

## Monterey and Sustainable Public History

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On March 19-22, 2014, the National Council on Public History will meet in the scenic and historic shoreline city of Monterey, California. In recognition of our belief that public historians can illuminate current issues, our conference theme is *Sustainable Public History*. We thank the program committee, NCPH staff, and all who responded to the call for proposals for helping us assemble an engaging, challenging, and timely program that we hope will stimulate lasting conversations and actions. The number and quality of submissions was truly inspirational.

In consideration of the growing evidence of climate change, one of the core questions our program asks is how we can use history to promote a better relationship with the environment. Sessions examine ways to engage public audiences with the history of land use, natural resource consumption, the politics of conservation, and energy use. Others identify potential venues for critical history including the local farm movement, public transportation systems, and heritage tourism. The conference supports a larger effort to become more environmentally responsible in preserving historic resources



Monterey County CVB

with sessions that engage practical considerations, such as disaster preparedness and energy efficiency. The NCPH Task Force on Sustainability will also present a draft of its white paper setting concrete recommendations for how the organization should respond to the problems of natural resource depletion and climate change. This is an important opportunity for all NCPH members and conference attendees to provide input and guidance on this critical issue.

A second set of issues our conference theme tackles is how we can sustain public history in a political and economic climate that frequently devalues and defunds cultural work. Recognizing that financial resources must correlate with social value, sessions explore how community engagement is helping public historians meet real needs and secure support. Other panels address contemporary politics and highlight efforts to advocate for public financing, raise history's public profile, and defend the importance of history and the humanities.

Richard Heinberg brings the economic and environmental threads of the conference together in his plenary session, *The End of Growth: Adapting to Our New Economic Reality*. Heinberg is a Senior Fellow at the Post Carbon Institute, an organization that believes our current economic, energy, environmental, and social problems are connected and

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## Discounted JPASS Access for NCPH Members



NCPH members may now purchase a discounted one-year pass to read and download articles in more than 1,500 journals. If you don't have easy access to JSTOR through a school or public library, JPASS may be a perfect fit. This

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As an NCPH member you can purchase a twelve-month subscription, which includes unlimited reading/browsing and up to 120 article downloads, for \$99—a savings of \$100 off the regular price. If you choose to renew, you can roll over any unused JPASS downloads for the next year. The NCPH office has mailed a custom discount URL to all NCPH members which will “unlock” the \$99 offer. (Let us know at [neph@iupui.edu](mailto:neph@iupui.edu) if you didn't get it.) Downloads of articles from *The Public Historian* will not affect your 120-download limit on JPASS.

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Full candidate info at [www.ncph.org](http://www.ncph.org)

Current Board and Committee members are listed at <http://bit.ly/NCPHgovernance>

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*Ballots and candidate biographical information were distributed by email to members in late November. Please contact [ncph@iupui.edu](mailto:ncph@iupui.edu) if you are a member and did not receive an electronic ballot. The election closes January 5, 2014. Your vote counts!*



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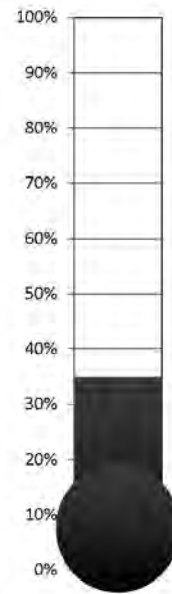
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# Digital Integration Fund

We continue to raise money toward our three-year, \$85,000 goal. The DIF will allow NCPH to...



- Finish construction of the Public History Commons
- Offer hybrid projects between *The Public Historian*, *History@Work*, and the Commons Library
- Expand possibilities for peer review and critical reflection in digital public history
- Augment articles with embedded sound and video files, zoomable images, linked databases, 3-D models, and maps
- Align the design and format of *The Public Historian*, the Commons, and *History@Work*

Learn more about the DIF at  
<http://bit.ly/NCPH-DIF>

Please make your donation today!  
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## The Public History Commons Continues to Take Shape

Cathy Stanton | [cstanton@tiac.net](mailto:cstanton@tiac.net)

Although you won't be seeing changes for a few more weeks, some infrastructural work is currently being done on the Public History Commons, NCPH's digital hub, that will result in a slightly new look and several additional features by start of 2014.

