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**Field Services Alliance**  
Annual Meeting  
Rochester, NY  
September 9, 2008

## **REPORTS**

### Introductions and agency reports

- Stacy Klinger and Jeff Harris, (IN), 26<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the field service office. Reported that funding is being cut for about 1/3 of museums in the state and as a result many small museums are merging;
- Don Zuris (TX) will talk about leadership in history awards later in the agenda;
- JD Britton (OH) recalled how the local history office at the Ohio Historical society formed in 1981 by Gary Nexx in partnership with OHSM to do field services for the state and now accomplishes these same goals through annual regional meetings, workshops, strategic planning, etc. JD will retire from OHS and continue to lead the markers program.
- Laura Ketchum (NC) does workshops, History Day, and just started teacher institutes. She works on a shoestring budget.
- Helen B. Louise, SD State Historical Society, reports that they are in the early stages of developing field services office in the state. There are a lot of newer small museums in pole barns and their volunteer staffs need training to “save the history”.
- Bethany Hawkins (AASLH) is responsible for AASLH workshops, awards, annual meeting, Dispatch and History News and will share more later in the meeting.
- Terry Jackson (AASLH) handles the bookshelf, and will share more later in the meeting.
- Myers Brown, (TN) shared that the Tennessee State Museum is doing a statewide survey to see the condition of the collections in museums, county and regional archives, and university archives. He will share the results as he knows more.
- David Grabitske (MN) of the Minnesota Historical Society; reports seeing lots of cuts in government for historical organizations and looks like it will get worse due to state budget short fall. He conducting a survey of collections with an IMLS grant support.
- Laura Casey (TX) reports that the Texas Historical Commission has been working with museums in the state since the 1960s (550 museums in 284 counties); hosts training workshops, partners with other organizations, administers an annual grant program. They are currently finishing AASLH standards pilot program and a \$200,000 Preserve America grant to do training workshops and training webcasts both audio and video. They will host 60 training workshops in next three years; doing a needs assessment for museums and archives in the state and will expand the workshop curriculum as needed
- Jody Blankenship (OH) of the Ohio Historical Society, operates History Day, and professional development for teachers and students
- Scott Carrlee (AK) reported that the Alaska State Museum has 7 ½ million dollars to do the planning for expanding the state museum archives, including a CTC grant to hire a part time person to facilitate locating archives and historical collections from tribes, churches, and cities. “Archives Rescue Core” is a grass roots program to see the needs of collections and eventually to do training workshops. He is finishing the Performance Management survey pilot for AASLH; participating in the standards project for AASLH with a positive response from 6 museums that participated. He received a leadership grant to fund an internship program with 6 interns placed around the state with mentors to work with the interns
- Carol Harsh (SITES) shared briefly about the Museum on Main Street program.
- Kathy Dixon, Georgia Museum Association, reports that they are facing sever budget cuts. They currently have approximately 150 members.
- Nicole Hayes (ICA), a regional conservation center in Cleveland, hired 2 years ago to start an education and outreach program. She hosted a “Preserving our Cultural Heritage” workshop series and gives advise for grant

writing

- Claudia Berg, State Historical Society of North Dakota, develops small exhibitions that go to small facilities about state specific topics and the local museums augment them with collections. They partner with IMLS, MIND, state parks, and state archives to serve small museums in the state. She reports exciting times due to oil money in the state which has funded re-grant support for museums including capital improvements to buildings. There are new people working in museums that came from the business world, and have started some creative partnerships, workshops and technical assistance programs.
- Eric Taylor, 4Culture, Seattle, WA, administers the lodging tax for the county and provides funding for heritage organizations. Hosts heritage collections care and technical assistance workshops; hopes to work with University of Washington museum studies program to place interns; gives out approximately \$1M a year in grants.
- Keith Petersen, Idaho State Historical Society, due to the Lewis and Clark commemoration, the state supported 11 museums along the trail; administers grants for the state to fund historical societies and museums
- Susan Blakley (AIC-Cert), West Lake Conservators, provides training for emergencies and disasters; 202-661-8068 hot line, [aic-faic.org](http://aic-faic.org). They were deployed in Iowa during the flood. Trained to work with FEMA; a free program working with Heritage Preservation to assist in the care and rescue of the collections; provides a salvage report that is required by FEMA.
- Terry Abrams (NY) WHIT AHA, membership of small museums; provides workshops and training for small museums
- Cheri Cook (AASLH)
- Kim Andrews, Conservation Center for Art and History

Minutes approved, Jeff Harris; Myers Brown seconded corrections

#### Committee Reports –

##### **Program** (Jody Blankenship)

Submitted “Ask FSA” articles for Dispatch; completed survey of museums

##### **Professional Practices** (Jerome Thompson)

No report

##### **Membership** (Laura Casey)

FSA list continues to be strong and active; 12 new subscribers

John Harris keeps FS-list operating; personal greeting when new people join

##### **Communications** (Carol Harsh)

Working to define and better articulate the role of the committee

##### **Advocacy** (Melissa Davis)

No report

##### **Technology**

Working to keep the website updated

General discussion about reports:

