ADULT NEEDS AND MOTIVATIONS:
RAMIFICATIONS IN THE MUSEUM SETTING

Man knows himself only to the extent that he knows the world and finds the world only in himself, just as he finds himself only in the world. Every new object well observed discloses a new organ in ourselves.

Goethe (Sahasrabudhe 1968:51)

It is essentially a series of truisms to state: 1) that museums are in part educational institutions, 2) with a large proportion of their clientele being adult and 3) if significant education is to occur in the museum setting, that the needs and motivations of the visitor must be an integral part of the planning of programs. Platitudinous as these might be, there has, unfortunately, been an underlying and ongoing conflict among museum professionals concerning the former and a general non-recognition in practice of the latter two.

The purposes of this paper are: 1) to examine the place of education in the museum, 2) to delineate the needs and motivations of adults leading them to select a museum experience and 3) to begin to grapple with the ramifications of the above for the planning and delivery of museum education programs.

Museological theory holds that the fundamental purposes of museums are collection, preservation and study of artifacts and specimens, as well as the exhibition and dissemination of information about these objects, all for the public good. However, "education" as such is a relatively recent and underdeveloped aspect of museum responsibility (Dixon 1974:1). Many professionals still maintain that collection, preservation and study (the curatorial mandates) must take precedence over the educative function.

This notion stems in part from what H. Daifuku (1960:73) refers to as the "elitist origins" of museums as institutions which began as private collections of scholars or connoisseurs who shared them only selectively with very limited audiences. A representative of this side of the argument is C. Pankhurst, former president of the American Association of Museums, who states...

I don't feel it is the primary role of the museum to run a school...Our primary role is collection, conservation and use... (Burcaw 1975:174).
W. E. Washburn (1964:35), in voicing the fear that energies spent on education will take away from the search for knowledge, maintains that education is not the fundamental purpose of the museum. It is not really a "purpose", but rather only a "function":

...education must be subservient to knowledge, as a technique is to an idea, and a function is to a purpose. Education is not an end in itself. The pursuit of knowledge is (Washburn 1964:38).

Of course, there are just as strident opinions emanating from educators in the field to rebut those in the curatorial role. For instance, R. L. Bunning (1974:59) states...

As an educator, I feel that the acquisition and research functions should be viewed as ancillary functions, valuable in direct proportion to their utility in implementing the educational function.

Further weight is added to this argument by the fact that museums are publicly funded and, as such, are increasingly being asked to justify expenditures by demonstrating more directly their service to the public through education programs. As J. R. Saunders (1964:93) asserts...

Any museum open to the public, and particularly one partially supported by public funds, has an obligation not only to acquire knowledge but to disseminate it.

Of course the argument here is a fruitless and unnecessary one, but it continues nevertheless; less frequently now in overt terms, but it still does produce a constant underlying tension among professionals in the museum field. Despite the fact that many professionals in the field today at least publicly recognize the equal if not paramount importance of education (see Zetterberg 1969:16, Allan 1960:24, Daifuku 1960:78, Singleton 1970:108), educators remain as "low man on the totem pole". The obvious answer to this argument is that curatorial and educational purposes of the museum are of equal importance and in fact mutually dependent.

From this viewpoint then, it is not difficult to see why serious examination of visitor educational needs and motivations has been generally neglected in what historically have been "slap stick", ad hoc approaches to museum education planning (see Dunn 1977:16). In general there has been a lack of research concerning the museum
visitor (Zetterberg 1969:ix) and most of that which has been done tends to focus on children and school programs.

It is obvious that the need for professional museum education planning for adults will not go away. In fact, it is becoming increasingly important. Adult visitors are not only becoming more numerous \(^1\), but more affluent, mobile and better educated (Dixon 1974:3, Burcaw 1975:136-7). As such, adults have become more demanding of the museum in terms of the educational programs offered (Larrabee 1967:27, Patterson 1968:37). Social and technological changes leading to increased leisure time and propensities toward seeking out more “continuous learning” opportunities will greatly increase the “demand potential” for museum services among adults (Zetterberg 1069:10, Dixon 1974:1-2).