- If you're a reader of our *History@Work* blog, you're used to its prominent place front and center on the [publichistorycommons.org](http://publichistorycommons.org) site. *History@Work* will still be easy to find, but it will be slightly less prominent, reflecting the fact that as the Commons becomes more populated, the blog is just one among several projects housed there.
- Joining *History@Work* will be a space that connects you to our new Omeka-based PHC Library. The Library will eventually house a

wide range of digital materials and collections; some of the initial additions will include:

- multimedia components of collaborative publications between the Commons and *The Public Historian*
- dossiers of material relating to selected exhibits and other public history projects
- a collection of work focusing on environmental sustainability and public history

Digital projects tend to have a perennially "work in progress" character, and that means users occasionally need to adjust to new navigational paths or visual layouts. We're working to keep those as minimal and clear as possible, while also bearing in mind the ever-changing patterns of online reading (for example, the need to make things readable on very different-sized screens). We're always open to feedback, so feel free to contact me at [cstanton@tiac.net](mailto:cstanton@tiac.net) with questions or suggestions.

Cathy Stanton is NCPH's Digital Media Editor.

# Why I'm a Member of NCPH

Mary Rizzo | [mary.rizzo@rutgers.edu](mailto:mary.rizzo@rutgers.edu)

After completing a graduate program in American Studies and spending some frustrating time on the academic job market, becoming a professional public historian was like finding the right key on a ring with dozens on it—things started to click into place. But, as it happens, the key opened the door into a room filled with people chattering away on completely unfamiliar topics that I needed to learn. Fast. What I soon realized was that NCPH was the real key: a place of intellectual engagement and professional support that has helped me in every phase of my career since. Now, as the Public Historian in Residence at the Mid-Atlantic Regional Center for the Humanities at Rutgers-Camden, I co-edit *The Public Historian*, bringing full circle my experiences in graduate school and the various museum, educational, and nonprofit jobs I held.

Nothing beats the annual conference as an introduction to NCPH. I attended my first in Louisville, KY, to participate in a working group where I was talking about history-based programs for civic education at the NJ State Capitol. Early in the conference, I met with Denise Meringolo, director of public history at the University of Baltimore, Maryland County, to talk about a research project I was doing on heritage, gentrification and Baltimore's annual Hon Fest. In the Brown Hotel's gorgeous bar, she bought me a beer (thanks, Denise!) and we had a fantastic talk that satisfied my cravings for smart conversation and professional support (and eventually turned into a public history class at UMBC). At that point, I knew I had found my intellectual home: an organization that combined theory and praxis and whose conferences felt collegial rather than combative.

As impressive as NCPH's breadth is, one of the most interesting areas to me has been its forays into the world of the digital humanities, something that I'd heard of, but wasn't entirely sure how it connected with my work. I got the chance to find out, though, when Cathy Stanton asked me to blog for *Off the Wall*, which discussed exhibition practice outside museums (and which soon evolved into *History@Work*). I imagine she thought I was doing her a favor by saying yes, but little did she know that I might have paid her for the opportunity. For someone who was dealing with the ins and outs of program management on a daily basis, the opportunity to write about curation becoming a buzzword for boutiques or how the Toynbee Tiles were a kind of individual archive was a creative outlet where I and other bloggers could try out new ideas in front of a welcoming public. That kind of platform is invaluable and has only become more so with *History@Work*. Now a veritable compendium of current public history activities, *History@Work* is read by thousands of people monthly. As readers become more comfortable with it, they're also commenting on posts, realizing the promise of the digital public sphere for conversation across time and space.

Since those early blogging experiments, I've attended THATCamps, taken courses on HTML, CSS, Ruby on Rails, and Python. With my current research project—which looks at the relationship between policy and cultural representations of Baltimore—I plan to utilize mapping to visualize the connections between real and imaginary places. Right now, these are glimmers of ideas, but getting an initial introduction through NCPH to the digital possibilities of public history has helped me think broadly. And I know that whether at the



conference, on the blog, or through conversations with people who I met because of NCPH, I can draw on a wealth of resources to help me in my professional life.

*Mary Rizzo is the co-editor of The Public Historian and a member of the NCPH Board of Directors. She is the Historian in Residence at the Mid-Atlantic Center for Research in the Humanities at the University of Rutgers-Camden, and prior to that was associate director and acting executive director of the New Jersey Council for the Humanities.*

## End of Year Appeal Donors to Date

The NCPH End of Year Appeal was mailed out to members in November. We thank those of you who have already responded!

