Reviewing the past year

Looking Ahead to 2021!

What a year this has been — and it’s only half over.

As we look forward into an increasingly uncertain year we want to take a moment to acknowledge the effect that the COVID-19 pandemic has had on institutions across our state. While most of our colleagues are feeling the significant impact from our state’s public health initiatives, we feel lucky to be part of a passionate group of museum workers, who are not only resilient, but will play an important part in preserving and telling the stories of this tumultuous year. Cheers to each of you for every reconfigured exhibition schedule, updated loan agreement, awkward Zoom meeting, and education program gone digital!

(see Looking Ahead on page 6)
Welcome to the Annual Report of the Washington Museum Association. This report reflects on the past year of our wonderful organization, which has moved forward through our new goals and activities. Over the last year, like your organizations, WaMA has had many successes and challenges, and this report reflects back on those while it also lays out many of our plans for the coming months ahead.

I would like to introduce and welcome our incoming WaMA board members, as they help broaden our geographical and professional representation. New board members for 2020 include Lynn Bethke, Collections Manager for the Museum of Culture and Environment at Central Washington University; Jessica Rubenacker, Exhibit Director for the Wing Luke Museum; and Sarah Samson, Curator of Collections & Exhibits at Renton History Museum. They each bring a wealth of knowledge and experience to WaMA, and I look forward to seeing how each shapes our board, organization, and museum field.

But the transition is bittersweet, as we say farewell to our outgoing board members and thank them for their time, effort, and energy over the recent years: Freya Liggett, Curator of History and Campbell House at the Northwest Museum of Arts and Culture; and Elizabeth Stewart, Director of the Renton History Museum. They have both held multiple positions and always been the helpful hands wherever needed. I truly cannot thank them enough for everything they have done for WaMA and the museum field.

In reviewing all of the data for this annual report, I am very proud of what we have accomplished as an organization and what our museums have done throughout Washington State and how we have all adjusted through these unusual, and unprecedented, times. It is through museums like yours that we continue striving forward and I truly appreciate your support through everything we do, at WaMA and in the museum field.

In Museums We Trust,
Sadie
Welcome New WaMA Board Members!

**Lynn Bethke** has been the Collections Manager at the Museum of Culture and Environment at Central Washington University (CWU) since 2007. As the sole staff member, she manages the collection, the gallery, and is deeply involved in all aspects of museum work. She has also taught in the Museum Studies program at CWU regularly since 2010. Lynn earned her Master’s degree in Museology from the University of Washington, and holds Bachelor’s degrees in Anthropology and English Literature from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Outside of museum work, she enjoys reading, knitting, and roller derby.

**Jessica Rubenacker** is currently the Exhibit Director for the Wing Luke Museum, where she provides leadership and oversight of the community-based exhibit development process. She returned to the museum after managing the City of Redmond’s Arts Program -- overseeing the City’s public art collection, new public art commissions and public programming. Jessica previously worked for The Wing as Visitor Services Manager and Exhibit Specialist and has also held positions at the Henry Art Gallery and Frank Lloyd Wright’s Fallingwater. She sits on the board for Historic South Downtown, a state-created agency responsible for preserving and supporting the cultural identity of Seattle’s Pioneer Square and Chinatown-International District neighborhoods. Jessica holds an MA in Museology from the University of Washington and BFA in both Painting and Art History from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

**Sarah Samson** has been with the Renton History Museum since 2006, first as the Collection Manager and currently as the Curator of Collections & Exhibits. Previously she interned at the Burke Museum of Natural History & Culture and worked in archaeology in South Dakota. She received her Master’s degree in Museology from the University of Washington and her Bachelor’s degree in Anthropology from the University of South Dakota. Sarah is a University of Washington Museology affiliate faculty member, teaching collections care and serving as a host site for their exhibits class.

Thank You Outgoing Board Members!