The question now becomes, just how effective is education for adults in the museum setting? The assertion of M. Harrison with concurrence by B. Wriston (1969:1) and L. V. Coleman (1927:242) that..."Without exception everything that a museum does is educational, even when this is not the intention."
...is of course patently false, given the "purposeful" nature of real "education". Many such as C. G. Screven (1974:10) have raised the question as to whether in fact museum experiences result in any substantive learning at all:

> Museum professionals have strong beliefs that something is happening to their visitors, but there is great difficulty in defining what this is, much less measuring it.

Of course, in order to clarify these muddied waters, it is necessary to develop specific goals and objectives for museum education programs, which at least will give a direction to, if not a means of evaluating, the learning occurring. Naturally, as one of the first steps in this task it is crucial to understand the needs and motivations of the potential learner (Waniewicz 1976:177). Planning must start with a knowledge of the museum visitor.

If nothing else, it is known that the adult learner at the museum is a voluntary participant. As such, it is important to first examine the reasons why people visit the museum and then to look at their needs within the museum setting.

As is the case elsewhere in adult education, basic motivations
for participation in a museum visit have not been fully analysed (Ferrier 1969:219). The traditional and continuing wisdom in the museum field has been that people come to the museum "primarily, to be entertained" (emphasis added), yet, in reporting this, G. E. Burcaw (1975:135) also notes the paradox here, in that the museum exists primarily to inform. Nevertheless, an important study of museum visitors in Canada by B. Dixon et al. (1974) has notably discovered that the single most often mentioned reason for visiting museums relates to the perception of the museum as an educational institution rather than one used for entertainment. Although Dixon did not have the respondents prioritize the reasons for attending, the findings do indicate that at least the educational motive may be one of the most important, and that museologists should consider the motives of the adult learner as opposed to those of an ethereal "visitor".

Motivation, contrary to its popular usage is not.....

...a bag of tricks which the teacher uses to produce learning; rather, it is a process that belongs to the pupil...a process in which the learners internal energies are directed towards various goal objects in his environment. (Ferrier 1969:226, 218).

Therefore, it is very difficult for an educator to cause a learner to be motivated. However, to be effective, educators must be aware of the learner's own motivations and plan educational experiences accordingly.

In general, human motivation has been examined by those such as Carl Rogers and Erich From under the rubric of "need reduction" and "positive striving". Of course, Abraham Maslow has developed his "organismic" "hierarchy of needs" (primary--biological and secondary--social motives) as the basis for motivation, while Thorndike has indicated the need for distinctions between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation (see Kidd 1973:102, 104, 107).

In terms of the motivations specific to learning, R. J. Havighurst and H. P. Schueler (1960:43) have determined that the dominant stimuli for adult learning overwhelmingly arise from the "primary environment". For adults, of course, depending on the dominant concerns at that particular stage of their development, these are such things as job, family and death (Lowe 1975:52-3).

The developmental sequence of motivations for adults has been
divided by Kahlen into "growth--expansion" (e.g., career, marriage, family related) and later "insecurity--threat" based motives (e.g., decreasing status with age, physical changes, time and money limits, skill deficits resulting from technological advances etc.) (Ferrier 1969:221).

Accordingly, it is well recognized that adults are motivated primarily from within by present problems concerning their daily life. (Schueler 1960:44, McLeish 1960:29). Wanieicz's (1976:82, 177) study has also indicated that the most important reasons for adults seeking learning opportunities are practical in nature, clustering around "personal growth" and "practical goals". It was found that 35% placed "personal growth, development or fulfulment" first in importance while 33% indicated employment and financial status as primary motives. The study of Johnstone and Rivera in the U.S.A. identified three similar major categories for motivation: vocational, personal development and improving social relations (Lowe 1975:53).

It is difficult to pick up on one motivation as being universally important, for as Ferrier (1969:218) maintains, "middlescents" are not a homogenous group with uniform motives...

Instead, their inner drives and impulses must be analysed as a sequence of motives and stresses which gradually but radically change as they mature and move through their life cycle.

An illustration of this in the museum setting is Dixon's (1974:185) findings which establishes the relative importance of the educational motive in museum attendance as increasing significantly with age. Perhaps it is because educational institutions have not recognized the changing nature of their motivations that the majority of adult learning is undertaken outside the normal range of institutional support (Fenland 1979).