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If your contribution is on its way, thank you!

If you haven't made your end-of-year gift yet, please show your support for public history today by visiting <http://bit.ly/NCPH-give>.

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# Actions of the NCPH Board of Directors

On Friday and Saturday, October 18-19, 2013, the NCPH Board of Directors met on the campus of Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis. After a half-day fundraising workshop and a strategic planning discussion, the board took the following actions:

- Heard Cathy Stanton's Digital Media Editor report on the fast-growing readership of *History@Work* and the construction of the new Library as part of the digital Public History Commons. The board also discussed the future of *H-Public*.
- Both the interim agreement with UCSB and the UC Press agreement for *The Public Historian* end December 2014. Board members had a wide-ranging conversation about how they think both partnerships are going and identified a set of issues they would like to raise in discussions with both partners.
- Discussed options for filling a board vacancy.
- Unanimously voted to approve a proposal to meet jointly with Society for History in the Federal Government for the NCPH Annual Meeting in Baltimore in 2016.
- Discussed the idea of a resume review service for NCPH members, which the staff is developing with the Membership Committee.
- Considered the range of constituencies that NCPH serves, the makeup of the organization's membership, and how NCPH and its programs should balance the study and practice of public history.
- Voted to form a task force on graduate training and employment and then to invite other associations to join it. The task force would research education and employment issues and then create a best practices and recommendations report for university administrators, history departments, and individual faculty thinking about establishing a public history program.
- Agreed to build a racial/ethnic diversity program involving local public history practitioners in cities where the annual meeting takes place.
- Outlined initial plans for marking the 2016 NPS Centennial during our Baltimore annual meeting.
- Voted to amend the 2014 Operating Budget to include an income line for \$15,000, which the board will raise for the Annual Fund.
- Voted to adopt the 2014 Operating Budget as amended.
- Voted to approve the 2012 Audit of Financial Statements conducted by Gauthier & Kimmerling, LLC.
- Voted to approve the proposal to change the NCPH Bylaws to add the Digital Media Editor to the board as an ex officio, non-voting member.
- Voted to approve the proposal to change the Bylaws to make the Ad Hoc Digital Media Group and the Ad Hoc New Professional and Graduate Student Committee into standing committees.

## From the Executive Director



John Dichtl  
jdichtl@iupui.edu

### History Rising

I have been participating in two informal yet ambitious conversations to promote public history. First, there is the History Relevance Group. Tim Grove described it in his October 25 *History@Work* post as a small but growing “grassroots movement made up of public historians who say it’s time to show why the study and practice of history develop life skills that contribute to a stronger citizenry and are crucial to our nation’s future.” The group met several times this year, including at the NCPH conference in Ottawa and the AASLH conference in Birmingham. While the group began sketching out a “national branding strategy” for history, it is now focusing on the question, “Why is history crucial to our future?” and on illuminating examples of historical projects and programs that have had measurable impact in helping citizens and leaders solve problems, and in inspiring students to learn. The relevance group at the moment is a nebulous entity of historian curators, consultants, education specialists, academics, and administrators—

and whether or not “a brand” crystallizes at the end, the discussions have been exhilarating and continue to draw in a wide variety of viewpoints. At the AHA Annual Meeting in Washington, D.C., on Friday, January 3, the group will hold a public forum, and then again at the NCPH in Monterey on Saturday, March 22. I invite you to attend both events.

I’ve also been talking with people who are interested in convincing more academically-based historians to try public history. In a way, this has always been an NCPH message. The entire public history profession leads by example, hopefully, winning over public history converts from among the ranks of college and university faculty. But I think the message that traditional historians have heard is that to do public history, one must go all-in, one must be “a public historian.” They also hear that for a history department to be serious about public history, it ought to have a full-fledged program for public history.

Rather than seeing a proliferation of programs, I would rather there be more historians willing to try public history approaches and projects. As I have heard Associate Dean John Majewski at UC Santa Barbara say, every member of a university history department should be doing some kind of public history work. And as Rebecca Shrum, my colleague at IUPUI, and others have stated, not every department

needs a public history program, but every department should have public history. At the AHA Annual Meeting in January, Rebecca, Alexandra Lord, Patrick Moore, and Michelle McClellan have organized a roundtable for Friday, January 3, to carry that message.

