Never attended the New England Museum Association Conference? That’s okay, NEMA’s got you covered.

Pre-Conference Planning

What's in my bag and how should I pack?
November in Boston can get chilly, just like some of the hotel function rooms (variable in temperature), so pack layers! Fall weather is fun for layering to suit the changing temperature. It might not hurt to carry gloves or an umbrella if you are planning to go off site.

Packing for conference means anticipating the variety of events and sessions that will take place. Comfy shoes are a great option for conference and allow for mobility in a variety of situations. The conference hotel is located close to the Charles River so a camera would be a great, along with athletic shoes to enjoy the scenic views!

Registration includes a tote bag, but you may want to bring an additional bag to carry conference gear and other essentials, such as: pens, pencils, notepads (paper, laptops, or iPads – however you best take notes), an electronic charger, business cards (see below), printed resumes, business clothes, a water bottle, and a positive attitude.

Suggested dress code?
Dress to make a good impression. Dress the way you want to be seen in a work environment. Business casual clothes are recommended, but everyone is allowed to dress however they would like.

Registration cost, lunches, and dietary restrictions?
Depending on the rate you paid, your registration will cover the cost of conference, off-site sessions, and events. Off-site sessions and evening events are optional, but are a great way to expand and round out your conference experience.

Registration fees can also cover the cost of lunches if you sign up for that option. Including lunch fees in your registration is a fantastic way to stay on site to meet other attendees without the stress of leaving the hotel in search of food.

If you have any dietary restrictions, please highlight those on your registration form or contact the NEMA office.

How can I save money on the cost of staying at the hotel?
Utilize NEMA's Roommate Matching Service to save on the cost of your hotel room and meet new people! Sharing with a colleague is a great way to make connections and keep the cost down. If you are looking for someone to room with, call (781-641-0013) or email (conference@nemanet.org) the NEMA office with your name, phone number, and the number of nights you will be staying. NEMA will contact you with roommate contact information if we find a match. NEMA does not guarantee that a roommate will be available.

How can I save money on the cost of conference?
NEMA is pleased to offer several scholarship and fellowship opportunities to make the annual conference more financially accessible. Scholarship awards support travel, lodging, and three-day registration for individual members of NEMA and employees of NEMA institutional members. The deadline for all scholarship programs is September 19, 2014. Only one application is necessary to apply for all scholarships and fellowships. Note: Individual opportunities have slightly differing requirements in the essay portion of the application. To apply, go to nemanet.org/scholarships.

How do I get to the conference?
All sessions will be located at the conference hotel unless otherwise noted:

Hyatt Regency Cambridge
575 Memorial Drive
Cambridge, MA 02134
Phone: 617-492-1234
How can I carpool and what are other “green” ways to travel?
To share a ride to conference, contact the NEMA office (781-641-0013 or conference@nemanet.org) with your name, phone number, where you will be driving from, and when you need a ride. We’ll do our best to connect you with a colleague going your way! NEMA does not guarantee that transportation will be available.

Trains and buses will also get you to Boston and the Hyatt Regency Cambridge has shuttles that can pick you up from 7 am.– 9 pm, call the hotel at 617-492-1234 to be picked up from:
- Harvard Square
- Cambridgeside Galleria
- Kendall Square T stop
- Boston University T stop

What is public transport like in Boston and Cambridge?
Boston’s transit system is the oldest and fourth largest in the nation. The conference hotel is located closest to the “Boston University West” Green Line stop, a short walk over the beautiful Charles River. For more information on the transportation system feel free to explore, buy fare tickets, and find a map at: www.mbta.com

Preparing a conference modus operandi:
Prior to conference you will receive a preliminary program book that will list the sessions, events, and off-sites. Establish a schedule of the sessions, events, and potential off-sites you would like to attend. Be prepared to have a backup plan in case on the day of the session a meeting room is full.

Once you pick up your registration packet at conference, you’ll receive a final program book with session listings, room numbers, and a floor plan.

If you’re building your museum career, don’t miss the daily “Career Conversations” with seasoned professionals. Also, don’t forget to sign up to have your resume reviewed by a NEMA ambassador (nemanet.org/resume). Time slots are limited, so do it soon.

During Conference
Take notes in the sessions and don’t be afraid to speak up. Introduce yourself to panelists and other attendees (see: “How to strike up a conversation”). If a session is not what you were looking for it is okay to leave, but be strategic about an exit route. If you sit in the front of a session you won’t be able to leave, so if you’re not sure about a session please make sure you sit in the back.

When choosing a seat look for people who aren’t “together” - some people travel the conference in packs and it will be harder to break into those groups. Individuals who are on their own in a session will be more open to chatting and networking; remember you will always have museums in common, so start talking!

