

# SPURLOCK

MUSEUM

Winter 2008

The newsletter of  
the Spurlock Museum

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## A MESSAGE FROM THE MUSEUM DIRECTOR

By Wayne Pitard, Acting Director

As I write this, I have just passed the halfway point of my acting directorship at the Spurlock Museum. The time here has been very busy, but also very rewarding and enjoyable. It has been my privilege to work with a most amazing staff day in and day out, watching them mount two temporary exhibitions this fall, *Ancient Egypt: The Origins* and *Uncovering Life's Third Domain: The Discovery of the Archaea*, while working steadily on numerous long-term projects. I have witnessed the extraordinary professionalism of our Education section as they guide crowds of young people in exploring the Museum on their school field trips and at the Around-the-World Wednesday program. I have also had the pleasure of working with both the Museum Board and the Spurlock Museum Guild as they have continued to support the Museum with both their time and finances. It is a wonderful experience to witness the dedication of these valued friends of the Museum.

It was also my good fortune to take part in some joyful celebrations here this fall. During the Foundation weekend, I officiated over the dedication of two parts of the Museum that were named for two pairs of great supporters. The Central Core Gallery was named the Charles M. and Barbara S. Hundley Central Core Gallery in honor of that couple's endowment of the Spurlock Museum Professorship. Additionally, Marie Zahn came from California for the dedication of our Learning Center

as the Dene W. and Marie C. Zahn Learning Center in appreciation for their support of our educational program. It was a delight to spend time with Marie, Charles, and Barbara during that weekend, getting to know them and seeing their extraordinary commitment to our mission.

Let me encourage all of you to come see our two fall temporary exhibits, which complement each other very nicely. The larger exhibit, *Ancient Egypt: The Origins* (running through February 24, 2008), provides wonderful insights into the background of the culture that we think of as classical Egyptian civilization. It features numerous beautiful artifacts from the dawn of ancient urban culture over 5,000 years

ago. In contrast, *Uncovering Life's Third Domain* (through January 27, 2008) celebrates a monumental scientific discovery that took place on the University of Illinois campus just 30 years ago, a discovery that has changed the way biologists understand the genetic makeup of life on earth. Thus, within a few feet of each other, our visitors can move from life in very ancient times to a contemporary scientific

discovery.

All the enthusiasm and support from those around me have made my stay here a wonderful experience. And, looking at things from the inside for the past two-and-a-half months, I can say with some authority that the Spurlock Museum's best days are coming. We hope that you will share them with us.



Acting Director Wayne Pitard and Marie Zahn at the ribbon cutting.

### WINTER 2008

#### WILLIAM R. AND CLARICE V. SPURLOCK MUSEUM

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign  
600 S. Gregory St.  
Urbana, IL 61801  
Phone: (217) 333-2360  
Fax: (217) 244-9419

Director, Douglas J. Brewer

Museum Hours:  
Tuesday: Noon - 5 pm  
Wednesday, Thursday, Friday: 9 am - 5 pm  
Saturday: 10 am - 4 pm  
Sunday: Noon - 4 pm  
Monday: closed

[www.spurlock.uiuc.edu](http://www.spurlock.uiuc.edu)

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On the cover: 2007.08.0016. Tibet. Tea kettle trimmed with decorative silver medallions. Ca. 17th-18th century.

## EDUCATION UPDATE



# Educational Outreach Expands Online Learning and Access to Teaching Collection

By Tandy Lacy

In January and September 2007, the Education section completed three major projects designed to enhance and broaden the Spurlock Museum's educational outreach services.

Each of these projects—enabling online learning and public access to materials—represents months, even years, of work carried out by Museum staff and the scholars who join them in the creation of interpretive exhibits. These resources not only build upon and enrich interpretation of the Museum's artifact and teaching collections, but also extend the life of exhibits and offer learning experiences to increasingly diverse audiences.