Along those lines, I’ve recently had conversations with faculty members in traditional departments who are exploring the idea of doing *something* with public history. They are hesitant to jump in and proclaim they have a public history program, and that’s okay. Yet they and their colleagues are interested in trying public history courses and projects for their students, public history speakers, tours, and even relationships with nearby public history institutions.

A key question I keep getting is one that I would like to put to you. How can someone who is not a historian of the U.S. or Canada do public history in the United States or Canada? That is, how might a historian of sub-Saharan Africa work public history approaches, projects, and readings into her courses? What kinds of public history course or project relationships might a medievalist in a small college in Wisconsin establish with local institutions? I have the beginnings of my own answers to such questions, but I would welcome help in compiling examples to share, with NCPH serving as the clearinghouse.

When I began my search for a graduate school to develop my skills as a public historian two years ago, the National Council on Public History's *Guide to Public History Programs* became a vital aid in helping me choose a program that was most appropriate to my needs and interests. This guide—sold as a print publication as late as 2006 but now accessible online to anyone—is an important resource for prospective students and public historians seeking a clear picture of the state of the field.



IUPUI Public History Program's annual Workshop attendees at Conner Prairie Interactive History Park, August 2013.

The *Guide* is significant because public history education at both the undergraduate and graduate levels has experienced tremendous growth over the past ten years. As NCPH President Robert Weyeneth has suggested, history students who are interested in taking their work outside the classroom have turned to public history to “shape public attitudes about the past,” work in a collaborative setting, and make history meaningful to themselves and their audiences. I graduated in the spring of 2011 with a social studies teaching degree and worked as a teacher for one year. My own experiences with several public history internships during college, however, inspired me to consider a career teaching people of all ages about the past in an interpretive setting.

I acquired valuable skills during those internships, but I understood that I needed more training in public history theories, methods, and practices. At the time I was unsure where to go or who to turn to for help in finding a public history graduate program that worked for me. Thankfully, a professor led me to the *Guide*, which helped to start the process of learning about and applying for public history programs.

I began my search by combing through each hyperlinked guide entry, which led to a PDF document outlining a specific program's history, contact information, financial aid opportunities, places where students interned, and employers who hired students after graduation. I made an Excel spreadsheet with each of these designated fields and a list of 30 schools that looked compelling to me. I then visited each program's website to learn more about tuition costs, curriculum requirements, and campus life. I also made phone calls to program directors, telling them that I had looked at the *Guide* and wanted to hear a “pitch” for their program (I discovered later that email was oftentimes a faster and more reliable means of communication). As I narrowed down my list, I arranged formal phone interviews and campus visits with my top choices.

When applying for public history programs, I thought about the following questions:

- Do I understand what public history is? Do I know the difference between public history and museum studies?
- Do I want to study a specific concentration within public history (archives, historic preservation, interpretation, etc.) or do I want more generalized training?
- Am I willing to relocate for graduate school? If so, where?
- How much will it cost to attend school? What is my budget? What are some possible avenues for financial aid?
- What is the status of the economy? Are there jobs in public history?
- What is the history of the school's public history program? Does it fit my needs?
- What were my impressions of the faculty I communicated with during the application process? Did they sound committed to helping me achieve my scholarly and career goals?
- Am I prepared to fully commit myself to graduate school? Is going to school simply to wait for the job market to improve problematic?

Answers to some of these questions are still coming into focus for me, especially while I have been helping to update the current NCPH *Guide* in my role as the NCPH graduate assistant this year. The previous complete update for the *Guide* was in 2010. Rapid changes in the field and the negative effects of the Great Recession, I think, make it more important than ever for public history programs to provide precise information for prospective students and professional public historians.

*Nick Sacco is a second-year graduate student in the Public History Program at Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis and is the graduate intern in the NCPH executive office.*

## The Landscape of Programs



### GUIDE TO PUBLIC HISTORY PROGRAMS

A new version of the NCPH *Guide to Public History Programs* is taking shape online. Over the past few months, we've asked program directors to update their entries in the new,

abbreviated format. A total of 220 graduate and undergraduate programs are listed, including 138 graduate programs in North America alone, though some still lack a refreshed entry. (Directors, updating your program in the *Guide* only takes 15 minutes but provides valuable information for current and prospective students, peer institutions, and public historians interested in forming partnerships with faculty.) Please let us know if we've missed any programs. Entries as well as the form for creating a new/updated entry are at <http://bit.ly/NCPH-Guide>

# Thank You Legacy Circle Members!

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Connie Schulz



Perhaps you remember the moment when you first thought of yourself as a public historian. You're likely also to recall the first time you became involved in NCPH. Joining the Legacy Circle of the NCPH returns the gift of permanency to an organization that has not only provided an intellectual foundation for professional development, but also a collegial home for public history practitioners.