After Carl Rogers (1960:69) and J. R. Kidd (1973:101), motivation is a key determinant to whether learning occurs at all. If museums are going to be successful in adult education, they must begin to take adult motivations more seriously in the planning of educational programs. As Schueler (1960:45) maintains, to treat adult motivations the same as those of children, as museums have been doing in the past, is in fact insulting to the adult and his/her self-directed nature. On the whole, museums have failed in this
area.

As Dixon has determined, adults are selecting museums not merely for entertainment, but significantly, for educational reasons as well. Over 80% of respondents saw museums respectively as "rewarding", and as "educational not entertaining" (Dixon 1974:39). Predictably the more highly educated, the more likely those surveyed classified the museum as educational rather than entertaining (Dixon 1974:60). In fact, Dixon (1974:245) asserts that because visitors have this high educational expectation of museums, they do become disappointed because their expectations in this regard are not fulfilled.

Of course, there are a multiplicity of other motivations behind museum attendance ranging from "stimulation" to the seeking of "shelter" (Wriston 1969:2). Few respondents are able to articulate them easily or identify one as being most important however. Despite this, R. E. Morris (1968:56) has identified four major motivational categories stimulating museum attendance: 1) curiosity (both intellectual and sensationalistic), 2) the wish for social prestige, 3) objective interest "as one form of the general desire to become an educated person", and 4) enthusiasm.

Recreation--entertainment motives also appear high on the list. It is a mistake however, to conclude that "recreation" motives exclude "educational" ones.

To some people at least, the museum is a sort of intellectual entertainment centre, where pleasant forms of educational experience add zest to life (Edwards 1976:12).

Beyond this, Burcaw (1975:137) maintains...

Visitors who are principally seeking recreation still demand interpretation; they want informed people to explain things. Many visitors to museums with quite adequate labels still prefer guided tours.

As well as confirming the importance of the recreational motive 2, Dixon's (1974:30, 167) study indicated that what may be identified as family--social motives are also important.

In the general field of Adult education, Kidd (1973:106) identifies "social" motives as being highly significant in most adult educational choices. For example, participants in National Farm Radio Forum overwhelmingly reported that their motivation was primarily "neighbourliness and community spirit" and "enjoyment of
discussioneven above and beyond the perceived educational advantages of the program.

Veverka's (1979:6) work has indicated that, using Maslow's hierarchy, visitor selections of topics in an interpretive setting most often reflect "belongingness--affiliation" motives. It was also noted here however that not many education programs have been directed at this type of motivation. Again museums are falling down in their responsibility as educational institutions by not planning on the basis of important visitor motivations.

Another piece of the traditional wisdom dispelled by the Dixon report is that more adults visit museums to view special temporary exhibits than come to see permanent exhibits. Larrabee (1967:17) has noted that this may in fact have been a result of the very bias in education programs toward the special exhibits "...to such an extent that the special exhibit has become the only reason to go to a museum." It has been noted that it is primarily the availability of education programs which is a major factor in attracting visitors to museums (Daifuku 1960:78). According to Dixon's findings, however, 44% of visitors indicated that they were motivated by the desire to see a permanent exhibit, while 38% reported that a special exhibit had attracted them.

Once the visitor is inside the door, of course, motivation continues to be important in determining the quality and quantity of the learning. Daifuku (1960:75) and Screven (1974: ) lament the lack of knowledge about the actual educational effects of exhibits.

It is important for the maintenance of motivation that feedback or the "consequences" of the interactive behaviour stimulated by the original motivation are in fact rewarding. C. G. Screven (1974:15) states...

While there are many factors which influence visitor motivation in museums (for example peer group interests, the "glamour" of certain artifacts, educational background, museum fatigue, crowding), probably the most important underlying factor is what happens to the viewer when he actually attends to something in the exhibit. When he attempts to read a label, does he become confused? If so, this bit of productive behaviour is likely to be discouraged. When he looks for certain features in some vases, does he find them? If so, he is more likely to continue looking; if not, he is likely to quit looking.
Screven (1974:15) continues...

Therefore, to "motivate" viewers to spend the necessary time and effort to learn from an exhibit, we must arrange things so that productive exhibit-attending behaviours (eg. searching, reading, answering, comparing, distinguishing etc.) are followed by consequences which encourage their repetition while non-productive behaviours (guessing, sloppy comparisons etc.) are followed by consequences which discourage their continuation.