**Freya Liggett** is currently the Curator of History at the Northwest Museum of Arts and Culture in Spokane. She holds a BA in Anthropology from Linfield College. She also serves on the Heritage Capital Projects Advisory Panel and the review committee for the Humanities Washington Speakers Bureau. Freya was the Museum Manager at the Moses Lake Museum & Art Center (Moses Lake, WA) for over 11 years, and the Curator/Archivist at the Bayside Historical Society (Queens, NY) for five years. In 2019 she celebrated 20 years in the museum field. Freya is passionate about small museums, and the communities they serve. Outside of work Freya enjoys spending time on the water.

**Elizabeth P. Stewart** has been the Director of the Renton History Museum in Renton, WA since 2006. She was previously Research Historian for a state-operated African American history museum, the Banneker-Douglass Museum, in Annapolis, MD for six years. She has a B.A. from the University of South Carolina and a Ph.D. in American History from American University in Washington, DC. While completing her degrees, Elizabeth worked at McKissick Museum in Columbia, SC and the Smithsonian Institution’s National Museum of American History. She chaired 4Culture’s Heritage Advisory Committee from 2011 to 2013 and serves as a peer reviewer for AAM’s Museum Assessment Program.
WaMA 2019 Membership Report

–Freya Liggett

WaMA had big plans to celebrate 40 years of serving Washington museums in 2020. The planned “40 for 40” membership drive was targeted to add 40 new members in each category and introduce the first dues increase in over 10 years. The revenue goal would have enabled WaMA to begin the first phase of updates to the website and communication tools. 2020 didn’t work out how anyone expected.

First the bad news, since March there has been a 10% drop in membership renewals. With so many museums closed, some perhaps indefinitely, business as usual is anything but, even for WaMA’s most supportive long-term members.

The good news is with the help of two grants, one received from the Hugh and Jane Ferguson Foundation in 2018, and another from Humanities Washington this spring, WaMA can move forward with the first phase of improvements. But it’s only the first step.

The new 2020 membership message is simple: an investment in the Washington Museum Association is an investment in the future of Washington museums.

Invest in the Future of Washington Museums!

The effects of the COVID-19 pandemic have been especially hard on Washington museums. Planning how and when to reopen your doors are only the first steps in recovery. We know times are tough and WaMA has leaned heavily on friends and partners to continue serving you, but those organizations and individuals are feeling the stress of hardship too. We know your WaMA membership may not be top of mind, but a strong museum network has never been more critical.

Postponing the 2020 conference was more than lost networking and development opportunities, it was a significant loss of revenue that translates into lost support for museums. Conference registrations and sponsorships provide the majority of WaMA’s annual operating support. Basic association functions are in jeopardy. WaMA is investing internally now, knowing that Washington museums will need more than an annual conference in 2021.

Understanding those hardships, WaMA has postponed planned membership increases for 2020. A strong network of museum-minded people is just as important as dollars to continue fulfilling our mission. Please invest in WaMA by renewing or joining. Together we can be a statewide voice for museums of all sizes and play a meaningful role in the post-COVID recovery era.

Museums need strong advocates in the coming months and years. Anyone who cares about the future of Washington museums should be a member of the Washington Museum Association.

WaMA 2019 Treasurer’s Report

–Anna Goodwin

Total earned revenue was $46,989.41, showing an $8,893.50 (23.4%) increase from 2018.

Total expenses were $35,225.14

The association ended the year with an excess of revenue over expenditures of $11,764.27.

As of December 31, 2019, the Banner Bank account has $38,306.03; Banner Bank CD has $19,128.54. Accounts payable is $111.09.

Total liabilities are $111.09.

Total equity is $57,545.66.

Total liabilities and equity is $56,434.57.