The members of the Legacy Circle encourage you to consider including NCPH in your estate plans so that the organization is still strong, decades from now, to serve the field. Please contact the executive director (317.274.2716 or jdichtl@iupui.edu) or see the NCPH website for information about supplying NCPH with a letter of intent regarding your estate plans.

# JPASS Access (cont. from page 1)

(1934-2007). Coverage begins for each journal at the first volume and issue ever published, and extends up to a publication date usually set in the past three to five years. Current issues are not part of the JPASS Collection.

JPASS works through your existing MyJSTOR login. NCPH members already are able to read and download all current and past issues of *The Public Historian* using their individual MyJSTOR account. Within several days of joining NCPH, JSTOR emails you information about establishing your username and password for a MyJSTOR account. (For more information about using JSTOR, or if you have never activated your MyJSTOR account for reading *The Public Historian* online, please contact JSTOR User Services at support@jstor.org or see <http://about.jstor.org/support-training>.)

# Public Outreach Project Award

The ASEH announces a new award recognizing excellence in the public humanities and environmental history. This prize, which includes \$1,000, is for environmental history projects and programs that engage the public beyond the academy; help the public appreciate the role of the environment in the shaping of broader social, political, economic, and cultural issues; and/or have measureable impact on communities. The project should have been presented or initiated between January 2011 and December 2013. Nominations due by December 31, 2013. <http://bit.ly/ASEH-public>



# Welcome to Monterey

Robert Weyeneth | [weyeneth@sc.edu](mailto:weyeneth@sc.edu)

Monterey is a stroll down memory lane for me. I grew up a hundred miles north, in the San Francisco Bay Area, in booming postwar California. My life with history may have begun in our fourth-grade state history class where we used a textbook called *California Yesterdays*. I remember reading that the first Californians used acorns for food, that the Spanish used adobe to build, and that Junipero Serra was buried at Mission Carmel before the American Constitution was written. I also remember thinking that Monterey was where the action was in California before the Gold Rush and statehood in 1850. I was thrilled when our family drove down there. There were

adobe buildings! I still recall glimpses of the Cooper-Molera Adobe and the Larkin House through the windows of my mother's station wagon (in what I now realize must have been my first historic driving tour). Eventually my grandfather made it his project to take me to all twenty-one California missions. When I studied history in high school, the travels gave me enough teenage knowledge to notice that the chapters in our American history textbook on "the colonial period" celebrated the English but barely mentioned the nation's Spanish and Mexican colonial heritage. Today our history textbooks are less Anglocentric and more inclusive, of course. But Monterey remains a fascinating—and perhaps formative—place for visitors. With a distinctive regional history, unusual architecture, a remarkable

literary tradition, and the spectacle of sea and nature, it's the very definition of a locale with a unique sense of place.

The NCPH conference this year is our thirty-sixth annual gathering and our fifth meeting in California. We consider the gathering in 1979 just down the coast in Montecito, near Santa Barbara, our first conference as an organization. We met subsequently in Los Angeles in 1984, San Diego in 1990, and Sacramento in 1994. It's been twenty years but we're back!

*Robert Weyeneth is the president of NCPH and director of the Public History Program at the University of South Carolina.*



# Be Seen in Monterey

Draw attention to your institution or company by reserving exhibit space or sponsoring an event.

<http://bit.ly/I1dHdD>

1932 Imperial Economic Conference, Ottawa. Based on reproduction C-003781 from the Library and Archives Canada.



# Documentary Editing Goes Public

Beth Luey

Editing historical documents used to be an arcane discipline practiced by historians at large-scale, long-term projects. Over the years, their ranks were joined by historians working alone or with one or two assistants on smaller editions. Almost all directed their work to an audience of research scholars. With the advent of digital technology, though, historians in many settings saw the opportunity to make documents available to a larger public, not only as images but as intellectually accessible editions—transcribed, annotated, and searchable in complex ways.

Since 2011, the Association for Documentary Editing has administered the annual Institute for Editing Historical Documents, funded by the National Historical Publications and Records Commission. The changes in the discipline are readily visible in those who have attended the Institute: fewer than one-third work at large projects. The majority are teaching faculty, archivists, curators, and historical society staff members; they hope for an audience that includes students and the general public.