Don’t forget to silence your cell and if you’re tweeting, do so discreetly (see: “Cellphone, laptop, and social media etiquette”).

Attending Conference
When should I arrive?
This year, NEMA has produced a pop-up exhibit (nemanet.org/popupmuseum) featuring the creativity of NEMA’s museum community. It starts Tuesday evening at 6 p.m. and all are welcome to attend. This event is a great time to engage with conference attendees and to start putting names to faces. If you can’t make this event or won’t be in until Wednesday, make sure you attend the 8 a.m. conference orientation session Wednesday morning hosted by the Young & Emerging Professionals group.

What events should I be sure not to miss?
- Tuesday, November 18th, 7:00 – 9:00 p.m., NEMA Pop Up Exhibit
- Wednesday, November 19th, 8:15 – 9:00 a.m., NEMA Conference Preview
- Wednesday November 19th , 5:30 - 6:15 p.m. Newcomers Reception
- Wednesday November 19th, 10:45 a.m., Keynote Panel
The keynote panel features a “dream team” of museum and health care professionals discussing the conference theme “Picture of Health: Museums, Wellness, and Healthy Communities.”

Malcolm Rogers, Museum of Fine Arts/Boston; Carole Charnow, Boston Children’s Museum; Carl Nold, Historic New England; Dr. Lisa Wong, Harvard Medical School & Longwood Symphony Orchestra; and Dr. Joel Katz, Brigham & Women’s Hospital.

The conversation will be led by Jared Bowen, Emmy Award-winning Arts Editor of WGBH Boston. You can plug into the discussion via Twitter using #NEMA2014.

Is there an art to wearing a nametag?
Yes! So your lanyard does not hang too low, which makes it hard to read for others, tie it in a knot at the back of your neck to shorten the length, allowing for easy readability.

Suggested snacking for workshops?
Brain food will keep you going all day throughout conference. Staying hydrated will also help keep you fueled for the day. Coffee, tea, and light snacks are provided during some breaks, but you may want to bring a few from home to keep you going throughout the day.

Old fashioned bulletin board communication:
NEMA has a bulletin board located in the registration area that will inform attendees of any happenings around conference or if any extra event tickets are being sold. It’s a great way to communicate with other attendees and stay informed.

Talk Back Wall:
Feeling creative? Express yourself on the NEMA Conference Talk Back Wall. It’s the perfect place to share your feelings about the conference, what you’re learning, and your love for museums.

Cellphone, laptop, and social media etiquette:
If live tweeting is encouraged and you have the permission of the speakers, feel free to tweet or post to your heart’s content using #NEMA2014; just make sure you’ve quoted the speaker accurately and are still paying attention. Also, with all electronics, ensure that items are on silent and that they’re charged in advance, so wires aren’t a trip hazard during sessions.

How to strike up a conversation?
NEMA attendees are very friendly, plus we all have something in common – museums! Foster hearty conversations with constituents by using icebreaker questions, and asking about the sessions they have enjoyed. Do not forget to be an open minded and excellent listener!

Suggested icebreakers:
• Asking about an exhibit they’ve seen recently.
• Best session they’ve attended so far.
• Anything surprising they’ve learned at conference.
• What they like to do in their non-museum time.
• Thoughts on the keynote presentations.

What to do if I need a break?
Session hopping can mean you’re taking in intense amount of information in a short period of time. Take a break to restore energy levels and absorb all the exciting ideas floating in your head. Check out the exhibit hall, look at the bulletin board or Talk Back Wall, or relax in one of the hotel’s quiet spaces. Make sure to stay hydrated and when you are feeling ready go back into the sessions.

Can I bring a guest to an evening event?
Yes! Guests are welcome to attend evening events as long as they’re accompanied by a conference attendee and their ticket cost has been covered during registration.

Lose something during conference?
If you lose something during conference, visit the hotel front desk for more information about their lost and found procedures for the missing item.

Post Conference
How do I stay in touch with the connections I made?
Best through e-mail? LinkedIn? Business cards?
Staying in touch with the connections you made while at conference is very important for follow through and branching out your network. While at conference, when someone hands you their business card, take a minute to write on the back of it where you met them and what you discussed. These notes will help you to reconnect post-conference and kick off a new conversation.

Evaluations for NEMA and other feedback?
NEMA offers two ways to give feedback. Make sure you fill out session evaluations, printed on yellow paper and located in each session room. Evaluations can also be found on the NEMA app. Shortly after conference we’ll invite you to participate in a post-conference survey, where you’ll be able to give us your opinion on how the conference went for you. We appreciate your comments!

NEMA would like to thank our intern Scarlett V. Hoey and the Young & Emerging Professionals PAG Co-Chairs, Ashley Martin and Amanda Gustin, for writing and publishing this handbook!

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