The implication here, of course, is that museum educators must take an active role in the planning of exhibits. Although this type of interdisciplinary cooperative planning is the ideal, again, in practice, the concerns of the educators are often not considered seriously enough by those in curatorial roles during the development of exhibits (M. Shawid, personal communication).

Along with considerations of why people are motivated to come to museums, it is also important, if museums are to fulfill their responsibility for educating the public, to examine why people stay away.

Much of the motivation militating against museum visits arises from a general negative image of "education" per se, the imposing nature of the buildings themselves, as well as a perception of the exclusive nature of the clientele served. Dixon's (1974:172-3) study found that...

Among the problems identified by non-visitors were: the sameness and passive nature of the museum experience; the inconvenience in getting to the museum; a set of negative attitudes toward the museum building, which they perceive to have a forbidding and overpowering air; and a feeling that museums are appreciated by those who are prepared in advance with information about them.

Museum visiting was seen by half of the respondents to be "unchanging", and "not modern" (ie, not "with it"), and over 66% believed that visiting museums was "something not convenient to do" (Dixon 1974:39, 41, 120).

As well as stressing the public's image of the museum as "a peacefully sleeping repository", Burcaw (1975:171-2) refers to a study done in the early sixties which found that the mass media has presented the museum in an extremely negative fashion. Museum workers are portrayed as "rather stupid", "shy and neurotic and unhappy", while visitors seldom come to museums unless engaged in "something curious or illegal or unusual". An elitist and even racist image
pertains today (Burcaw 1975:174). Dixon (1974:43, 130, 175) finds that one third of those surveyed believe museums to be "only for intellectuals," while 47% feel that to really appreciate museums a visitor must have some foreknowledge.

On the other hand however, many adults are alienated by the perceived orientation of museums toward children. Larrabee (1967:15) asserts...

The public apparently thinks of museum education as something for children...where the only role of the adult seems to be to keep children from wrecking the place.

An increasing segment of the adult population, the "elderly" also have special perceptions and real physical difficulties which motivate them to avoid museums. Despite their "natural orientation" toward the past dealt with in museums, elderly visitors are seriously under-represented in attendance figures. Dixon (1974:19-20) reports that participation in museum visits sharply declines with age, especially after 49. For example, in the year prior to the study, 60% of those aged 30-64 attended a museum, while only 41% of those over 65 did so. (Dixon 1974:108). At the same time however, Dixon (1974:177, 182) discovered that the actual desire to participate in museums is not effected by age, while the older one gets the more likely is it that museum visits are found favorable.

What, then, is holding the elderly back? According to Dixon (1974:246) accessability and availability of museums are key factors here. J. Sunderland (1977:22) points to "agism" (the analogue of racism) and to the many real or perceived barriers to participation of the elderly. Factors such as public transit, fear of crime and going out at night, discomfort in new situations, reluctance to attend alone, architectural impediments (also a significant problem for the handicapped), and admittance fees are identified.

These happen to correspond very closely to the reasons for non-participation in the general field of adult education (Lowe 1975:42). The most important factors here are identified as negative attitudes toward "education" and the lack of "inappropriateness, inconvenience, or geographical maldistribution" of facilities.

An indication of the real inaccessability of museums to the aging is given by the finding of a survey by the National Council
on the Aging in the U.S.A. which revealed that, despite an interest in community facilities, only 1% had visited a museum within the past year (Sunderland 1977:22).

Since, as Kidd (1973:113) asserts "...most of the interests associated with most forms of learning endure or even intensify throughout life..." it is obvious that museums are failing a large and increasing proportion of its adult audience. It is essential to begin planning educational programs with the growing elderly population in mind.

In general, the implications of the above are that museums must spend more time and effort attempting to reach the non-visitor, not to mention the media, in order to change the negative image of the museum. This image cannot help but be a major factor in non-attendance. It is important to encourage more people to visit museums because, as Dixon (1974:194) has asserted,...

The data suggest that many Canadians expect a museum visit to be difficult and perhaps disappointing on a number of dimensions, but that their actual experience of the museum is easier and far more rewarding than they expected.

Museums are in fact failing the public by not attracting them in the first place.

