President’s Report

Aloha kakou,

It’s a new year and the HMA board of directors is gearing up for our annual conference to be held at the Mānoa Grand Ballroom of the Japanese Cultural Center in Honolulu on April 24, 2015. The theme for this year’s conference is Story Connects. Whether we work behind the scenes in archives and collections, in exhibit design, working with members and donors, or in visitor services, we are all in the storytelling business. In the museum world we understand and appreciate how story makes meaningful connections between people, ideas, collections, and places. I think that notion is beautifully captured in this year’s logo created by Margo Vitarelli.

Appropriately, our keynote for this year is a storyteller. Victoria Nalani Kneubl is a well-known Honolulu playwright and author. She holds a master’s degree in drama and theatre from the University of Hawai’i. Her plays have been performed in Hawai’i and the continental United States and have toured to Britain, Asia, and the Pacific. An anthology of her work, Hawai’i Nei: Island Plays, is available from the University of Hawai’i Press along with her mystery novels. She is currently the writer and co-producer for the television series Biography Hawai’i. In 1994, she was the recipient of the prestigious Hawai’i Award for Literature and in 2006 received the Eliot Cades Award for Literature.

We are very excited about the conference presenters and events we have in store for this year. We will kick off the conference on April 23 with an evening lecture at Bishop Museum by John Falk, author of Identity and the Museum Visitor Experience. On Friday, April 24 from 8am to 4pm, we will have a full day of presentations, demonstrations, and interactive activities on topics including connecting to kids through interactive museum education, connecting to visitors through storytelling and theater, connecting to collections through technology, and connecting to communities. The evening of the 24th, we will gather for pupus, drinks, and discussion when Hawaiian Mission Houses hosts “A Pau Hana Museum Theatre Night.” Saturday, April 25th, field trips through ‘Iolani Palace and the State Archives will be available.

The annual HMA conference is where we get to step out of the everyday concerns of our individual organizations and come together as a professional ‘ohana, refresh our connections to each other and the field, share ideas, and get inspired about what we do. To register for the conference, you can go to the HMA website at www.hawaiimuseums.org or watch for conference materials in your e-mail. We look forward to seeing you in April!

Me ke aloha pumehana,
Heather Diamond, HMA president

Why Do People Visit Museums?

Thursday, April 23, 2015
6:30 to 8:00 pm
Venue to be announced

In this presentation Dr. John H. Falk will explore one of the most fundamental questions facing the museum profession - why do people visit or not visit museums? Using the lens of personal well-being and drawing from both past and current research, Falk will offer a “visitor’s eye view” of how the public uses visits to museums and other leisure venues as vehicles for fulfilling their own personal needs and aspirations.
Weekly Tours of the Daniel K. Inouye Kilauea Point Lighthouse

By Jane Hoffman
Executive Director,
Kilauea Point Natural History Association

The Daniel K. Inouye Kilauea Point Lighthouse, formerly called the Kilauea Lighthouse, is now open for tours to the public twice a week. Until 2014, these tours were only offered once a year, and had been suspended during the Lighthouse Restoration project, which culminated in 2013.

The Lighthouse is located at the Kilauea Point National Wildlife Refuge, which is open Tuesday through Saturday from 10 am to 4 pm, and closed on Federal holidays. Lighthouse Tours occur every Wednesday and Saturday at 10:30 am, 11:30 am, 12:30 pm, 1:30 pm and 2:30 pm. Visitors planning to take the tour must pay the refuge entrance fee but the Lighthouse Tour is free. There are no advance reservations, and space is limited. Participants must be present to sign up and receive their ticket. For more details, restrictions or questions regarding the tours please contact the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service office at (808) 828-1413 or visit their website at www.fws.gov/refuge/Kilauea_Point and click on the Lighthouse Restoration link.

