



LOGBOOK

The Newsletter of the Cayman Islands National Museum

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Vision: A Museum Beyond Walls

“The past is a source of knowledge, and the future is a source of hope. Love of the past implies faith in the future.”

—Stephen Ambrose

Most museums define their purpose using words such as “an educational and cultural institution.” They speak about “acquiring, displaying, and preserving artefacts, documents and records.”

And that is also true of the Cayman Islands National Museum. However, Chair of the Museum Board Harris McCoy articulates a much more poignant and far-reaching role for the Islands’ museum, using words such as “identity,” “pride,” and “belonging.”

And with the imminent re-launch of the Cayman Islands Museum in the first quarter of 2009, at no time in history is the

Museum more conscious of its role as the keeper of the Islands’ cultural identity. At no time is it more focused on reflecting the pride and sense of belonging of all who live here.

To achieve these overarching goals, says Mr. McCoy, the Museum must aspire to a vision that takes it beyond its walls – a vision to connect with the people – all the people who live here.

“The Museum is only as effective as its connectivity with the community,” he said,

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Trustees and Members of the Board on stairs to the balcony of the Museum: front, from left, Chair Harris McCoy, Board Member Eziethamae Ebanks, and Trustee Linton Tibbetts. Centre row, from left, Trustee William Forsyth, Deputy Director Barnes-Tabora (partially hidden), and then-Museum Director Anita Ebanks. Rear, from left, Project Director Tommy Ebanks, Deputy Director Doss Solomon, Board Member Simon Palmer, and Ministry of Culture Assistant Secretary Joel Francis, Board Member.

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adding: “The Museum belongs to all of the people – as culture and heritage emerge from the substance of our lives. The Museum represents us – all of us.”

And that, the Chairman says, means that the Museum must strive to engage and represent all sectors of the community. That is a particularly pressing goal, given the Islands’ history as home to a range of nationalities that have and are contributing to the culture and way of life.

“We must welcome people from all walks of life, and from all cultural origins, who have come to call the Cayman Islands home, whether temporarily or permanently,” said Chair McCoy.

Among initiatives that will contribute to this is the emuseum initiative (see sidebar

story) that will enable everyone in the Cayman Islands and beyond to enjoy the range of Museum assets. It will seek to gain a greater sense of identity and cultural awareness through such involvement.

In line with that, Mr. McCoy said that enhancing the pool of professional expertise was another important objective.

“We are all today creating the history of the future,” Chair McCoy reminds. “How well we articulate today’s story will determine the sense of identity and history that future generations will inherit.”

Everyone needs to work and aspire together to enable future generations to inherit that greater sense of identity, pride and belonging, he said.

■ END

Technology – The Wave of the Future

In yet another community outreach effort, the eMuseum project will be launched at November’s “soft” opening.

“Come November, everyone – within Cayman and global interests – will be able to interact with the Museum by logging onto our website and linking to descriptions of all Museum exhibits and artefacts,” says Board Chair Harris McCoy. He explained that at any given time descriptions of 200 of the 8,000 artefacts would be accessible on the website, which would feature artefacts on a revolving basis.

Through this avenue, the population can provide feedback to the Museum’s management team. However, achieving this objective is more than a practical matter of assisting the Museum, says Mr. McCoy. It is important as a matter of ethical practice that the population be encouraged to explore collections for inspiration, learning and enjoyment.

The Museum will therefore be doing everything possible to encourage the population to take advantage of this resource as a step towards personal enrichment, he said.

It is also part of good ethical practice that as an institution the Museum consults and involves communities, users and supporters.

Of course, such interconnectedness is as valuable to the Museum as it is to the population in terms of achieving more broad-based grounding in the culture: “If people are not connected with their past, they feel a sense of isolation and, ultimately, alienation.”

So just as the rest of the world is resorting to technology to build person-to-person connectivity in an increasingly complex world, the Museum will be seeking to build societal relationships through technology.

“Our ultimate goal is therefore to build overall cohesion with the help of a society that is involved and in harmony with the Museum’s goals and achievements.”

Mr. McCoy invites anyone wishing to become a member of the Museum to volunteer or otherwise contribute to Museum development by emailing membership@museum.ky or info@museum.ky.