In January, two new modules for online learning were added to the Explorations section of the website, accessed from the Museum's home page. *Musical Expressions of the Senufo Tagba* and *Journeying through Balinese Lives* provide glimpses into various aspects of the daily and ceremonial life of the Senufo Tagba people of Burkina Faso, West Africa, as well as the Balinese-Hindu people

living on the island of Bali in Indonesia. Both presentations were designed and mounted in collaboration with the Museum's Information

Technology section. Visitors to these rich online environments can learn about the people and cultures represented in exhibits through text, colorful images, and audio and video clips. From the time they were mounted until early December, their pages have received more than 20,000 hits from visitors. They represent a type of learning resource that was envisioned as early as

1999 when Partnership Illinois grants (1999 and 2000) supported the Museum's efforts to build and sustain community access to the wealth of its collections, even while galleries were closed.

In September, *Luxurious Layers* was announced in the News section of the Museum's website. This assemblage of Teaching Collection objects and related materials is the first in a series of Building Blocks, materials made available on loan to educators through the World Heritage Museum Guild Educational Resource Center. Developed to reflect the kimono traditions of Japan, this unique resource for hands-on learning expands the themes and information presented in the Fall 2003 exhibit, *Luxurious Layers: Kimonos of the Heian Court*. The custom-made storage, carrying, and display cases that house the wide variety

*The Burning of the Love God*, detail showing demon. Gift of Professor John Garvey, 2002.17.0022. In the online exploration *Journeying Through Balinese Lives*, cloth paintings such as this one illustrate the beliefs and traditional narratives that are the basis for cultural practices featured in the module's various images and media clips.

of items in this learning module were designed and constructed by the Collections Management section. Like the pages of online Explorations, this outreach resource is the result of long-term goals set prior to the opening of the Spurlock Museum. Before materials like those in *Luxurious Layers* could be assembled for public access, the entire Teaching Collection—an ever-increasing resource—had to be processed, reviewed, and thoroughly documented. This work was done in concert with the Registration section, which also supported the writing of policies and procedures that would eventually make it possible to access a series of Building Blocks.

*Luxurious Layers* contains a wide variety of materials, including two kimonos with accessories—one kimono for a boy, one for a girl—each packed with a custom-designed mount that can be assembled for display. (T03417)



# JIM SINCLAIR AND HIS COLLECTION OF INTERNATIONAL ARTS AND ARTIFACTS

By Dr. Yu (Ian) Wang



Dr. James B. Sinclair, professor emeritus of crop sciences at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, is a well-known scholar in the agricultural sciences. He joined the U of I faculty in 1968 and retired in 1996. He was appointed as the interim director of the National Soybean Research Laboratory in the College of Agricultural, Consumer, and Environmental Sciences (ACES) in 1994, served in that capacity for four years, and developed it into a world-renowned institute. In 1996, at the fulfillment of his 30-plus years of teaching and research, he was honored with Lawrence University's Lucia R. Briggs Distinguished Achievement Award in recognition of his career accomplishments in plant pathology.

In contrast to Sinclair's great academic achievements, less mentioned but of equal importance, is his long-time activism and support of our University museums—especially the World Heritage Museum and the Spurlock Museum. He

served as the president of the Spurlock Museum Board of Trustees and continues to be an active member. As a museum of world cultures, the Spurlock Museum is fortunate to have been given more than 100 artifacts collected from more than 40 countries and covering several hundred years of human history—which are only a portion of Sinclair's lifelong collections.

Sinclair's interests in the arts began when he was still in high school. He attended elementary and high schools located near the University of Chicago with its fine museums. He and his friends were frequent visitors to the Art Institute of Chicago and the Field Museum. His education in the arts continued through his studies, receiving his BS from Lawrence Univer-

sity, in Appleton, Wisc., and his PhD in the plant sciences from the University of Wisconsin at Madison, where he majored in biology and eventually in plant pathology.

After receiving his PhD in the science of plant disease, Sinclair spent 12 years at Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, where he was able to continue his interest in the arts by visiting the museums in New Orleans and the surrounding areas. He began serious collecting of art and artifacts at that time, acquiring his first pieces from local artists in Baton Rouge and New Orleans. Some artifacts were purchased from the Neiman Marcus antique shop in Dallas. Many pieces are from outside of the United States, including artifacts from India, Japan, and Thailand.



2007.08.0075A-G. Brazilian Yamomamy Tribe bamboo carrier with 5 arrowheads of different sizes. Mid-20th century.