In view of those changes, our next three-year grant (2013–2016) includes workshops for historians in allied associations. We will be working with the NCPH, the Society for American Archivists, the American Association for State and Local History, and the Society for History in the Federal Government to tailor workshops to their needs.

All editors need to know the basics: selection, transcription, annotation, and indexing or tagging. They need to find funding for their projects and market their products. But we expect that the members of each association will have some additional requirements.

For example, NCPH members who teach will need to determine the best way to involve students and to incorporate documentary editing into a public history curriculum. Oral historians need to adapt the best practices of documentary editing to a very different sort of document. (Traditional documentary editors have developed ways to edit speeches delivered without a script.) Historians working in the community will want to learn how best to train and use volunteers, as well as the advantages and disadvantages of crowd sourcing.

My successor as education director of the ADE, Bob Karachuk, will be working with the NCPH. All of us in the ADE look forward to an exciting and fruitful collaboration.

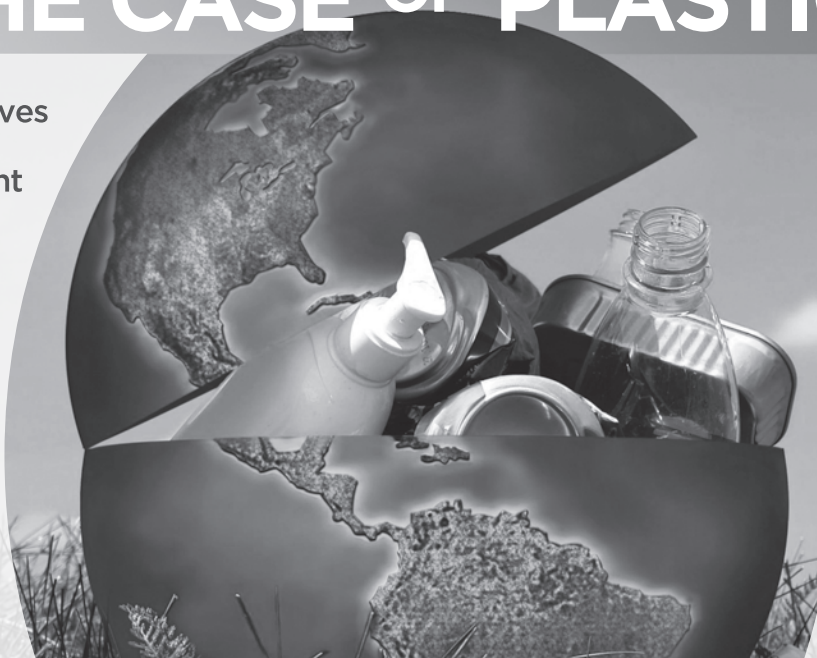
*Beth Luey, a member of the Public History faculty at Arizona State University from 1980 to 2006, was the education director of the ADE from 2011 through 2013.*



## CONFLICTS in CHEMISTRY: THE CASE OF PLASTICS

Plastics improve our lives but hurt our planet. Should the government regulate plastics? What say should consumers have? How about scientists? Activists? Manufacturers?

In this new role-playing game, students explore the complex issues and diverse perspectives connected to plastics and investigate how science affects their everyday lives.



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# Monterey and Sustainable Public History (cont. from page 1)

that resource depletion, environmental impacts, and spending debt levels make a return to our pre-recession economy impossible. Arguing that the construction of an Earth-friendly and human-friendly economy starts with education and understanding, Heinberg's talk will challenge us to find a role for public history in the construction of a more secure and stable future.

The conference continues to offer plenty of opportunities to learn new skills. Join us on Wednesday and take advantage of a rich array of workshops on subjects such as Wikipedia editing, oral history, digital preservation, and audience research. THATCamp will be back, this time in a half-day format, and Nina Simon, author the well-known blog *Museum 2.0* offers a workshop on engaging museum audiences with participatory experiences. Modeled after the popular digital lightning talks, this year also inaugurates "Classroom Project Showcase," a brown-bag lunchtime session for public history educators to share successful teaching strategies and projects in an informal setting.