The Museum’s website is accessible at www.museum.ky. ■ END

MUSEUM INVITES PUBLIC TO TOUR RESTORED BUILDINGS

This 23rd November marks 17 years since the Museum commenced service as the premiere keeper of the territory’s historical and cultural heritage. As the highpoint of its anniversary celebrations, the Museum will open the restored buildings for tours by residents and visitors. Tours will be scheduled during the week of 24th - 28th November. All members of the public are invited to visit the Museum during this week. **For a schedule of tours, please see local media or contact the Museum at 949-8368.**

Museum Launches Fundraising Drive Membership Campaign Underway



First Caribbean benefactors toured Museum works site in May prior to completion. (From left) Managing Director Tom Crawford and Regional Director for Compliance Anna McLean with the Museum's Acting Director Debra Barnes-Tabora (far right).

Waiting in the wings for opening curtains in the first quarter of 2009, the Museum is busy behind the scenes developing opportunities for donors, not only with respect to their support of efforts to preserve history for future generations, but also with regard to their becoming active participants in its historic re-emergence. The programme of engaging benefactors goes hand-in-hand with a membership drive inviting supporters back home, while embracing new interests.

"We have commenced a programme of inviting persons and companies to become part of this historic event – the re-launch of a new and improved institution following our massive and intensive two-and-a-half year post-Ivan restoration programme," said Board Chair Harris McCoy.

In addition to other opportunities, institutional and high-net worth benefactors may have opportunities to "own" major exhibits, Mr. McCoy explained. Among other benefits, this ownership will be expressed by means of installation of tastefully appointed nameplates at sponsored exhibits.

But even more importantly, says the Chair, "We need our supporters, including new interests, to be a part of this historic re-launch." The Museum especially needs a strong cadre of volunteers, he said. "And this opportunity is open to all sectors and all ages of persons across our communities."

So far, civil servants have been invited to join via mass emailing; the Chamber of Commerce has agreed to come aboard, plans for which include the hosting of

a Business After Hours at the Museum following November's soft opening; and there is a steady programme of personal contacts with institutions and individuals.

In addition to the satisfaction derived from supporting an institution with such important goals, members have unlimited free admission. They are also invited to members-only previews and receptions and have access to the Museum's library.

"Join the Museum today and you will have the opportunity to participate in the institution's development into a bustling, vital cultural centre for local residents and a 'must see' destination spot for visitors," says Mr. Simon Palmer, chairman of the fundraising committee. "Your support will help to advance existing programmes and break ground in new initiatives."

In addition to deriving satisfaction from this worthy cause and accessing benefits, corporate donors, upon contributing an annual fee of CI\$20,000, are designated members of the "Heritage Guardian Society." Those who donate \$10,000 plus will join the "Silver Thatch Society", while "Benefactors" may contribute \$5,000 or more. Those who contribute \$1,000, \$500 or \$100, will be designated, respectively "Sponsors", "Donors" and "Contributors".

Annual membership fees for the general population are: Seniors/Student, \$10; individuals, \$25; and families, \$50.

Benefits for these categories are outlined in the enclosed "Membership Benefits" insert, which has a detachable portion for application purposes.

For questions or comments, please contact membership@museum.ky. For contributions, please email fundraising@museum.ky or call 949-8368. ■ END

Preserving Priceless Mementoes, Conserving Current History: The Museum Invites Interests in Funding Exhibits



Consultant Conservator Mary Peever admires a Museum acquisition by Robert Farlow, in league, she says, with work of the Old Masters.

The Museum is hoping to raise more than C\$1,000,000 to fund exhibit re-building, involving specialised fittings and furnishings. These permanent exhibits are being developed by the US-based Wilderness Graphics, Inc.

Exhibit and other sponsorship opportunities range from \$2,000 to \$300,000, with the average around \$10,000. Among the most impressive will be the proposed "Sail 'Hoy" Maritime Heritage International Travelling Exhibit which will take the Cayman Islands to the world. Donors' names will appear on a "Sponsors" Wall at the Courtyard of the Museum, and will be positioned well as in the galleries.

There is also the "Old Gaol" conservation

and research programme. The discovery last year of writing on three walls in the Museum's Old Gaol has prompted further academic and scientific exploration into the age and significance of this important graffiti. This research is being undertaken by a team of consultants comprising professional historic architects and specialist conservators.

The old handwriting, potentially of historic import, will be presented for public viewing after all the centuries-old wall coverings have been peeled away in the meticulous expert initiative.

The Object Theatre Auditorium, the setting for the audio-visual show, will be entirely revamped with state-of-the-art, back-of-house technology.

