Letter from the Chair

Dear ARLIS Midstates Members,

Our October 2nd meeting at the Milwaukee Art Museum was both productive and provoking. Approximately 30 members of VRA Midwest and ARLIS Midstates attended, and we spent most of the day in a room situated at the ‘bridge’ of Calatrava’s stunning building. The day started with (Archivision-sponsored) refreshments from a local coffee roaster, along with a large group discussion about where our professions and associations are headed and how we can better work together to meet our communities’ needs. After lunch, the ARLIS and VRA groups split for our respective chapter meetings. Minutes from our meeting are forthcoming, but highlights include a decision to move our website (now relocated to http://midstates.arlisna.org/) and listserv, some proposed bylaws changes (see website), and the decision to have TEI (ARLIS/NA’s new management company) collect our chapter dues. Part of this last decision was agreement that the chapter would have only one level of membership ($20 annually), which meant eliminating the discounted student category; we resolved to seek other ways to help student members. As a result of the decisions made at the meeting, you should find both ARLIS/NA and ARLIS Midstates membership renewals easier in 2010.

Sometime around December 1st, you’ll be asked to vote for both new chapter officers and on proposed changes to our bylaws. If you have been remiss in renewing your 2009 chapter membership (17 people on our listserv have not renewed this year), please do so now. See the chapter website for details.

The articles in this edition of our newsletter are representative of the commitment, collegiality, and services that characterize our profession. Thanks to all who contributed, and to everyone who worked on the Indy conference, our Fall meeting, and the chapter’s committees these past few months.

ARLIS Midstates will meet next sometime during the ARLIS/NA 38th Annual Conference in Boston, April 23-26, 2010. Our Fall 2010 meeting will be held in Ann Arbor, Michigan. I hope to see you all there.

Regards,
Marc Gartler
Chair, ARLIS/NA Midstates Chapter
In the mid 1980s, I first met Ursula when she walked into my office to ask me about entering library school to pursue art librarianship. She had come to the U.S. with her husband, Laurence Lampert, while he pursued his doctorate at I.U. Her background was in the German book trade and I knew this experience combined with her language and humanities skills and a lively, intelligent personality would make her a dynamic asset to our profession.

Ursula completed her degree in 1986 and I urged her to take a half-time position at the Indianapolis Museum of Art Library knowing that their head librarian at the time was near retirement and that the challenges of planning a new library would be an exciting opportunity for a new librarian. Within two years, Ursula became head of the IMA Library and rapidly began bringing up automated systems at the IMA. Indeed, as I recall her telling me—the Library was the first department to have email and internet access in the Museum. She also worked passionately to develop the collections and to have them catalogued—creating a relationship with the Indianapolis-Marion County Public Library that allowed her library to have access to OCLC cataloging copy and to input IMA Library records into this expanding international database. Her outreach to the curatorial staff and the community set new standards for professional and library accomplishments and she began to work ceaselessly on the planning of a new library which she was able to see through to its opening in the past several years.

Throughout her career, she and I regularly communicated about her ideas for the expansion of reference services and outreach to the IMA curators, her collaborative cataloguing initiatives with the IMCPL, and years of challenges demanded of her as she planned a new library. Her energy and commitment to the profession meant she would become active in ARLIS/NA as well as our Midstates Chapter serving as an officer in both organizations.

Ursula also shared a dream with me to have an annual ARLIS/NA conference in Indianapolis. We began planning for this conference at the beginning of the new century but we knew the ideal time would be when the expansion of the IMA was completed. Ursula and I were the original Co-Chairs for this conference which excelled under the new Co-Chairs, Eileen Fry and Tony White for Programs, and Sonja Staum and Alba Fernández-Keys for Local Arrangements. I told her about the great success of this conference and how very much we appreciated her hard work during its planning.

Given the trials of her final year, Ursula’s grace, intelligence, strength, compassion, and good humor never ceased to amaze me. She touched my life in so many ways—as a superb student, an honored colleague, and as my dear friend.