From left to right:

2007.08.0012. Thailand. Bronze figure of Buddha on a platform giving a sermon to the evil ones. 18th century or earlier.

2007.08.0016. Tibet. Tea kettle trimmed with decorative silver medallions. Ca. 17th-18th century.

2007.08.0051. Nigeria/Guinea Coast. Handmade leather carrier of cowry shells used for exchange representing a large sum of money. Ca. 18th-19th century.

2007.08.0013. India/Goa. Handmade statuette of Virgin Mary titled "Our Lady of O" with ivory face inlay and hands and metal crown. Ca. 1850.



During his 30-year career at the University of Illinois as professor of international agriculture in support of the College of ACES international programs, his responsibilities ultimately took him to more than 40 countries.

"It was then that my studies in art and artifacts through the years paid off," recalls Sinclair. "While visiting many of these countries, I found time to visit museums and special collections. I visited flea markets, Sunday markets, side-street vendors, stalls, et cetera, buying items related to the culture of the country I was visiting and pieces of art. Most of my collecting was in the Far East and sub-Saharan Africa. I continued to collect related works found here in the U.S. markets."

The following illustrations will give Museum friends and readers a small sampling of the collection. More detailed information about this exciting new acquisition can be found on our Museum website: [www.spurlock.uiuc.edu](http://www.spurlock.uiuc.edu).

## BEHIND THE SCENES: CLEANING ARTIFACTS

By *Christa Deacy-Quinn and John Holton*

An active preservation program involves keeping artifacts and their storage spaces clean. All artifacts are cleaned before being put into storage. Cleaning an artifact is a very specialized and careful process, much different than a quick toss into the washing machine. Strangely enough, the cleaning process starts without even touching the artifacts.

The majority of the Spurlock Museum's artifacts were used by other owners before arriving at the Museum, and they usually have some kind of dirt, damage, and wear. All of these features are painstakingly detailed and documented in a written condition report, which is a snapshot of an artifact's physical condition at the moment it enters the Museum. Condition reports include an artifact's material components and preservation recommendations for that artifact, thus enabling the Museum staff to identify and track later changes in condition.

Most condition reports recommend cleaning the artifact. This recommendation often refers specifically to removing dust from the surface of the piece. Dust is one of the greatest concerns in the preservation of artifacts, for although it may seem innocuous, at a microscopic level dust is very abrasive. Additionally, the components of dust provide nutrients for insects and mold, and they can retain moisture. Dust is ubiquitous;

therefore, most of the artifacts in the collection must be cleaned through a dry-cleaning process.

Rather than the dry-cleaning used to launder shirts and suits, our "dry-cleaning" is simply the practice of cleaning without any liquids or solvents.

Cleaning methods require a delicate touch. A soft brush lifts dust from the surface of the artifact, and the dust is then removed with a vacuum.

Once the artifact is properly cleaned, the staff writes a conservation report, documenting the specific cleaning procedures used. In addition, this report may record other procedures performed on an artifact, such as restoration or reshaping. Next, the existing condition report is updated to reflect the artifact's newly-cleaned status.

Finally, the clean artifact is ready to be placed in storage. In storage, shelving units sealed against dust house most artifacts. Oversized artifacts, however, require different storage solutions. For example, long, flat artifacts may be hung on the walls to make the most efficient use of space. If the artifact needs to be stored outside the sealed units, it is protected from dust with a cover. Dust covers are made from an unbleached cotton fabric, muslin, or a flashspun polyethylene fiber fabric (called Tyvek™), sewn to fit each individual artifact. Once an artifact is clean and protected, it is available for study and research for years to come.



Top to bottom: Aurora Erickson writes a condition report. Student Kevin Joye cleans an artifact. New staff member Melissa Sotelo sews a dust cover. Finished dust covers hang in storage.

# **DOTTIE WHITE:** ADVOCATE FOR MUSEUM INTERNS

By Robin Fossum

Dorothy “Dottie” Berkey White has spent a colorful lifetime full of family and travel. Dottie was raised in Texas, and as a teen she moved with her family to southern Illinois. Following two years at a local college, she transferred to the University of Illinois where she met her future husband, Donald White, who was attending the University on the G.I. Bill. The couple studied and worked their way through school, Dottie receiving her arts and sciences and foreign language degree in 1947, and Donald received his general engineering degree. The couple had wonderful memories of their time as students at Illinois.