WaMA Membership by the Numbers

107 Institutional
55 Individual
7 Patron
23 Business
20 Senior
67 Student
279 Total
2020 Arts, Heritage, and Science Day

– Allison Campbell

On February 4th, the Washington State Historical Society (WSHS) welcomed over 40 museum professionals and volunteers to the Lord Mansion in Olympia for a day of workshops on a wide range of topics. The day kicked off with a presentation by WSHS staff about free materials available to heritage organizations interested in marking the 2020 women’s suffrage centennial, including a downloadable 6 panel exhibition called Washington Women Led the Way and classroom curriculum materials for 4th and 7th grade teachers. Lissa Kramer, manager of the Capital Heritage Projects program, discussed the new grant guidelines and online application process, and was later joined by registrar Mackenzie Hotz and heritage outreach manager Allison Campbell for an introduction to emergency preparedness for small museums. The workshops concluded with presentations and a Q & A on the topic of how small museums can do big things with limited resources. The conversation was led by Cristy Lake of the Northwest Railway Museum and Snoqualmie Valley Historical Society and Nancy Salguero McKay of the Highline Heritage Museum. The day culminated with a reception hosted by the Washington Museum Association, attended by members of the statewide arts and heritage communities as a kick off to their advocacy work on February 5th.

Legislative Wrap Up

– Allison Campbell

Thanks to the work of the Washington Museum Association and other statewide advocacy organizations several bills were passed in the 2020 legislative session impacting arts and culture in our state. Below are some highlights, a full bill report can be viewed at https://bit.ly/3ectBAw.

- **SB 5792** – Makes statutory requirements and policies for two cultural access programs the same in all counties of the state. The final bill as passed can be viewed at https://bit.ly/2O7PKW3.
- **HB 2837** – Expands powers granted to state historical societies to include small granting authority. The final bill as passed can be viewed at https://bit.ly/3IjmXM.
- **SB 6312** – Makes the nonprofit and library fund-raising exemption permanent. The final bill as passed can be viewed at https://bit.ly/38LSnGn.
- **SB 6670** – Encourages access to state parks through cooperative programs with libraries. The final bill as passed can be viewed at https://bit.ly/3iG3Yvc.

The Heritage Caucus meets on Wednesday mornings at 7am in Olympia during the legislative session to discuss issues of concern to the arts and heritage community. All WaMA members are invited to attend. Email allison.campbell@wshs.wa.gov to receive weekly agendas.
Here at WaMA we are moving full steam ahead, continuing the momentum towards our 40th Annual Conference, which (we hope) will be held in Olympia in June 2021. The board is still navigating how, where, and when to hold our Annual Retreat to strategize methods to better serve our membership and the museum community. From your responses to our 2018 membership surveys, we learned that increasing digital and in-person learning, as well as more opportunities to get together with colleagues were high on your list. To that end, we are strengthening our partnerships with other great organizations in our state, including Washington State Historical Society, 4Culture, and Inspire Washington to plan and share opportunities for learning. Follow WaMA on Facebook for links, schedules, and other news.

But, most of all, we are looking forward to when this “new normal” is over, and we can get back to normal, normal.

The board is planning to move most of its meetings to digital format (we are so thankful we invested in a Zoom account a few months before the Pandemic really hit the States). We hope that it means that more of our members will join in on our conversations. We want to hear from you – what more can we do to make your world easier during these uncertain times? How can we be of service to you? Reach out to us via email (contact@washingtonmuseumassociation.org) or on Facebook @WashingtonMuseumAssociation. Or, join us on the WaMA Board or one of our committees by contacting a board member.

We are looking forward to heading to Olympia next spring and are planning our best conference yet to make up for not getting to see everyone’s shining faces this year. And, until we can all be together again, we’ll be embracing new avenues to continue our work.

Digitally yours,

Brooke Shelman Wagner and Katie Buckingham, Washington Museum Association Vice Presidents

(looking ahead, continued from cover)

Inspire Washington looks to WaMA for insight and direction as we advocate for more resources for Washington’s broad cultural field and museums, specifically. Nearly every city, town, and hamlet across our broad state, has a museum, heritage organization, or historic site. Within these places and spaces reside the histories of our communities and artwork that inspires. We are dedicated to WaMA’s objective of bringing more resources to the vital work that is uniquely Washington. This past year was a great year of partnership, including monthly strategy calls, sponsorship of the 2019 conference, and collaboration on the 2020 state legislative agenda. We applaud how WAMA builds a broad cultural community from Kittitas to Kennewick and Whatcom to Walla Walla.