The Kilauea Lighthouse Restoration Project began in 2008 and was completed in April 2013; just in time for the Centennial Celebration. The lighthouse was officially re-named during the Lighthouse Centennial Celebration Ceremony on May 1st, 2013. Close to $1 million was raised during the Kilauea Point Natural History (KPNHA) capital campaign. The total cost of the restoration was approximately $2.5 million.

The Lighthouse is the focus of a book compiled by Kim Stutermann Rogers as a project of KPNHA. The book, titled Keepers of the Light, Land and Life, A Look at Kilauea Point over 100 Years documents the rich and fascinating history of the lighthouse and the land upon which it sits. The book is available at the KPNHA Bookstore in the Visitor Center at the Refuge.

Free admission days at the Kilauea Point National Wildlife Refuge are:
- Lighthouse Day on Saturday, May 2nd;
- National Public Lands Day, Saturday, September 26th;
- National Wildlife Refuge Week, Saturday October 17th; and
- Veteran’s Day, Wednesday, November 11th.

Series of photographs showing the restored Daniel K. Inouye Kilauea Point Lighthouse. The exterior of the 100 year old building after restoration. Interior images show a tour group climbing the spiral staircase to view the unique lens. Photographs of the lens by McMillen LLC.
Museum Computer Network (MCN)

by Nicholas Griffiths, Collections Technician
Bishop Museum

Since conferences began in 1972, the Museum Computer Network (MCN) has been a guiding light for the integration of museums and technology. Its leaders nurture an environment of collaboration where exhibition failures are embraced for their lessons, digital successes are shared for wider adoption, and optimism is replenished for all. Jeffrey Insho of The Andy Warhol Museum wrote it best: "The Museum Computer Network conference is, in my opinion, the place where the most talented makers, hackers, and doers in the museum sector meet up annually to set the course of things to come" (retrieved from http://static-made.com/on-professionalspirit-animals/ on 5 February, 2015). To attend MCN is to throw one's self into a network of professionals who believe innovation is the key to museum sector longevity, and positive thinking is the only kind worthwhile.

The annual conference was held in Dallas this past November of 2014, and its theme was "Think Big, Start Small, Create." This motif drew in an international crowd of heritage professionals ready to communicate their stories, dream big, and team up for collaborative projects. The keynote kickoff for this event was Lance Weiler: a writer, director, and "experience designer." Recognized as a pioneer of transmedia, he was named by WIRED magazine as one of the 25 people reinventing entertainment and changing the face of Hollywood.

Weiler stimulated imaginations at MCN by revealing the myriad ways in which his works transcend traditional media. His movies call you while you’re watching them, his protagonists physically go where their audiences tell them to, and participation is frequently rewarded by physical manifestations of fictional plotlines. Reality and fantasy are indelibly intertwined. These examples provided compelling directions for museums wishing to expand influence beyond their walls.

The individual talks that followed Weiler’s highly inspirational address varied widely from mobile apps, to digital publishing, interactive exhibitions, and social media. Their variability notwithstanding, they shared one common thread: using technology to facilitate engagement between visitor and collection. Although there are many ways of facilitating this connection, a recurring catalyst for this process was the notion of “Open Authority.” As case in point, an entire panel was devoted to exploring the movement’s significance within museums of the 21st Century.

To be clear, “Open Authority” has nothing to do with letting go of authority, so much as sharing authority; reshaping it into something more conducive to the user experience. In other words, “Open Authority” is not “Anti Authority.” Quite the contrary, “Open Authority” is about using the authority an institution does have to foster personal connections with collections by allowing for the personalization of experience. And this personalization more often than not requires that we use our curatorial expertise to include content generated by the public.

Whether Post-It notes on gallery walls, or hash tags on Instagram, the success of an installation is measured more and more these days by the visitors’ active generation of participatory media.

Facilitating this type of personalization increasingly involves allowances for photography within galleries, and the assurance of openly accessible collections online. Now more than ever, museums are obligated to make a distinction between digital representations and the actual objects being represented. Along these lines, a frequent topic at MCN was the correlation between virtual access and physical visitors.