Following graduation, Donald and Dottie married in Beverly, Ill. Donald began his career in construction engineering, while Dottie took up homemaking and volunteer work. While raising their two children, the Whites began their travels to see the world. As their children grew, they too traveled with their parents. Dottie found magic in visiting with other peoples and cultures. Special places for the Whites included: Europe, Southeast Asia, Egypt, and a favorite: Machu Picchu in Peru.

In the 1990s, while visiting her sorority on campus, Dottie toured the World Heritage Museum and saw many outstanding collections. She soon joined the Museum Board and became a supporter.

Donald passed away a few years ago, but Dottie is maintaining their strong ties with the University. The Whites have arranged to leave a substantial part of their estate to the Spurlock Museum and the College of Engineering. They have already started a scholarship in engineering and have enthusiastically supported an internship at the Spurlock Museum, among other major gifts. Dottie is proud to sponsor students at the Museum and is thrilled that the Museum will soon offer a Museum Studies Program.

The Spurlock Museum is delighted to have Dottie and Donald White as their benefactors. We are glad that their travels led them to us.



## **SPURLOCK MUSEUM GUILD UPDATE**



In keeping with its Egyptian theme, the 16th annual Spurlock Museum Guild Auction began with a series of captivating performances by Trikhala, a local belly-dancing troupe. Following the entertainment, guests enjoyed a delicious Mediterranean- and Middle Eastern-style buffet prepared by Illini Union Catering.

Guild president Paula Watson welcomed guests and introduced Dr. Wayne Pitard, acting director of the Museum, and College of Liberal Arts and Sciences Dean Sarah Mangelsdorf, who was honorary host along with her husband, Karl Rosengren. Auction co-chairs Vivian Larson and Judy Hummel introduced auctioneer Emerita Barbara Peckham, who handed the gavel over to auctioneer extraordinaire, Don Denny.

The live auction produced spirited bidding by the inimitable Randy Ott, on a number of choice items, including a Wisconsin woods getaway,

a Bakhtiari rug, and dinner at the Cliff Dwellers’ Club in Chicago.

Dueling bidders also competed for the chance to provide support

for a bus trip from a distant school to the Museum—a direct contribution to the educational program. Similar wish-list items will be featured at future auctions. The hard work of the members of the various Guild auction committees and the generosity of donors resulted in a total of \$25,000 raised to benefit the Spurlock Museum.



Pictured left to right are Carl Larson, dancer Dana Schlake, and Phil Morgan.

**Paula Watson**  
*Spurlock Museum Guild president*



## LETTER FROM THE BOARD PRESIDENT



Dear board members, colleagues, and friends of Spurlock Museum:

Our general board meeting was held Friday, September 28, 2007.

My heartfelt thanks go to all of our board members and Museum staff for their hard work and contributions to the meeting, making it a valuable and memorable event. A special thank-you goes to our active board members Barbara and Charles Hundley for organizing and providing the wonderful tent reception after our general board meeting, which gave us all an opportunity to socialize and network. It made us feel valued.

The Hundleys, active members of our Museum board, have generously pledged a deferred gift of \$1 million to the Museum. In recognition and in honor of their continuing support and significant contributions to the Spurlock Museum, our Museum's Central Core Gallery was renamed the Charles M. and Barbara S. Hundley Central Core Gallery, and a ribbon-cutting ceremony was held after our last general board meeting.



Marie Zahn and Acting Director Wayne Pitard at the ribbon cutting for the Zahn Learning Center.

Though it is rare, we had a second ribbon-cutting celebration the same day, in which the Museum renamed our Learning Center the Dene W. and Marie C. Zahn Learning Center in honor of the Zahns for their quarter-million-dollar gift to the Museum to support the Learning Center's multipurpose space, its programs for independent learning about other cultures, and staff-led activities.

For all of the exciting developments and activities taking place at the Spurlock Museum, I would like to thank each of our board



A thank-you hug.

members for their continuing support and contributions to our mission. A recommendation for a dues increase to \$150 per year was unanimously approved by the membership at our last general board meeting. Also, to all of our delight, the second annual Spurlock Museum magazine was published and delivered to our members and friends at the meeting. It is my dream that we find a way to create a quarterly academic journal that will provide a publication platform for our Museum Studies programs.