Monterey and the surrounding area provide an inspiring setting for exploring sustainability through its history of fishing, agriculture, wine, and literary production. Conference goers can enjoy guided tours of Cannery Row, the Monterey waterfront and architecture, the National Steinbeck Center, and the Robert Louis Stevenson House, or appreciate the area's natural beauty on bicycle, kayak, and on foot. The Local Arrangements Committee has prepared behind-the-scenes tours of adaptive reuse projects of local historic properties and a special viewing of the laboratory of Edward F. Ricketts, a pioneering marine biologist. Opportunities for touring and outdoor recreation are plentiful.

See you in Monterey!

*Co-Chairs of the 2014 Program Committee, Briann Greenfield is a Professor of History and Coordinator of the Public History program at Central Connecticut State University and Leah S. Glaser is an Associate Professor of History and Public History, also at CCSU. Glaser currently chairs the NCPH Task Force on Sustainability.*

## Annual Meeting Dates to Remember

**November 2013** – Registration opens. Hotel room blocks open.

**December 2013** – Call for student volunteers issued. Call for Dine Around topic proposals issued.

**January 2, 2014** – Deadline to reserve space in the Exhibit Hall.

**January 15** – Working Group case statements due. Dine Around topic proposals due.

**February 1** – Deadline to reserve event for sponsorship.

**February 12** – Early registration deadline. Conference mentor requests due. Student volunteer applications due.

**February 18, 19, and 21** – Cut-off dates (respectively) to reserve discounted rooms at Hotel Abrego, Hotel Pacific, and Casa Munras.

**March 5** – Pre-registration deadline.

**March 19** – The 36th Annual Meeting opens at 8:00 am, Monterey Conference Center.

## Point Sur Lighthouse Tour Highlight

**Carol O'Neil**

First identified by early Spanish explorers in the 1500s as "a point that appears as an island," Point Sur is a landmark on California's central coast. The United States claimed the large volcanic rock in 1866 for an eventual lighthouse. Construction began in 1887 on a lighthouse to enclose a First Order Fresnel Lens and a fog signal, and several other buildings to support the keepers and their families (the lightstation). The light was turned on for the first time on August 1, 1889, and has been in operation as an aid to navigation ever since.

Originally, no road was built to the top of isolated Point Sur. A steam-driven hoist-rail system operated to the peak of the immense circular rock, but the keepers and their families had to walk nearly 400 steps to the top. Fuel for the railway was too precious to spend on easing the way of people. By 1900, the rail was abandoned and a narrow road was built. Point Sur was remote. It was a full day's travel to Monterey, the nearest real town, and by a poorly maintained road. Even from nearby Big Sur, travelers would have to traverse a half mile of sand to reach the bottom of the rock. In storms, the rock would become a true island, cut off from the land by high tides.



Photo courtesy Carol O'Neil

Point Sur was manned by keepers from 1889 until the last one left in 1972. For 83 years, the normal population of Point Sur consisted of four keepers and their families. They also kept assorted animals in a barn, and had a carpenter-blacksmith shop. Later, a garage was added. The children had their own school for a few years, including a teacher who lived with one of the families. During World War II, Point Sur housed a compliment of coast watchers. Later scientists and engineers lived atop the rock while they developed highly classified Cold War underwater surveillance systems (SOSUS) put to use around the world, including the nearby Point Sur Naval Facility.

# The Grapes of Wrath Tour Highlight

Marianne Babal | [babalm@wellsfargo.com](mailto:babalm@wellsfargo.com)

If you want to explore more of Monterey County, sign up for Friday's deluxe tour to the National Steinbeck Center in Salinas. Our aptly titled *Grapes of Wrath* tour will visit this award-winning museum dedicated to the life and work of John Steinbeck, and the people and places of Monterey County that inspired him.



Courtesy Flickr user sjb4photos.

Highlights of the Center's permanent John Steinbeck exhibition gallery include Rocinante, Steinbeck's camper from the book *Travels with Charley*; artifacts from Doc's Lab in *Cannery Row*; memorabilia featured in Steinbeck's lesser known wartime works *Bombs Away* and *The Moon is Down*; and letters, journals and equipment that inspired *East of Eden*, *The Grapes of Wrath* and *Of Mice & Men*.