JD Britton stressed the importance of articulating the core values of the FSA and circulating them in a variety of ways

#### Executive Summary of Small Museum Needs, AASLH Small Museum Committee (Stacy Klingler)

The AASLH small museums committee began in 2004. They gathered info for needs assessment of small museums and want to determine what resources there are in the field that can address these needs and provide services for small museums. Want to develop a national resource list, maybe in partnership with FSA or other organizations, to identify workshops and training opportunities, electronic resources and expertise of staff. They are looking for a gateway to provide services to small museums; will send a note on FS-list. If states share this information between states it could streamline efforts and training opportunities. The need for training is huge and this sort of collaborative effort fits in the model of the museum assessment program

#### AASLH Awards Program Committee (Don Zuris)

Hard working committee; will give a session about the awards process and how to apply through case studies; awards can give recognition that can parlay into additional funding. Deadline is March 2, 2009; application on the AASLH website; work with state team leaders to put the application together along with critical review; applications are vetted by state team, sent to regional chairs for review, and then the committee reviews them. They meet in Nashville for a couple of days of intense

reading, debate, discussion and voting. The culmination is the AASLH awards banquet (75% - 80% coming to receive their award). The WOW award was established a few years ago and only given at the discretion of the committee. The award of distinction is given to individuals who have given over and above for the field of local history. FSA offices should encourage people to apply for the award and help provide a critical review of proposals.

#### AASLH report (Bethany Hawkins)

- 2009 professional development opportunities (doing exhibition makeovers about how small organizations can update their exhibits; museum 101; planning purpose-driving programs; historic house museums issues and operations). Expanding their on-line workshops (archives; board development; going green webinar—three 75 minute sessions live with conference call and website; volunteers; 7 steps for successful volunteer recruitment program) looking for new ideas that tie into the standards either on line or on site
- Annual meeting blog on AASLH website; people will talk to meeting participants about the theme; sessions will be on website as a pod-cast
- AASLH will be early next year, August 25-29, 2009 in Indianapolis
- Connecting to Collections-- IMLS and Nancy Rogers will be doing a session about collections care
- 845 sets of living collections publications have been giving away; there will be a third round of non-living collections publications; winners are posted on IMLS website; visit [www.aaslh.org/bookshelf](http://www.aaslh.org/bookshelf) to apply between Jan 5 – March 9, 2009
- New affinity group, Visitors Voices, has been established for people interested in audience research and evaluation
- Standards program supported by IMLS, since October 2005, teams of people across the country have developed the materials; the project will be launched in June 2009; will cost \$150 for a museum to join and receive the materials. Program helps museums find out about the standards for excellence and procedures to follow to achieve professional excellence. Teams of people worked together to develop self assessment questions and performance indicators.; Pilot project ends this month, followed by evaluation process. FSA offices and state museums associations can participate by putting press releases in newsletters, use standards project as foundation for making suggestions for improvement and help plan workshops and seminars; will include info for boards of directors to help them understand why this is important; materials will be given to FSA offices

#### Discussion about FSA: A Twentieth Anniversary History by Tom McKay.

JD led the discussion and encouraged FSA to form a history committee to add new information as we move into the future. It is interesting to see how FSA has evolved. We may need to have a three paragraph summary of the history to put on the same page as the core values.

Motion made by JD that we record a special note of thanks to Tom McKay for his work in preparing this report. Cherie Cook seconded the motion.

#### Winter meeting.

February 22-24, 2009 in Jackson, MS. Cindy Gardner will host the meeting.

- IRS Oversight of Charities
- Insurance plans for small organizations
- Recognizing organizational behavior

#### **OLD BUSINESS**

None

#### **NEW BUSINESS**

Jeff Harris raised an issue about the FSA website. FSA website resides on AASLH server and updates need to be sent to Bethany at AASLH to be posted. It is a cumbersome process. A link on the AASLH website directly to FSA website should be developed. Jeff and AASLH staff will explore avenues to streamline this effort.

Myers moved and Cherie seconded a motion to reflect our gratitude, esteem and best wishes to JD for his years of service to FSA.

**Meeting adjourned.**

Summary of Surveys for 10 score project

Discussed the FSA Museum 10 Score Project piloted in 5 states and 55 museums. David reviewed the results. Scott was pleased how far the measure has come, but questioned how difficult it was to administer, far more complex and subjective than originally intended. He recommends that the survey be sent to organizations that are new to the field services office. David visited 25 organizations and interviewed them to complete the survey. Jeff thought this could be something that could track year to year the progress made by an organization. JD questioned to subjective nature of the answers. FSA officers need to have one-on-one discussions with museums. Branding score was very telling about success of the organization. Decision made to continue to work on it and fine tune it as an effective tool for field services officers. Scott thanked David for his hard work on the project.