In other words, how many more people will walk through our doors if we give away our digital assets for free? Landscapes are undoubtedly changing in this regard, requiring different tactics on the part of museum professionals. What would have been considered piracy in year’s past is now a powerful form of marketing. Encouraging the beloved “selfie” next to our cherished artifacts is sometimes the most effective form of marketing. Allowing visitor ownership of experience often translates into buzz, crowds, and ultimately profit.

If the above paragraphs have sparked any bit of interest, check out MCN’s YouTube station (https://www.youtube.com/user/museumcn). Luckily, for the museum field, MCN makes their message of open access very seriously, and releases their talks for free. If you’d like to experience this in person, MCN’s 2015 conference will be held in Minneapolis, MN, in early November. Although the theme has yet to be announced, proposals will soon be accepted here: http://mcn.edu/. All Hawaiian heritage institutions are encouraged to make the pilgrimage. MCN 2015 is not to be missed!

What Nonprofits Need to Know – New Rules for Government Grants and Contracts

Monday, Mar. 9 from 1:30 to 3:30 pm. at HawaiiUSA Federal Credit Union training room, 1226 College Walk, Honolulu.

SAVE THE DATE for this special training opportunity with Victoria Collin of the White House Office of Management and Budget (OMB). (OMB) Uniform Administrative Requirements, Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards ("Uniform Guidance") took effect on Dec. 26, 2014, establishing new regulations for government grants and contracts. The Uniform Guidance includes many changes that significantly impact nonprofits, including reimbursement for indirect costs in government grants and contracts at all levels - federal, state, local - when federal funds are part of the funding stream.

At this session, Victoria Collin will give a presentation regarding the OMB Uniform Guidance and answer any questions you may have.

Who should attend? Non-profit executive directors, CFO's, accountants, grant/contract managers and others interested in changes in government grants and contracts to nonprofits.

Cost: $15 for HANO members; $25 for non-members.
Phone: (808) 529-0466
info@hano-hawaii.org
hano-hawaii.org
Mau Waiwai Makamae:
Strengthening our Museums, Protecting our Treasures

By Noelle Kahanu

An exciting new project, funded by a grant from the Hawai‘i Tourism Authority, will be contributing greatly to our collective knowledge of visitor experiences at three of our most important historic sites. Facilitated by the Museum Studies Graduate Certificate Program (MSGCP) at UH Mānoa and guided by Wendy Meluch, a leader in visitor studies, this project enables the collaborative development of visitor surveys in consultation with representatives from Iolani Palace, Queen Emma Summer Palace, and Hulihe‘e Palace.

Museum staff, volunteers, and students would receive professional training and administer the surveys at all three sites. Students would then collate the data resulting for the first time, in consistent information being gathered across the board. The results, which would also be shared with HTA, will hopefully document the significance of Native Hawaiian cultural experiences and quantify the extent to which the Hawaiian culture impacts our visitors, both locally and beyond.

The history of the Hawaiian people, as told through their hand-wrought works, resides in museums and cultural institutions throughout the state of Hawai‘i. Mau waiwai makamae (precious treasures) representing the depth, breadth, and complexity of the Hawaiian experience.

Each of these institutions do their best to preserve, display, and interpret these works. Over the last decade, though, major factors have impacted the financial well-being of some of Hawai‘i’s most beloved institutions: post 9/11 declines in tourism; dramatic decreases in federal funding and corresponding increases in competition for state and private grants; and greater pressures on individual and family spending, thereby limiting discretionary budgets. Visitors are the backbone of a healthy and sustainable institution. Museums thrive when admissions are robust but many of our museums lack sufficient resources or support to adequately attract visitors, or to grow their modest visitor base. For those visitors that do come, little is known about them. Why did they decide to visit a museum? How did they get there? What was their experience? Did they learn something new about Hawaiian culture? Would they return?