"This is a great project for a high-net-worth individual or company – anyone would be proud to be associated with the show, which will rival the best there is. We envisage it will attract a huge local and overseas audience," said Deputy Director Doss Solomon, who is responsible administration and operations.

Medium-range opportunities include an underwater cave diorama, an exhibit on politics and the judicial system, and the "Old Seaman" diorama, a local favourite. More moderate sponsorship opportunities include the Welcome Kiosk, a mosaic of habitats, a "Walk-Through-Time" history timeline, and a church life vignette, among others.

For those whose budgets allow smaller donations, there is the "Special Specimens" changing display, among others, and panels on a variety of topics – conservation, bush medicine, island industries, shipbuilding, turtling, and fishing, and more.

And whom does the Museum envisage may become involved? "There is something for everyone," said Mr. Solomon. This includes banks and other entities in the financial sector, large hardware and other stores, freeport shops, dive operations, government departments, churches, associations, and schools at all levels, to name a few.

"We are also hoping that families, especially those whose names have been associated with the history and development of the Cayman Islands, will come forward so that their association can be preserved for posterity," Mr. Solomon said.

If you are interested in learning more about becoming a donor, please contact the Museum at fundraising@museum.ky. Call the Museum at 949-8368. ■ END

Consultant Recommends: Promote Buildings as Heritage Site



Minister for Culture, the Hon. Alden McLaughlin, toured the completed Museum complex in August. From left, rear, Board Chair Harris McCoy, Minister McLaughlin, Principal of Unit Construction Gordon McLaughlin, Acting Museum Director Debra Barnes-Tabora, and Museum Facilities Committee Chair, Architect Omar McLean.



Historic Preservation Architect Patricia Green (left) and Acting Director of the Museum Debra Barnes-Tabora view typical iron wood post conserved at the Museum.

The recently uncovered graffiti makes the “Old Gaol” of “universal importance,” and ongoing conservation and research work has given the project its “credibility internationally.” This is the view of internationally recognised Historic Preservation Architect Patricia Green.

Miss Green said that the entire building, with the Old Gaol as its flagship, should be promoted internationally as having significant historic importance. The historic graffiti, she said, “places heightened associative values”; providing the Old Courts Building (the main building of the three) with a “superb candidate for international status.”

The National Museum will continue the work of two current research and conservation consultants: Dr. Isabel Rigol is researching the historic importance of the building; Dr. Elisa Serrano is working on the conservation and presentation of the Old Gaol graffiti.

As part of her brief, Miss Green made environmental, construction and research recommendations on interventions for the handing over of the archaeological site by the end of October.

Key among her recommendations is an “international interface component.” These short-, medium-, and long-term proposals address local, regional and international fund-raising, promotion, income-generating and public interface strategies. ■ END



Drs. Elisa Serrano (left) and Isabel Rigol looking at graffiti uncovered on the walls at the “Old Gaol”.

Restoration Achieves Balance: Historic Preservation and Modernisation

With the completion of the restoration and refurbishment works in August, the Museum facility is poised to showcase the Islands' cultural heritage utilising modern amenities. The structure has also been strengthened to create greater resiliency against potential weather-related threats.

Facilities Committee Chair Caymanian architect Omar McLean commented on the blend of historic preservation and modern building compliance: "Much has been done to keep the building looking like it did in its early years," but, he added, there was no sparing of modern amenities to ensure that the building would stand up to today's and future demands. "Steel columns and beams, timber rafters and studs, metal straps and concrete walls were all added to make the structure strong. At the same time, every effort has been made to take advantage of natural, external light source, eliminating some of the darker aspects of pre-Ivan CINM. And in all of that, Mr. McLean said, "All requirements to meet today's building code have been implemented."

The following are some highlights of the restoration:

1. **Maintaining the authenticity of the original construction.**

To retain its historical authenticity, the substance formed in termite nests was burned, generating a powder that was mixed with linseed oil. This was applied to the damaged "iron wood" posts in the building. Traditional techniques and materials were employed in the restoration of the historic wattle and daub walls of the Old Courts Building.

Unit Construction's Gordon McLaughlin, also chairman of the Museum Facilities Committee with oversight of the original restoration in the 1990s, paid careful attention to detail, including producing samples of every joint and cut he intended to do. This ensured authentic replication of the original framing.

Careful attention was also paid to restoring the original colour scheme. Mrs. Barnes-Tabora carefully scraped down to the original wall coverings, whose colours the contractors worked hard at replicating. A similar effort was made in repainting the roof.

