

Association of Indiana Museums
Annual Conference
Richmond, Indiana
September 18-19, 2011

Conference Attendee/Scholarship Recipient Report

The Lew Wallace Study & Museum has had a long and productive relationship with the Association Indiana of Museums (AIM). Crawfordsville is a community rich in museums and all of them have utilized the resources of AIM in one way or another over the years. After attending my first AIM conference in Bloomington last year, I had great expectations for the 2011 conference in Richmond.

As I looked at the conference sessions being offered this year I saw a number that pertained to specific issues we are currently dealing with at the Lew Wallace Study & Museum. Last year I stayed pretty much with one of the coded tracks—this year I branched out and attended sessions from several different tracks including collections, small museums, and administration. I found the connecting to collections sessions very exciting. The update with news on site visits, the upcoming Collections Advisor, conferences with emphasis on collections and the travelling exhibits being developed all emphasized just how many resources are available to Indiana museums either free or at very reasonable rates from the Indiana Historical Society—it is a tremendous asset to smaller museums. Even reminders about things I know about like the Orphans Corner in the Communique On-line were great refreshers.

The Lew Wallace Study & Museum, like many of the museums in Indiana, faces continual preservation issues and the associated funding problems. In several of the sessions I attended, the presenters offered not only inspirational successes—but also practical approaches. I went away with notes on many income producing events, grant opportunities, and earned income ideas. Beyond the presenters, those in attendance freely contributed to the discussions. The willingness of the presenters and audience to share their institutional knowledge and personal tips was refreshing and encouraging.

In addition to the value of the workshop sessions, I have to add that the presentation by Jeremy Efroymsen of the Efroymsen Fund at lunch was a highlight for me. Mr. Efroymsen's creative presentation touched on a number of issues discussed in workshop sessions and also reflected much of what we do at the Lew Wallace Study & Museum. As with several of the talks I attended, Mr. Efroymsen provided a blend of inspiration and practical application that made the entire AIM conference an excellent experience for me.

Beyond the workshop sessions I thoroughly enjoyed the opportunity to see the sites and learn about Richmond. I thought that I knew something of the history of Wayne County, but thanks to the gracious and informative hosts, I came away with a deep appreciation for the history of area and the opportunities for cultural education that the sites offer. I also very much applaud the inclusion of representatives from Ohio. The issues and resources that we share are complimentary and I think we all benefit from expanding

horizons. Even having Ramona Duncan-Huse available to consult on conservation concerns was such a wonderful addition. It was another example of the creative networking that this conference provided.

In closing, I think the AIM staff and Richmond coordinators should be congratulated. From the on-line conference information and registration, to the very convenient location at the Reid Hospital, to the side trips, and information provided on local attractions and restaurants, the whole conference was smooth, professional, and complete. It was wonderful to connect to so many of those individuals who make Indiana museums special, and I can't wait for the AIM conference next year.