A secondary purpose of this project would be to create a database detailing the programmatic needs of our Hawaiian museums and cultural institutions. Accessible and updatable by the institutions themselves, the database would create service learning opportunities for students and volunteers, connecting them to institutions in need.

Said the grant’s Principle Investigator, Noelle Kahanu, “this is a really exciting project because we hope eventually to share these visitor surveys with other institutions, enabling them to be used at their sites. That’s why it’s so important to have partners like Hawai‘i Museum Association to help spread the word. By working together, we can strengthen our collective museum community.”

We look forward to hearing more about this collaborative project at HMA’s Annual Meeting in April. Until then, feel free to contact Noelle for more information at nmkahanu@hawaii.edu.

Third Thursday Pau Hana History Theatre

By Tom Woods
Executive Director, Hawaiian Mission Houses

In January, HMH instituted a new program called Third Thursday Pau Hana History Theatre. It is no secret that historic houses around the country have been struggling with declining attendance and revenue over the past decade. In an effort to entice new visitors, historic houses are experimenting with different programming strategies, including providing more access to collections with fewer restrictions to visitors.

Another approach that has gained some favor on the mainland is “History Happy Hour,” some people have derogatorily referred to it as “Drunk History.” In general, the program involves inviting visitors into the historic house for a history lecture served up with cocktails and wine amidst the historic spaces. Hawaiian Mission Houses has begun experimenting with this by adapting its popular Cemetery Pupu Theatre programs into an evening tour of our restored house cellar combined with pupu and drinks and a pau hana history theatre performance.

Check out this new program idea, and then discuss the merits of history happy hours, history theatre, and the particular perspective of a historical character over wine and beer. Sign up for this event with HMA conference registration.

A Pau Hana Museum Theatre Night will be held on Friday night, April 24, from 5:00 until 7:00 pm.

Good Questions...
Close Encounters of the Inquiry Kind

At the annual HMA conference, Hawai‘i State Art Museum (HiSAM) Educator Susan Hogan and members of her Art Bento Program outreach education team will present an interactive demonstration of inquiry-based strategies guaranteed to enliven and personalize encounters with museum objects. Art Bento Program team members Quala Lynn Young, Loke Simon, and Tara Iden Spagnoli are seasoned museum educators with extensive experience working with adults and children at museums across our city, including the Honolulu Museum of Art, the former Contemporary Museum, and the Honolulu Zoo.

Want to see how these techniques can be used “at home”? YOU are invited to send a photograph of one of YOUR museum objects to hisameducation@gmail.com to have your collection represented in this lively demonstration.

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Hui o Laka Freshening Up
Kōkeʻe Natural History Museum
by Chris Faye, Director, Kōkeʻe Natural History Museum

Early on January 24th, a much needed reorganization of the Kōkeʻe Natural History Museum took place. Some of the exhibits date from the early 1950s and had never been moved from their original positions. Exhibits were dismantled, slid, rolled and carried to new positions to open up the space to allow better visitor access to the exhibits. The museum is the key activity of Hui o Laka, founded in 1953. Trustees cleaned behind cases and literally brushed away the cobwebs. Then the shop was tackled with the same goals. All this as a first step in determining a new, holistic master plan for the museum and grounds. As the doors opened for the day, the somewhat dusty trustees retired to a planned design charrette lead by trustee Andy Jasper, director of the McBryde and Allerton Gardens of National Tropical Botanical Gardens.

Enthusiastic, freewheeling thoughts and wishes were captured on paper and a plan formed. So clear were the thoughts that the following week some of the exhibit cases were tweaked to fit in the new plan. Ongoing upgrades, temporary and permanent are being shared on facebook: facebook.com/Kokee-Museum-New

The Museum Gift Shop will be receiving new furnishings and products with a grand reopening during the annual Banana Poka Festival Sunday, May 26.

First row (l-r) Billi Smith, Albie Schraepfer, Wai Kuapahi, Kay Koike; back row (l-r): Frank Hay, Chris Faye, Andy Jasper, Sue Boynton.