With so much happening at the Museum, I am sure you are as excited as I am.

I wish you all a wonderful new year.

Sincerely,  
Dr. Yu (Ian) Wang

## EXHIBITS

THROUGH SUNDAY, JANUARY 27, 2008  
**Uncovering Life's Third Domain: The Discovery of the Archaea**

THROUGH SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 24, 2008  
**Ancient Egypt: The Origins**

TUESDAY, MARCH 25, 2008-SUNDAY, APRIL 20, 2008  
**Qak'aslem, Qakem: Kaqchikel Maya Weavings**

TUESDAY, MARCH 25, 2008-SUNDAY, AUGUST 10, 2008  
**Calypso Music in Postwar America: Photographs and Illustrations, 1945-1960**

## EVENTS

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 9, 2008  
**Winter Tales**

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 19, 2008  
**Campbell Lecture by Emily Teeter**

FRIDAY, MARCH 28, 2008  
**Opening Reception: Calypso Music in Postwar America and Qak'aslem, Qakem: Kaqchikel Maya Weavings**

SATURDAY, APRIL 5, 2008  
**Heirlooms, Artifacts, and Family Treasures: A Preservation Emporium**

SATURDAY, APRIL 12, 2008  
**Mayan Weaving Demonstration**

FRIDAY, APRIL 18, 2008  
**Steel Drum Performance**

SATURDAY, APRIL 19, 2008  
**Mayan Weaving Demonstration**

SATURDAY, APRIL 19, 2008  
**Mayan Weaving Talk**

SATURDAY, MAY 3, 2008  
**WorldFest**

For more information on these events and to view our current calendar, please visit [www.spurlock.uiuc.edu](http://www.spurlock.uiuc.edu).

# The Role of Docents

By Tandy Lacy, Director of Education

What do docents do? The simple answer is that they give tours and programs, but the job is much more than that. Above all, docents are ambassadors of the Museum. They represent the staff and collections, and they help create understanding in the community of the Museum's mission.

If you've been on a general tour of the Spurlock Museum, then you know that our docents introduce visitors to the concept of a museum of world cultures and to the themes that unite the diverse cultures represented. They travel with groups through each feature gallery, sharing their favorite artifacts. Some of our guests refer to this tour as "Around the World in 60 Minutes"—and you don't even need a passport.

Have you ever thought about volunteering as a docent but worried about memorizing pages of text? Spurlock Museum guides are encouraged to present the basic themes and introductory information in their own words and to highlight artifacts or sub-themes that hold special interest for them. Everyone's tour is different. This format also makes it easier for docents to respond to the particular needs of each tour group. Providing open-ended exploration in each room allows time and energy for answering individual questions and helping groups find artifacts and information that interest them. This approach also creates an environment in which visitors can share with staff their opinions of exhibits, their cultural experiences, and their own travels around the globe.

In addition to general tours, the Museum offers a wide range of tours and programs,

covering specific themes, topics, and galleries for visitors of all ages. Docents are invited to present as many of these aspects as they feel comfortable learning, but everyone starts with the basic general tour in order to learn the Museum and participate in the most common types of visitor experiences.

The Museum will begin docent training in spring 2008 with opportunities for new docents to observe a range of school and other tours and programs in April and May. A short session of classes will follow, with summer and early fall as time for research and individual gallery exploration. We'd love to have some new docents ready for the new school year in fall 2008.

Training consists of:

- Tours with experienced guides (both staff and volunteers)
- Hearing the exhibit curators discuss their galleries
- Researching artifacts of personal interest to present in tours
- Individual gallery exploration
- Access to gallery texts and related resources in the Museum
- Group and one-on-one discussions with education staff about working with visitors, strategies for handling groups, and so forth.

For more information or to receive a volunteer application, please contact Beth Watkins at (217) 265-5485 or [ewatkins@uiuc.edu](mailto:ewatkins@uiuc.edu).

Docent Sarah Wisseman tells children about being an archaeologist.



## SPURLOCK MUSEUM

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign  
600 South Gregory Street  
Urbana, IL 61801

Non-Profit Organization  
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