– Manny Cawaling
Executive Director, Inspire Washington
In his keynote address at the 2019 Washington Museum Association Conference, Adriel Luis said a vital step of community-centered practice is cultivating tangible relationships with actual people. In Spokane, I began building a community of Emerging Museum Professionals by getting to know people.

As WaMA’s first EMP ex-officio board member, I acted as a welcoming face at the following events:

- Burke Trivia, Seattle
- EMP happy hour, Spokane
- Exhibits Happy Hour, Museum of Glass, Tacoma
- Gender Equity in Museums Movement (GEMM-SEA), Seattle
- Drinking About Museums, online

I continue to connect with museum professionals through the EMP Facebook group. My focus on relationship-building continues as a member of the 4Culture COVID 19 Recovery Task Force. By acting as resources for each other, Emerging Museum Professionals can help Washington state’s cultural sector survive current challenges and thrive in the future.

—Erika Robertson, Ex-officio board member, Emerging Museum Professionals

Washington Museum Association board’s ex-officio positions bring together perspectives and resources from like-missioned institutions to serve Washington’s diverse museum sector. 4Culture is proud to partner with WaMA in this way. In 2019, the heritage department continued our support of WaMA’s annual conference by providing stipends for three King County-based heritage practitioners to attend the conference. I also rely on WaMA to provide leadership on how heritage organizations in King County can stay informed about statewide issues and advocacy opportunities such as Arts and Heritage Day, the cultural sector’s advocacy day in Olympia. Thank you, WaMA for providing that leadership.

At 4Culture, 2019 was the year of the King County Cultural Health Study. 4Culture staff visited more than 40 communities across King County to hear about what’s working and what’s not when it comes to culture. A series of focus groups with stakeholders of all kinds — nonprofit organizations, artists, board members, elected officials, and more — formed the foundation for our new, 3-year strategic plan. This plan was completed in April 2020 and is available, along with the Cultural Health Study report, on our website.

Looking ahead to 2020, this year is already filled with unprecedented challenges. With WaMA, 4Culture will continue listening to the hopes, challenges and needs of Washington’s museum field and collaborating on creative opportunities for the field to thrive.

—Chieko T. Phillips, Heritage Program Director, 4Culture
Strategic Plan Development and Current Status

—Richard Beckerman and Luanna Gomez

In October of 2018, the board came together for a facilitated process to develop a Strategic Plan for a three to five year time frame. The board reviewed the current mission statement, and went to produce the plan in response to the question: How do we build on our current success over the next three to five years to improve and deepen our connections to our stakeholders? The process culminated in developing five major initiatives as seen in the plan summary on the next page.

Nearly a year later, in September, a board retreat was held in Yakima. The major component of the retreat was in the spirit of the strategic initiative of Improving Internal Operations by providing board development through training for strengthening organizational performance. Other work done under this initiative has included improved financial reporting and tracking; after the positive financial performance from the 2019 Spokane conference, planning for hiring an executive director over the term of the plan, the Building Financial Growth initiative; and under the Policy Making for Stakeholders initiative, increased advocacy across the state in cooperation with Washington Nonprofits and Inspire Washington. Updating Prior Visioning has initially focused on identifying our values as an organization in the face of dramatic social change and engagement with our members. The board is in ongoing discussions relating to Building Stakeholder Engagement entailing review of content delivery and reconstructing our communications.