Another feature of historical importance is an old underground cistern which was framed for showcasing by means of a glass-viewing panel. Caribbean Utilities (CUC) is to repair guy wires for the old flag pole, and Mike Farrington, of Harbour House Marina, is rebuilding the "cross tee," the original having been lost in Hurricane Ivan. In a historic find during the restoration, conservators discovered graffiti while peeling back layers of wall cladding and paint during the restoration process.

2. **Modernising the Museum's capability.**

The Museum now boasts an IT system that will provide for virtual tours at the finger tips of visitors. Another first is a new mechanical system that incorporates a dehumidifier to deter any potential mould and termite infestation. A fire protection system has been installed.

3. **Hurricane proofing the building.**

As far as possible, the building has been hurricane-proofed, and the roof of the newer, rear section of the building has been strengthened in line with Building Code standards. This section has also been remodelled to accommodate a larger changing exhibition gallery, curatorial and shop storage, as well as a service room.

Advantages of Modular Design

The US company Wilderness Graphics Inc. is forging ahead with the remodelling and development of exhibits, in anticipation of the Museum's grand opening in the first quarter of 2009.

The permanent exhibits will feature a new "modular," free-standing design, which will make quick work of dismantling and storing exhibits. It will also afford greater protection to the buildings' historic walls during exhibit installation and dismantling.

This built-in capacity for faster dismantling and storing will mean that potential storm damage to Museum resources will be greatly mitigated, says Deputy Director Doss Solomon, responsible for administration and operations. Purpose-built exhibits are also more adaptable to renewal of artefacts and updating of information.

While the post-Ivan recovery has been arduous and challenging, the process has nevertheless brought its upside. "We are pleased that we have been able to achieve the greatest possible degree of resilience with regard to mitigating impacts of future disasters," said Deputy Director Solomon. "This is a major investment at this time, but it will ultimately pay off in the future by enabling us to safeguard artefacts and exhibition stands."

Importantly, it will contribute to a more vibrant and engaging Museum, he noted.

■ END

Museum Strengthens Expertise and Cohesion

On the eve of its re-launch, among initiatives on the agenda at the Museum is the development of partnerships with the University of Leicester, in England, and New York University's Department of Museum Studies.

"What we are trying to do within the Museum is to strengthen a culture of respect for specializations and know-how," Board Chair Harris McCoy says. "This is critical to achieving greater cross flow of ideas, while also enabling people to blossom and thrive in their professional lives."

As a practical step to strengthening that culture within the Museum, beginning in September staff will have the option of embarking on a degree in museum

management. This will be available from the University of Leicester.

NYU's Department of Museum Studies has also become a resource for the professional development of the Museum.

The Chair said that these two new initiatives would assist in a renewal of energy, creativity and focus at the Museum, driving its re-launch. And this he said would ultimately create greater purposefulness and focus at the Museum.

"Cohesion in the Museum is important in order to truly project that respect for diversity and thus to be able to attract wider community participation and involvement," the Board Chair says.

■ END

Museum Gift Shop Offers New Line of Merchandise



Museum staff Finance Officer Rena Cargill and Retail Services Assistant Alison Scott prepare for the re-opening of the Gift Shop at the Museum site in November.

The Museum Gift Shop opens in the Museum complex in November with an entirely new look and feel reminiscent of Cayman of yesteryear. The Museum Shop reopens in time for Museum's 17th

anniversary celebrations in November.

Reminiscent of an "Ol' Time General Store," the new look and feel will feature a series of rustic barrels and mahogany trim on merchandise displays. It will be then operating from the historic old post office that formerly served the entire Grand Cayman.

Come November, visitors entering the Gift Shop will find colourful displays of a new line of inspiring souvenir merchandise. The new product line will offer everything from Caymanite to crystal, prints, puzzles and more.

The Gift Shop will remain the sole authorized distributor for Cayman Islands flags and Coat of Arms plaques, as well as the flag of the United Kingdom. ■ END



CAYMAN ISLANDS
**NATIONAL
MUSEUM**

Museum Calendar of Events

2008

NOVEMBER – DECEMBER

Opening of shop and cafe
and organized tours of the
restored building

2009

JANUARY – MARCH

Opening of phase I of
exhibits Natural History
Gallery followed by Cultural
History Gallery

APRIL – JUNE

Opening of Changing
Gallery with Sports Exhibit

JULY – SEPTEMBER

McCoy Prize

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