2014 marks the 75th anniversary of publication of Steinbeck's classic novel of Depression-Era America, *The Grapes of Wrath*. To get the National Steinbeck Center's celebration of this anniversary underway, the Center recently sponsored a commemorative "The Grapes of Wrath Journey," following the Joad family's sojourn from Oklahoma to California along famous and historic Route 66. Three renowned artists—playwright Octavio Solis, community historian and visual artist Patricia Wakida, and filmmaker P.J. Palmer—embarked on a 10-day, five-state journey in October, 2013, inviting public participation in workshops and performances in local communities along the way. You can find out more about this participatory public history project and follow their journey at [www.GrapesofWrath75.org](http://www.GrapesofWrath75.org).

The lightstation at Point Sur is unique because it retains all of its original buildings. In addition to the iconic sandstone lighthouse, there are keeper-quarters, the barn, carpenter shop, garage and a building from World War II. Many have been restored over the past 20 years through a coalition of State Parks, the nonprofit Central Coast Lighthouse Keepers, and many volunteers who donate expertise, time and talent. All the tours of Point Sur are given by volunteers.

A visit to Point Sur takes you back to simpler eras. Exteriors are restored to c.1929 and the Head Keeper's Quarter's interior is restored to c.1950. The lightstation is only accessible by small-group tours to preserve the sense of isolation. While enjoying a stroll through the historic lightstation, you can also appreciate some of the best views of the coast to be had in California. On a clear day, Santa Cruz, almost 50 miles to the north, can be seen, beyond the mountains and rocks and surf that define the Big Sur coast.

Carol O'Neil, Interpretive Chair, Point Sur State Historic Park, will be leading the Thursday tour.

For those joining our tour to the National Steinbeck Center, the day's itinerary includes time to enjoy lunch on-your-own in Salinas. One unique lunchtime destination might be an ornate Queen Anne Victorian home at 132 Central Avenue in Salinas, boyhood home of John Steinbeck, and now a restaurant. Steinbeck House serves gourmet lunches featuring fresh, local produce from the fields of Salinas Valley. If you'd like to indulge in an extra helping

**"A journey is a person in itself; no two are alike."**

**John Steinbeck, *Travels With Charley***

of Steinbeck on our tour, lunch reservations are recommended. Steinbeck House is two blocks west of the National Steinbeck Center, call (831) 424-2735 for more information.

After lunch and departure from Salinas, our bus will detour to a nearby winery to taste some local wines

produced from vineyards on the terraced slopes of the Santa Lucia Mountains overlooking the Salinas River Valley. Wine grapes grown on 6,000 acres cultivated within the Santa Lucia Highlands appellation enjoy warm morning sun and afternoon maritime breezes that cool the vines, creating a long growing season perfect for cool weather-loving varietals such as pinot noir and chardonnay.

Whether your passions include wine or a good book, public historians will be sure to enjoy this day out exploring inland Monterey County.

*Marianne Babal is the Local Arrangements Co-chair for the 2014 NCPH Annual Meeting and is Historian and Vice President at Wells Fargo Historical Services in San Francisco.*



Photo courtesy Carol O'Neil

# Public History News

## National Council on Public History

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## Join NCPH Today!



### 2014 NCPH Annual Meeting

Monterey, California

Monterey Conference  
Center

March 19-22, 2014

San Carlos Cathedral, courtesy of Monterey  
County Convention and Visitors Bureau.

NCPH inspires public engagement with the past and serves the needs of practitioners in putting history to work in the world. We build community among historians, expand professional skills and tools, foster critical reflection on historical practice, and advocate for history and historians.

#### Members of NCPH have access to:

##### **The Public Historian**

— a print and online journal offering the latest original research, case studies, reviews, and coverage of the ever-expanding international field of public history

##### **Professional Development**

— continuing education in workshops, working groups, and critical reflection on practical and theoretical issues

##### **News of the Field**

— *Public History News*, email updates, and other NCPH reports will keep you current

##### **Community**

— connect to thousands of other public historians through our blog, *History@Work*, listservs, and the NCPH groups on Facebook and LinkedIn

##### **Discounts on the Annual Meeting**

— Monterey 2014, Nashville 2015, Baltimore 2016

##### **Leadership Opportunities**

— help to shape the profession and field by serving on committees and task forces

##### **Advocacy Efforts**

— NCPH, with the National Coalition for History, speaks on behalf of the profession and in the public interest on historical issues.

##### **Online Resources**

— Statement on Ethics and Professional Conduct, Tenure & Promotion guidelines, *Guide to Graduate Programs*, best practices, consultant listings, weekly job postings, and discounted JPASS access to journals

##### **Membership Dues**

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