned by staff, was a disaster in itself. Loose gravel on the rooftop was credited for causing broken glass, which in turn damaged exhibitions.

Among many slides of building interiors in disarray, one of the best slides illustrated that simple precautions are most effective. Five days after the hurricane and flooding, books on a low shelf were covered with mold, while those placed on higher shelves and consequently above the water line were in good condition. Some buildings in the Charleston area have marked water lines on walls and place collections above them.

The after effects of the hurricane continue to be monitored. The collections are surveyed every six months to detect mold or other patterns. Rust damage from salt water is also monitored on the buildings. It was suggested that all museums do a building survey to identify potential problems and set up an immediate and long-range plan to make necessary repairs.

Ted Greenberg, registrar of permanent collections at the Fine Arts Museum of San Francisco, was in the museum during the earthquake of 1989. While some works of art were damaged, many were saved owing to the museum’s commitment to secure all works on exhibit with innovative case designs and custom mounts. Damage to collections in storage was also largely prevented. In storage, cloth ties kept works from falling off shelves and fragile glass items that had been placed in custom-shaped ethafoam molds or boxes were unbroken.

The day after the earthquake, essential staff formed teams to assess the damage to individual works. For insurance purposes, a videotape was made before anything was moved. The museum eventually received grants to complete conservation work on some of the damaged works.

Since the earthquake, staff have established the S & M (scheduling and maintenance) committee to provide for the safety of loans on exhibit. Securing loans and designing security mounts before the opening often conflict with tight exhibition schedules. Museum staff compromised to meet their common goal of exhibiting fine works of art in a secure manner.

The museum has also coordinated a health and safety committee to respond to human needs. Many of the staff have received CPR and first-aid training. Emergency lights have been installed and glow-in-the-dark safety (Continued on page 6)
strips applied to emergency equipment. Owing to the size of the museum, the committee set up building zones and selected zone monitors as leaders in the event of a disaster. Since the earthquake, museum staff have tested their response plan through simulated disasters.

All speakers said that disasters will quickly reveal weaknesses in existing plans, and unknown characteristics in staff. They reiterated that a disaster preparedness plan is helpful, but be prepared for flexibility and improvisation. It is absolutely essential that a leader and chain of command be established in regard to response. Museums will be forced to set priorities in saving collections, as time is of the essence. A responsible leader for the organization can make these decisions and direct people to operate at their best potential and pace during the clean up phase.

Magdalyn Sebastian, chair of the discussion, asked museums not to sink into complacency. Planning, networking and rehearsing for disaster will pay off. In its post-disaster press release, it is hoped that the well-prepared museum will be able to report that staff is safe and collections saved.