



Weekly News

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What We Do For YOU! News from the Dept. of Cultural Affairs

History for Lunch: Edgar Harlan and the Indian Life School

State Curator Jerome Thompson discusses Harlan's relationship with Meskwaki

IOWA CITY – The State Historical Society of Iowa's popular History for Lunch lecture series continues this month with a presentation about Edgar Harlan's relationship with the Meskwaki Tribe in the early part of the 20th century.

State Curator Jerome Thompson will present "The Museum Curator and the Meskwaki" at noon, Wednesday, Oct. 21, 2009, at SHSI's Centennial Building, 402 Iowa Avenue in Iowa City. The lecture is free and the public is encouraged to bring a brown bag lunch. Limited seating is available on a first-come, first-serve basis. The day's events also includes an open house 10 a.m.-4 p.m. at the Centennial Building. Call 319-335-3911 for more information.

Harlan served as curator of the Iowa Historical Department from 1908 to 1937, and championed the development of the State Museum collections.

Though his influence can be seen from natural and social history to manuscripts and portraits, he held a special interest in documenting and collecting Native American history and material culture.

Harlan's strong relationship with the Meskwaki Tribe led to many of its artifacts being preserved and, thanks to his diligence, he built the Meskwaki collection with some of the best documentation of any Native American objects in the museum collection. In 1923, he was adopted into the tribe with the name ME-SHE-KA (Snapping Turtle).

Over the next 14 years, his relationship with the Meskwaki Tribe helped him pioneer an early form of diversity training for Des Moines elementary school teachers known as the "Indian Life School."

Thompson has served as state curator since 2004, providing professional and technical assistance and training to local historical organizations and museums across Iowa. He has been SHSI's interim administrator since December 2008.

He has a long tenure with SHSI, beginning in 1982, and has directed historic sites, museum and education programs for 18 years.

A native of Ames, Thompson is a graduate of Iowa State University in anthropology and began his work in museums as an archaeologist with the Texas Tech University Museum, where he obtained his MA in Museum Science in 1977.

Thompson has also worked for the Minnesota Historical Society and was the first site coordinator at Terrace Hill, a National Historic Landmark Site now serving as the residence of Iowa's governors.

Artist Jaume Plensa to speak at public art conference in November
Plensa's "Nomade" anchors John and Mary Pappajohn Sculpture Park

(DES MOINES, Iowa) - The Iowa Arts Council and the Des Moines Art Center will host the 2009 Iowa Public Art Networking Conference this November to celebrate the opening of the John and Mary Pappajohn Sculpture Park in Des Moines.

The two-day conference, supported by the Greater Des Moines Public Art Foundation, will be Nov. 12-13, 2009, at various locations in Des Moines. The conference fee is \$44.50, or \$60 after Nov. 1, 2009, through www.iowatix.com. A conference brochure is available at www.iowaartscouncil.org.

The conference begins at 6:30 p.m., Thursday, Nov. 12, 2009, at Hoyt Sherman Place Theatre, 1501 Woodland Avenue in Des Moines, with the Des Moines Art Center Fingerman Lecture featuring artist Jaume Plensa, who has produced projects all over the world including the "Crown Fountain" for Chicago's Millennium Park and "Nomade," which anchors the southern side of the Pappajohn Sculpture Park

During his presentation, Plensa will discuss his body of work and share his approach to making art for public spaces. The lecture is the 21st in the series made possible through generous gifts by Louis and Lois Fingerman.

The conference continues 9:15 a.m.-5 p.m. Friday, Nov. 13, 2009, at the Des Moines Public Library, 1000 Grand Avenue in Des Moines, for an introduction and walking tour of the Pappajohn Sculpture Park. Plensa and Des Moines Art Center docents will lead the tour. After visiting the Temple for Performing Arts for lunch and a presentation about public art projects completed during 2008-2009, participants will return to the Des Moines Central Library for panel discussions about "Sculpture Parks" and "Establishing and Maintaining a Public Art Program and Master Plan." The conference concludes with a reception at Art 316 Open House, 316 SW 5th Street in Des Moines.

The 4.4-acre John and Mary Pappajohn Sculpture Park opens to the public Sept. 29, 2009, in downtown Des Moines' Western Gateway Park. The park is located within a major crossroads of the urban grid, making it unlike any other sculpture park in the United States, and will contribute to the ongoing revitalization of the surrounding neighborhood.

The Pappajohns' contribution of 24 works for the park is the most significant donation of artwork ever made to the Des Moines Art Center and includes sculptures by Louise Bourgeois, Deborah Butterfield, William de Kooning, Ellsworth Kelly, Martin Puryear and Richard Serra, among others.

The project is a collaborative effort of the Pappajohns, the City of Des Moines, the Des Moines Art Center, and numerous corporate and private supporters.

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SAVE THE DATE: ADVOCACY 101 MEETING IN CEDAR RAPIDS NOV. 9 – THIS CONFERENCE IS FREE TO ALL MEMBERS OF THE IOWA CULTURAL COALITION!

