

from the president



by Whitney Watson

As NAME approaches twenty years of existence, it seems the time has come to develop a new vision and strategic plan that will carry the organization into its third decade. At the board meeting in April, many ideas were discussed that can affect the direction and future of NAME. After much discussion, it was suggested that work groups be appointed to work on creating both the plan and vision for each aspect of NAME's mission: advancing the profession, professional enrichment, and excellence in exhibitions. At the business meeting in Baltimore a draft plan will be presented for your review and comment.

Diversity is an important issue that NAME will address in creating its strategic plan. The importance of encouraging diversity can be seen in the effort AAM continues to place on increasing the diversity of the profession at all levels. Besides the meeting theme at the AAM meeting in Baltimore, there will be an emphasis on diversity in museums: diversity in staffing, diversity in the audiences served by museums and in the training of museum professionals for the future. I encourage you to attend the events and sessions related to this important theme. Look for the diversity track in the preliminary AAM program.

In looking around at the annual meeting in Cleveland, I was disappointed to see relatively few members from ethnic communities in the audience or on panels. At NAME's business breakfast and luncheon, it was a largely homogeneous group. How can we as the developers, designers, builders and evaluators of exhibitions encourage greater participation in NAME or other professional activities from minorities? How can we encourage people from diverse communities to choose our profession? This is a challenge that I want NAME and its members to strive to address in the coming year.

Elections will be held in early spring for officers and board members to serve NAME for the period August 2000 to July 2002. There is a nominating committee at work to recruit people with vision and a commitment to NAME and the profession. These people will lead NAME into the next century and NAME's third decade. The Chair of the Nominating Committee is Michael Pierce. His address is listed on the inside back cover. Contact Michael to learn more about these opportunities to serve NAME.

Volunteers are needed for many projects and tasks in addition to serving as officers and board members. Some tasks are well defined and have fixed commitments; others are more open-ended. All can have great influence over the direction and growth of NAME. As an organization, NAME needs the talents and perspectives from individuals from many different backgrounds and cultural heritages. Volunteer or volunteer another by contacting me or any NAME board member.

NAME is a members' organization. It represents your issues and concerns. In order to succeed NAME needs your input and your time and energy. This can be directed to the state or regional representatives of NAME or any of the Board members. As always, I look forward to hearing from you about NAME.

Whitney Watson
NAME President