B. J. Kish Irvine,
Librarian Emeritus, Former Fine Arts Librarian, Indiana University, and Associate Professor School of Fine Arts/History of Art and School of Library & Information Science

I first met Ursula the day I arrived in Indianapolis to interview for a librarian position at the Indianapolis Museum of Art. For the next nine years, Ursula was my supervisor, mentor, colleague, and, friend. I am thankful to have worked under her guidance for so many years as she taught me so much
about this profession.

I will always remember Ursula for her passion for life and her caring personality. Her knowledge of food and plants was outstanding. I always knew who to ask if I needed a suggestion on where to take out-of-town visitors to dinner. Her tofu lemon pie is now a staple in my home and nobody, as she would always say, would even suspect the recipe is completely vegan! Everyday when I walk to my car I see the beautiful Echinacea plants that she gave me when I first bought my house.

Ursula’s vision helped make our collection what it is now and her influence will remain a part of this library and of those of us who were lucky to work with her.

Alba Fernández-Keys
Acting Head of Libraries and Archives
Indianapolis Museum of Art

Ursula and I met for the first time in 1998. I was introduced to her by an acquaintance, who was a docent at the Indianapolis Museum of Art at the time, because I had decided to get a degree in Library Science and become an art librarian. While I was in school I did some observing at the IMA library plus an internship, but we really became friends and started doing things together after we ran into each other a couple of times in the neighborhood where we both lived. Ursula had a very bubbly personality, and maintaining friendships was very important to her; she would often call at the end of the week to make plans for the weekend to go out to dinner or to a movie and go for a walk in the neighborhood with her newly acquired Scottish terrier LuLu. Ursula also liked to go on trips, and I have wonderful memories of the times that we went together to New York, to see the Gates Project by her favorite artist Christo, and to Martha’s Vineyard. (Both trips were her idea.) At the same time, she also was a mentor to me, and we occasionally roomed together during ARLIS conferences or Chapter meetings.

Once she got ill, her friends remained an important part of her life. She was always very courageous, stoic almost, and we tried to make the best of it: we started watching Netflix movies at her home, did some walking, and went to an occasional exhibition or performance.

I feel very fortunate to have had her as a friend and to have, together with her other friends, been a part of that last year of her life.

Kitty Jansen
Librarian
Eiteljorg Museum, Indianapolis, Indiana

I consider myself one of the lucky ones who knew Ursula Kolmstetter as both a colleague and a dear friend. Although she had at first been an acquaintance, sharing the kind of once a year connections that we often enjoy during our annual conferences, our friendship deepened in 2001 when we both served on the ARLIS/NA Board as “Regional Representatives.” Having similar Board responsibilities and being “newbies” together, we found ourselves turning to each to compare notes, exchange ideas, and for moral support. Once we got our feet on the ground and began to really participate in Board discussions and decisions, Ursula’s knowledge of art, as well as her professional
experience and vision contributed greatly to the work of the Board. She was articulate and direct in her observations and always very energetic and practical in her suggestions. Strong in determination and yet gentle in presentation, she often softened discussions with her twinkling wit.

As roommates for almost every conference since our work on the Board, I got to know Ursula as a friend. Her outside passions included travel, remodeling her house and both designing and working in her garden. Although I never had a chance to see these, we talked about them often. Her passion for art and beautiful design was visible to all, clearly evident in the colorful, minimalist clothing, watches, and handbags that she wore. As she unpacked her suitcase each new item reflected her international sense of design and color. And who could forget those leather outfits? Although Ursula was not there last year during the ARLIS conference, when we visited the “Design” gift shop at the Indianapolis Museum of Art, I could just imagine her appreciation of those beautifully crafted objects.

Besides her knowledge and experience, elegance and sense of style, I will also remember Ursula for her warmth, gentleness, generosity, and grace. Who could not feel touched by her poise and charm, even in the simplest of encounters? Although Ursula was at times a very private person, this made her friendship even more of a gift. If I sit quietly and think back on the many nights we stayed up too late talking about everything, I can still hear her magical laughter. Ursula, you are greatly missed.