At the time of this writing, the Covid-19 pandemic has forced many changes to everyone and every organization. However, WaMA is fortunate to be in a relatively stable financial position at this time. While the cancellation of the June 2020 Conference in Olympia was a tremendous blow, it stands that the conference is a large single source of its revenue, but it is also the single largest source of expenses. WaMA projects it will be able to get by with a modest draw on its reserves while continuing to pursue all funding opportunities.
Strategic Initiatives – Goals

- **Update Prior Visioning** – Over 40 years, WaMA has had several generations of volunteer board members. Every generation of governance faces refreshing and “owning” the vision of the organization in the midst of social change, changes in the economy, and the expectations of contemporary audiences. This initiative is to connect anew with the values embedded in WaMA but values that will be updated in how the organization expresses itself and delivers on its mission in these times.

- **Improving Internal Operations** – Legacy methods of operating WaMA also need refreshing and then documented for future boards to guide their work. Clarifying expectations of how we will operate the organization is a first step, along with the developing the board in exercising their roles, and creating an Annual Implementation Plan to direct efforts and measure progress. This serves the needs of our stakeholders better and will provide more consistency across generations of board membership, and address the longstanding goal to engage an executive director for organizational stability and growth.

- **Build Stakeholder Engagement** – Recognizing that the most touch we have with our stakeholders, and in particular our members, is at the Annual Conference. The rest of the year, there is little contact. This prompted the board’s attention to a more current and dynamic online presence and look into adding regional programming, possibly with the assistance of partner organizations.

- **Build Financial Growth** – Over the past several years WaMA has enjoyed stable finances. Work is already underway to improve financial reporting. This is key, as the WaMA is positioning itself to try new activities, improve communication tools, and hire an Executive Director, and planning for revenue growth is needed.

- **Policy Making for Stakeholders** – In WaMA’s longstanding relationship with the State, we are a resource for policymakers to convey the needs of our constituents. This addresses advocacy, but WaMA can also codify museum standards and best practices for our members. Also, since many of our members are small operations with very limited resources, WaMA desires to help these members understand best human resources practices and compliance requirements.

Implementation Plans

The process used for this retreat creates a framework for board leadership to use in organizing the annual objectives of the organization. It allows for workgroups to work concurrently and report in board meetings their progress, issues, or resource needs.

With board members balancing their time between their paid work and the work requested by WaMA, having a practical range of 3 to 5 years provides flexibility when some initiatives may require more time than anticipated, or free up board resources when a task is completed in less time than expected.

Finally, this work will be reported in our written communications and in process of holding the Annual Meeting, where feedback is regularly sought from WaMA’s membership, informing board leadership in refining the Annual Implementation Plan each year.
WaMA congratulates all the 2020 Awards of Excellence and Conference Scholarship recipients!

We will be recognizing all institutions and individuals at the 2021 WaMA Annual Conference and look forward to celebrating everyone’s great accomplishments at that time. Applications will soon be available for the 2021 Awards of Excellence and Conference Scholarships! Look for more information soon on our website.

**2020 WaMA Awards of Excellence**

**Award of Exhibit Excellence**
Washington State Historical Society
Unpacking McNeil’s Past: The Prison, the Place, the People

**Award of Project Excellence**
MOHAI

Rainy Day History
a podcast by the MOHAI Youth Advisors
visit: https://mohai.org/program/rainy-day-history-podcast/

**Award of Exhibit Excellence**
Kitsap Historical Museum
Beyond Borders: The Indipino Community of Bainbridge Island

**2020 WaMA Scholarship Recipients**

Ellen Ferguson Student Scholarship
Melissa Deszendeffy
Central Washington University

Ellen Ferguson Student Scholarship
Rachel Gassman
Central Washington University

Robert Gruhn Working Professional Scholarship
Rachel Regelein
Southwest Seattle Historical Society

Gus Norwood Volunteer Scholarship
Chrissy Williams
Poulson Museum
The Washington Museum Association would like to recognize the support of several partners and granting agencies making a difference for Washington museums by investing in WaMA.

- WaMA received a $2,500 grant from the Hugh and Jane Ferguson Foundation in 2018 to renew and reposition the Washington Museum Association as a critical tool for supporting both museums and heritage in Washington State.