On Monday, Nov. 9, from 1 to 4 p.m., the Iowa Cultural Coalition, with support from the Linn County Nonprofit Resource Center and the Iowa City/Coralville Area Convention and Visitors Bureau will be offering an advocacy workshop titled "Minneapolis Arts Coalition: a Case Study" at the Cedar Rapids Museum of Art. Shelia Smith, Executive Director of Minnesota Citizens for

the Arts, and winner of the annual Arts Advocacy Award by Americans for the Arts, will talk about the 'Vote Yes Minnesota' campaign. This campaign resulted in a Minnesota constitutional amendment that allowed for about \$30 million/year in dedicated, constitutionally guaranteed funding for Minnesota arts and culture. Also included will be Region 8's quarterly CHAT meeting, led by Bob Untiedt.

This three-hour training/meeting is relevant to ANY nonprofit organization, and is free to members of the [Iowa Cultural Coalition](#) (ICC), Iowa's only statewide arts and culture advocacy organization. Become a member on Nov. 9 for \$25, or offer a donation to the ICC to take part in this important advocacy workshop. The workshop is presented by the Iowa Cultural Coalition, with support from the Iowa Cultural Corridor Alliance, the Iowa City/Coralville Area Convention & Visitors' Bureau and the Linn County Nonprofit Resource Center. All monies received go directly to the Iowa Cultural Coalition. For more information, or to RSVP, contact Bob Untiedt at robert.untiedt@gcrf.org

The Iowa NonProfit Summit: Turning Challenge Into Opportunity

Monday, November 16, 2009 8:30 am - 4:45 pm (Central Time)

State Historical Building
600 East Locust Street
Des Moines, IA 50309

The theme of the Iowa Nonprofit Summit is "Turning Challenge into Opportunity." With the 2008 floods and downturned economy there are increased demands on nonprofits both in demand for services and decreased funding from all revenue sources. The costs of holding this statewide nonprofit conference are being kept minimal in order to increase accessibility by small nonprofit organizations.

Conference Topics include:

- Collaborations among nonprofits and with community colleges, local and state government, and business.
- Strengthening, diversifying and engaging boards of directors
- New volunteer solutions including Iowa's new Volunteer Recruitment and Management Portal
- Structuring internships and the ways to access good interns
- Communication with constituencies including marketing, public relations, and advocacy for individual organizations and the nonprofit sector as a whole.
- Use of social networking.
- Gathering metric and outcome data to build strong funding proposals and public accountability

Conference Rates

Registration: \$50.00 per person

Exhibit Table space is available for an additional \$50.00 (only 10 spots available!)

Online registration ends at 5:00 p.m. on Wednesday, November 2, 2009. After this date, on site registration will be accepted on a space-available basis.

Free parking for this event is available in the parking garage located at 650 E Grand.

Register now at www.Regonline.com/npsummit2009.

Cultural Advocacy Day

Cultural Advocacy Day 2010 is being planned now. CAD will be February 17 and the Iowa Cultural Coalition is looking for help from across the state as they plan the event. The whole state needs to be represented, not just Des Moines! If you can provide ideas or other assistance, please contact Regina Smith at regina@messengernews.net.

Our Growing Listserv!

You guys are doing a great job of signing up for our listserv! We are plugging along, slowly but surely following the Yahoo rules of inviting *only 50 people per day*. We'll get to your name eventually, or you can follow the simple directions below.

To join, please go to <http://groups.yahoo.com/> and search for **lowa_CHAT**. You'll see **our logo there**☺ There is an easy sign in process. You are required to create a yahoo account (if you don't have one) but can then **select your primary email account** as the way you want to share information. Please consider joining.

Upcoming meetings

Please let deirdre.giesler@iowa.gov know if you've scheduled your next regional CHAT meeting. We'll announce it in the CHAT Weekly News!

Wow Moment

Wow. I had no idea of the magnitude of this situation. This is important information for us all.

Nonprofits Are Getting Caught in a Starvation Cycle—*from the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies*

In both the public and private sectors, organizations that build robust infrastructures are more likely to succeed than those that do not. Despite this general rule, nonprofits perpetually spend very little on information technology systems, financial systems, skills training, fundraising or

other types of essential overhead. In a recent survey by the [Bridgespan Group](#) of 100 nonprofits across the country, 56% planned to cut overhead even further in an attempt to weather the current recession. Doing so may jeopardize the organizations' very existence, not to mention their ability to accomplish their missions.

If meager infrastructures are so detrimental to organizations, why then is this a continuing trend within nonprofits? Further research by Bridgespan reveals a three-part cycle that contributes to the persistent underfunding of overhead:

1. Funders' expectations of how much it costs to run a nonprofit are unrealistic.
2. Nonprofits feel pressure to conform to these expectations.
3. Nonprofits respond by spending too little on overhead as well as underreporting their expenditures on tax forms and in fundraising materials. The underfunding and underreporting done by organizations in turn perpetuates unrealistic expectations and the cycle repeats itself. Over time, funders come to expect grantees to do more and more with less and less – a cycle that inevitably starves nonprofits.

Many funders do realize that nonprofits report artificially low overhead figures. However, without accurate data it is difficult to determine what appropriate figures should be. Although spending between 10% and 20% of operating expenses on overhead is commonly accepted in the nonprofit sector, other industries spend a considerably larger share (see figure below). Understanding real overhead costs and infrastructure needs takes commitment from both funders and grantees.

For more information, read the *Stanford Social Innovation Review's* [The Nonprofit Starvation Cycle](#).

Have a great week!