Laurie Whitehill Chong
Special Collections Librarian
Fleet Library at RISD

Ursula brightened every occasion. She expressed her aesthetic sense of fashion, art and the art of living in so many things she did. Lunch at her house for her library staff was an occasion for lemonade, beet salad with goat cheese and, for dessert, vanilla ice cream with fresh blackberries and nocello sprinkled on top. Of course, we all remember her clothes -- not many people can carry off polka dot tights, but they looked great on Ursula.

When we went to visit her over the difficult year of her illness and treatment, she was still unfailingly hospitable, offering coffee and treats. One of the last times Ursula came to visit us at Stout Library, she brought us a gorgeous bouquet of flowers. When describing actions that are poised, gracious, and artful, we say, “that is so Ursula.”

Shelley Quattrocchi
Cataloger & Technical Services Librarian
Indianapolis Museum of Art

I first had the great fortune to meet Ursula as she was finishing library school and looking at a position with the library at the Indianapolis Museum of Art. I was a young professional as well, only a few years into my first professional job with the museum library at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, IL. We corresponded frequently regarding museum library issues. Then, circumstance brought me to Indianapolis in 1994. The bond between Ursula and I continued to grow. Our friendship deepened as we continued to support each other professionally and personally, from working collaboratively on ARLIS/NA and ARLIS-Midstates Committees to various projects between the IMA Library and the Herron Art Library, and attending local cultural events. Spending time with Ursula whether professionally or personally always brightened my day. Ursula’s love for life, quick wit, unending warmth and charm, strong commitment to the profession, and great concern for others’ well being was inspiring. Even as she struggled with her illness, she was committed to making time for her friends. Ursula would call just to say hello and check in on ‘life’...I will always remember her grace, charm, wit, strength, and infectious laughter - I can hear her voice the phone, ‘Sonja, let’s do lunch’...I miss my dear friend and valued colleague.

Sonia Staum
Director
Herron Art Library, IUPUI
A Reminiscence from your 2009
Indianapolis Conference Co-Chairs

It will surprise very few of you to hear that, after months of constant emails, phone calls, deadlines, and sleepless nights, your 2009 co-chairs could happily have lived the rest of their lives without every hearing the word “conference” again! It was delicious to return to our normal jobs and a normal inbox with normal messages in normal numbers. I’m certain many of you felt the same way.

The strain of putting on the conference, and the consequent relief when it went off virtually without a hitch, created a sort of blissful amnesia. It’s only now, when we see our Boston colleagues announcing their conference web page and this year’s “Letter from the President” that we can start to look back fondly on our conference and all the wonderful people who helped make it a success.

There were times last year, around Thanksgiving and again in March, when we wondered if we would even be able to have the conference. The CPAC planning group went through a lot of “worst case” scenarios, as we heard of more and more librarians who had had their travel funding for the year cut, or even worse, had lost their jobs. We were not at all sure that “if we built it,” our colleagues and exhibitors would come. When our initial registrations were looking low, we took an idea from the headlines and came up with a “stimulus package” which, along with great promotional shout-outs and the collegial “Top Ten ways to be Arlisian” created the positive, upbeat atmosphere that characterized our Indycon. We did build it, and they did come.

The four of us cannot begin to thank all of our Midstates colleagues enough for the effort and enthusiasm you contributed toward making our conference the success it was. Our webpage, blog and program were excellent; the hospitality desk was a model of friendliness and efficiency, the tours and workshops were popular and well-attended; the social events were outstanding; our plenary speakers and panelists were challenging and inspiring; the exhibits hall was lively with vendors, poster sessions, and the Web Kiosk, and thanks in large part to the generosity of Archivision, our Silent Auction was one of our most successful fundraising events ever. Even Indianapolis itself cooperated and spared us rain for most of the week.

We would like to offer a special thank-you to our colleagues on the Conference Planning Committee, to Terrie Wilson, who did such a sterling job producing our Conference Proceedings (http://www.arlisna.org/news/conferences/2009/proceed_index.html) despite the illness which kept her from being at the conference itself; to Lynn Korenic for all her post-conference budget duties; and of course, to Sue Rawlyk, our inveterate conference manager, without whom we simply would not have had a conference.

So Kudos to ARLIS/Midstates. We did ourselves proud!