Disseminating information to the membership in a timely manner and providing meaningful ways for members to network with each other is no longer feasible with the association’s current web platform and communications strategy. Today’s members expect rapid response, more timely information, and a robust web and mobile presence, none of which are possible with the association’s current tools.

Over the past two years, WaMA has surveyed members and audited the website to explore options for integrating new communication tools and strategies. These funds will be applied to the first phase of improvements scheduled for Fall 2020.

- WaMA received $5,000 in NEH emergency funding from Humanities Washington this spring to offset a revised emergency budget deficit, enabling the association to shift immediate priority from revenue losses to member service throughout the emerging COVID-19 crisis.

WaMA provided member service through partnership with the Washington State Historical Society’s Common Concerns program; established a new member affiliation with Washington Nonprofits; communicated free services for museums from several independent consultants; played a more active role in statewide advocacy by participating in data analysis of the Creative and Cultural Economic Recovery Survey organized by 4Culture, and provided comment on small museum needs for the museum sector reopening plan spearheaded by ArtsWA.

Support Business Members that Support WaMA:

- 4Culture
- Daryl Gardner
- Minotaur Mazes
- City of Grandview
- Inspire Washington
- WORKSHOP 3D, LLC
- Sustainable Museums
- Artech Fine Art Services
- Bruce Eldredge Consulting
- Washington State Archives
- Highline Heritage Museum
- Mt. Rainier Scenic Railroad
- Western Museums Association
- Art Work Fine Art Services, Inc.
- NetX Digital Asset Management
- Washington Our Home Consulting
- The Steamer Virginia V Foundation
- Washington State Historical Society
- Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art WSU
- Clark County Historical Society & Museum
- Washington Office of the Secretary of State
- Washington State Housing Finance Commission

The Washington Museum Association wants to thank the contractors who help us get all this work done:

- Andrew Granitto, Happy Hen LLC, Graphic Designer. Andy has been with us since 2004.
- David Lynx, Larson Gallery, Membership Coordinator. David has been with us since 2004.
- Mark Messner, Bivens & Wilson, PPS., Accountant. Mark has been with us since 2017.
MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS ARE MANY...

- Network of people dedicated to museum advocacy, professional standards, clear communication, education, and diversity.
- Reduced registration fee for WaMA annual meeting conference, voting privileges for Board election and WMA direction.
- Museum Messenger newsletter, including articles, reports, photos, calendars, and job listings.
- e-Messenger internet news on important legislative issues, updates, job listings, and other current museum topics.
- WaMA website with a directory of Washington museums, resources, and regional news.

Additional benefits for Institutional Members:
- Expanded website listing.
- Two conference registrations at WaMA rate.

Additional benefits for Business Members:
- An exhibit table at the annual conference.
- Recognition in the WaMA Museum Messenger newsletter.

JOIN TODAY!
(Fill out form at right)

WaMA Membership Application

Please select one of the following membership choices in the Washington Museum Association:

- Personal
  - $20 Individual
  - $10 Student
  - $10 Senior, 62+
  - $10 Patron

- Organizational
  - $30 Institutional (non-profit)
  - $100 Business/Commercial

Name ________________________________ (Mr/Ms/Miss/Mrs or Organization Name)
Title ________________________________
Address ________________________________
City ___________________ State _______ Zip __________
Phone ___________ FAX ________________
email ________________________________

For Organizational members, please name Representative to act as voting agent and who will receive the WaMA mailings:
(Mr/Ms/Miss/Mrs) ________________________________ (Title) ________________________________

Payment:
$ ___________ Membership dues
$ ___________ Additional tax deductible contribution
$ ___________ TOTAL (Check payable to WaMA)

By selecting a higher category of membership or giving a contribution in addition to your membership, you promote the Association’s goals. Thank you for your support!

Please mail your information and check to:
WaMA Membership Coordinator
P. O. Box 10633, Yakima, WA  98909

(Please mail your information and check to:
WaMA Membership Coordinator
P. O. Box 10633, Yakima, WA  98909)