Alba Fernández-Keys, Eileen Fry, Sonja Staum, and Tony White
2009 ARLIS/NA Conference Co-Chairs
Archivision Gives Free Images to Meeting Attendees

Archivision generously offered 92 free images of the Milwaukee Art Museum’s Quadracci Pavilion by Santiago Calatrava to attendees of the fall ARLIS/Midstates and VRA Midwest joint chapter meeting on October 2, 2009. The images, and accompanying metadata, were posted online for attendees to download and add to their institutions’ image collections.

For more information on these images or Archivision, contact Susan Jane Williams, Independent Cataloging and Consulting Services, Sales Representative, Archivision, Inc., susan@archivision.com, 812-272-1896.

Archivision web site: www.archivision.com

2009 Bunce Travel Award Winner Nicole Beatty

By Nicole Beatty, Branch Library Coordinator, Fine Arts Library, IU

The Midstates Chapter Travel Award is given annually in honor of William C. Bunce who served as the Director of the Kohler Art Library at the University of Wisconsin-Madison from 1966 to 1999. The award provides funding for a Midstates member to attend the ARLIS/NA annual conference. Nicole Beatty was the recipient of the 2009 travel award.

Bunce, the Branch Library Coordinator at the Fine Arts Library, Indiana University, Bloomington, is an active Midstates Chapter member. She served on the Web Team for the 2009 ARLIS/NA conference in Indianapolis, maintaining the conference web page, and also assisted with one of the workshops at the conference.

In her own words, Beatty describes her experience at the conference:

Being selected as the William C. Bunce Travel Award winner allowed me to attend the 37th annual ARLIS/NA Conference, in Indianapolis. I feel so grateful to have had the opportunity to go to the conference. I tried to have my first ARLIS/NA experience be as well rounded as possible. I attended the Visual Resources Division Meeting which gave me a broader perspective on how Visual Resource departments are changing. I was further able to participate in the conference by helping with the Mashups workshop and presenting a mashup that I created as well as volunteering to work the silent auction finale, which was also exciting and fun!

I went to the session called Reaching Out and Bringing In: Understanding and Encouraging Diversity in the Library and listened as Meredith Kahn described making reference services more accessible and inclusive by taking them to architecture students. I also got tips from Dorothy Tao on how to make the library more inclusive, and learned about Pnina Shachaf’s fascinating study which asked the question: Are digital reference services color blind? I also attended the session on Women Artists and Technology: Strategies for Capturing the Cyber-Feminist Voice, where I witnessed podcasting being incorporated into a presentation and heard Arezoo Moseni’s unique vision on her library and on her artwork. I also learned about the digital resources, issues, dedication, and need for documenting The Woman’s Building. Both talks helped to solidify my belief that oral histories are important for everything, including librarianship. I explored Image Copyright in the Digital World, a topic that is especially relevant to my job as an image cataloger.

I also attended the session called Hot and Bothered: Erotica in the Library and Museum Context. I am very impressed with the missions of the Kinsey Institute for Research in Sex, Gender, and Reproduction, the Tom of Finland Foundation Library, and the Leather Archive in Chicago. This made me think about how libraries really are a vital part of people’s lives and how communities can be preserved in safe, and open minded environments through archives of their material culture.

I also took part in the conference networking program. I had a great mentor, Suzanna Seymour, and I was really impressed with the program. My mentor introduced me to many people, explained things about ARLIS/NA that I did not understand, and gave me encouragement to pursue my goals.

While there are so many other experiences that I wish I could discuss, those are some of the highlights. I appreciate all of the advice that I received from librarians and will certainly think of it throughout my career. Being able to go to the conference gave me a good sense of what is happening not only in the fields of art and architecture librarianship but also with visual resources librarianship. I was able to hear different perspectives on innovative library services, timely copyright issues, and see how digital resources can be integrated into presentations as well as used to preserve important artists, collections, and oral histories. I look forward to attending the Boston conference in 2010!
Motivated by the unfortunately-growing number of VRA and ARLIS members who recently have been either laid off or forced into retirement because of our current harsh economic times, Maureen Burns, Leigh Gates and Margaret Webster have established both a Google Group and a related LinkedIn Group named “The Transitions” to provide a forum for visual resource or art library professionals who, for whatever reason, are in transition in their careers. The Google Group will provide a private environment while the contents of the LinkedIn Group will be publicly visible to anyone who wishes to access it. The hope is that these sites will be used to discuss issues of concern, share experiences, post documents of interest, keep in touch with professional colleagues, and to gain access to relevant resources. It is anticipated that these groups will develop organically and take shape in ways which will provide practical career management information and emotional support to those who choose to join.

Initially posted on the Google Group site is an Online Resources page where useful links are listed for job searching, volunteer opportunities and networking. Also posted are some professional opportunities which had not appeared on VRA_L or ARLIS_L and an ongoing discussion of what makes an effective CV or resume.

Both the VRA and the ARLIS/NA Executive Boards have agreed to support these efforts, and a web presence and an open invitation to join should appear soon on their respective websites. After the initial invitation to members of both organizations was made in early August, over 20 people joined The Transitions. These members included those who have retired, been laid off, or are actively searching for professional or volunteer positions. It is hoped that participation in these groups will encourage those who, for whatever reason, are going through a career transition to remain active and vital within their profession. As a group member one will be able to engage in discussions, add and edit documents, invite new members, and connect with colleagues.

In order to preserve member privacy, it is asked that anyone interested in joining the Google Group inquire directly to the members listed below. It is hoped that VRA and ARLIS/NA members will spread the word to both former and current colleagues who might benefit from participation.

Maureen Burns moaburns@gmail.com
Leigh Gates lgates59@rcn.com
Margaret Webster mnw3@cornell.edu

A version of this article appeared in Images, The newsletter of the VRA, October 2009 vol. 6, no. 5. Reprinted with permission of the authors.
Treasurer’s Update as of September 30, 2009

By Kitty Jansen, Treasurer

Expenses since 11/1/2009: $250 taken from both accounts for this year’s Bunce Travel Award, for a total of $500, plus a $300 donation for the 2009 conference Welcome Party and $42.50 for the Silent Auction basket, for a total of $842.50.

Income since 1/1/2009: $500 from 22 regular memberships and 6 student memberships.

Reminder: If you haven’t already renewed your membership for 2009 you may still do so.

For the renewal form and full, updated treasurer’s reports, see the chapter website: http://midstates.arlisna.org/

Current balance Bunce Account: $1300
Current balance ARLIS/NA Midstates Account: $1803.79
Current number of members: 37

News from the Chapters Liaison

By Vanessa Kam, Chapters Liaison

It’s an honor for me to contribute this entry to your newsletter! The ARLIS/NA Executive Board had its mid-year meeting on September 24-25 at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. The meeting confirmed just how vibrant members of ARLIS/NA and its chapters are! One of the most exciting things we discussed was the upcoming annual conference in Boston, April 23-26, 2010. The call for papers format has resulted in what will most likely be very dynamic and compelling sessions! The hotel looks divine and the food will be ample and scrumptious. All of that plus networking with your divine colleagues equals a fantastic conference! I hope that you all can come and that you spread the word!

Speaking of spreading the word about ARLIS/NA and the benefits of membership, Darin Murphy, Librarian at the W. Van Alan Clark Library at the School of the Museum of Fine Arts, put together an eloquent call to chapter membership. Given that just about every chapter is concerned about membership in these difficult economic times, I thought I’d share with you some strategies that Darin has for not only maintaining chapter membership, but boosting it. I quote:

“The economic downturn is certainly affecting our profession locally, nationally, and internationally. While many individuals and institutions have felt the worst of it already, there continue to be new occurrences of art library reductions and closings posted on ARLIS-L. With this in mind I would like to remind everyone of the tremendous value of professional communications with our peers and ask that each of you not only renew your memberships again this year but encourage the folks you work with to do the same. Also, please consider volunteering to serve on the board once nominations are being sought.

Recently, while lunching with an ARLIS friend and colleague, I was asked why her library employees should join the local or national organization. It is a good question. While it might not be for everyone, membership, or more accurately, professional development within ARLIS can save us all the task of reinventing the wheel. A brief conversation on the phone with an ARLIS colleague can be informative, helpful, and often delightfully entertaining. It can also save your institution time and money. Additionally, especially with budget cuts affecting so many art libraries, membership can also be a way to remain committed to the field, committed to our network of colleagues, and provide us with a means to advocate for our profession, together.”

To add to Darin’s inspiring words, other strategies for revitalizing chapter memberships include making your presence known at any local library schools and reaching out to MLIS students. ARLIS/NA chapters offer great mentoring opportunities for students considering a career in art libraries and visual resource centres. Plus the chapters benefit from having the energy and ideas of new members still in library school and closest to the cutting edge of library scholarship/emerging technologies, and more!

TEI, our new management firm, has worked hard to ensure a smooth transition to their services. Should you have any questions about chapter websites, dues collection, or other services that TEI has offered to chapters, please don’t hesitate to contact me.

Because of economic hardship and its detrimental effect on travel budgets, some chapters will be holding their meetings virtually this year. The ARLIS/NA Executive Board members will be participating in some of these virtual meetings and is keenly interested in the technology used at these meetings. Speaking for myself, I’m curious to see if other chapters could benefit from the technologies used and if they might have even wider uses within ARLIS/NA. I’ll keep you posted on what I find!

Have a question or comment to pass along to the board? Please don’t hesitate to get in touch: dvanessa.kam@ubc.ca
Local Color: A Database of Art on the UM Campus

By Jamie Lausch, University Library Associate, University of Michigan Art, Architecture and Engineering Library

How many times have you walked by that interesting print in the hallway at work and wondered about it? Here at the University of Michigan, the campus is overflowing with art; most of it on display in places outside formal galleries and museums. There’s a Rauschenberg on the second floor of the School of Social Work, and prints by Jim Dine and Judy Pfaff in the Computer Science and Engineering (CSE) building. Though the holdings of the University’s museums are well documented and digitized, this everyday art on campus is not.

This summer I began a project with Annette Haines, Art and Design Librarian at AAEL, to create Local Color, a searchable database of art on the University’s campus. After a conversation with a staffer at the Library’s Digital Library Production Services department, which provides access to digital collections across U-M, we decided to use Flickr to build our tool. Flickr is straightforward to use, attractive, functional and, best of all, a built-in database. Flickr allows us to create sets of images, which function like folders. Each building on campus can have its own set, and the images within can be tagged with description information and geotagged with GPS coordinates to give precise locations for use on a map. We can also use machine tags (machine-readable tags) to assign data to images that could later be used in a new application, such as a web interface for searching or even uploading content to the collection.

We’ve put together a set with some sample content from the nearby CSE building to establish standards and to work out the kinks, and we’re nearing the fun part: getting out and documenting the art lurking in hallways all around Ann Arbor. As we populate Local Color, we’ll be blogging about it on AAEL’s News & Events blog (http://mblog.lib.umich.edu/aael/), posting sneak peaks of the newest images, as well as promoting it to our students and faculty on our subject guides. We’re looking forward to the response!

Examples from the database.

MACDG

The Midwestern Art Cataloging Discussion Group (MACDG) is a loosely organized group of librarians who meet two to three times a year. Anyone interested in art and architecture or visual resources cataloging is welcome to attend.

The next meeting will be held at the Northwestern University Library in Evanston, Illinois, Friday, November 13, 2009. Please join us for a conversation about art cataloging and visual resources issues and a visit to the Block Museum of Art! For more information or to add your name to the group’s mailing list please contact the current president, Laurie Chipps, at lchipps@artic.edu.

New Collection at BSU

Ball State University’s Architecture Library now offers the Architecture Building Material Samples Collection. This growing collection is comprised of samples of innovative and sustainable materials. Housed in the library’s Visual Resources Center (VRC), the samples are cataloged and searchable in the University Libraries online catalog, CardCat. For more information on the collection, see the VRC web site: http://www.bsu.edu/library/collections/archvrc/.

Chapter Website Address

The ARLIS/Midstates website is now hosted through the ARLIS/NA management firm, TEI, Inc. The new address is: http://midstates.arlisna.org/

Want to contribute to the next issue of the Midstates Newsletter? Send your news items to Amy Trendler at aetrendler@bsu.edu

Member News