Now that the major motivations concerning museum attendance have been established, it becomes necessary to examine the needs of the adult within the museum setting. Of course, it is difficult if not impossible, to separate needs from interests or motives. "An interest is often a direct expression of a need, but sometimes it is a substitute" (Kidd 1973:112).

Again, it is essentially a bromide to say a common principle, not only of adult, but of all education, that, if significant learning is to occur, "...the subject of instruction must be adapted to the present needs of the student..." (McLeish 1960:33; see also Kidd 1973:121). Given that education is one of "man's" most important needs in today's world, it is unfortunately the case that the great majority of these needs are not being met by museums (Kinard 1972:15).

In the wide view, as is the case for all adult education, it is necessary to provide further learning opportunities for those with little or no formal education as well as for those who have
completed this stage of their life (Daifuku 1956:37, Patterson 1968:42). Fundamentally, it is important for all to become more critically aware of the society in which they are living” (McLeish 1960:30). Problems such as population versus the means of production and the process of change itself are now demanding comprehensive adult education programs (Daifuku 1956:10). As Bunning (1974:56) has stated...

Therefore, it follows that a continuing type of education throughout adulthood must increasingly become a necessity if we are to cope successfully with the demands of our contemporary existence.

Thus, Goethe's pronouncement cited above must be central to the philosophy of the museum. As educational institutions, museums could and should begin to attempt to meet these needs for continuing learning. For instance, given the nature of today's society and the warnings of those such as Alvin Toffler, it becomes important for museums to involve themselves in preparing the public for increasing change. Many museum professionals such as A. Heine (1977:14) are of the opinion that...

For future generations it will be increasingly difficult to live on this planet and freely partake of the products of this world, coexisting with others, without knowing the earth from its own natural specimens, its artifacts and its history. A very large number of unbiased answers to survival can be found in the accumulated collections and experiences of the museum.

According to A. Farr (1961:265) it is the very failure of museums to respond to these and other "genuine educational needs" which has resulted in the present "hard times" (eg. financial) situation in which museums find themselves. Therefore, "relevance" becomes a key factor here. In general, from all their educational experiences...

Adults expect to find relevance both in the objectives and in the methods employed (Kidd 1973:121).

Cook and Gerard (1969:117) and Zetterberg (1969:29) indicate that this is no less a requisite in the museum setting.

The 1964 International Committee on Museums' Conference on Education and the Cultural Role of Museums identified the following needs to be satisfied by museum education programs: 1) to be shown how to look at things in order to understand and develop receptiveness, 2) to be integrated into society on a number of levels: a)
a) historic, b) contemporary culture, c) the future, d) sense of nationality, e) the safeguarding of all mankind's heritage, f) better international understanding; and 3) the need for profitable leisure time on the aesthetic, emotional and cognitive levels (Zetterberg 1969:41).

One of the major roles for museums to play in the satisfaction of needs is the development of a greater "visual awareness" through encouraging intellectual and aesthetic sensitivity cum expressiveness (see Murphy 1970:14, Finke 1969:60, Zetterberg 1969:59, Harrison 1960:81). According to J. W. Barcoman (1969:41)... The task of the museum educator is to introduce the newcomer to sensory experiences that will stimulate his powers of perception, of feeling and of thought.

Many such as J. T. Murphy (1970:14, 15) maintain that people do in fact need to rediscover and develop the lost ability to respond to the visual world by having the opportunity to identify their aesthetic capabilities in the museum in order to gain the confidence to use them elsewhere in their lives. In the terms of P. Sahasrabudhe "man" has become overly "allocentric" (perceptions based on objectification, emphasis on what an object is) as opposed to "autocentric" (i.e., reacting to affective influences). This state of affairs is said to lead to a dulling of "response--ability" to the visual and ultimately a tendency for prejudiced outlooks. Sahasrabudhe maintains that adults are allocentric, but have tendencies toward secondary autocentricity. Encouraged by the cultural setting, a "socio-centric perception develops. As Sahasrabudhe (1968:51) explains...

As the new stimuli disturb and disrupt the protectedness of the infant years, there is a tendency to deny total encounter with the object and to see the object only as it serves a need, as it allays a fear, or as it can be put to use... But when this becomes the only mode of experiencing the world stagnation sets in; then the useful banishes the real and objects never achieve aesthetic form, reality becomes confined by public parliance and the familiar by public opinion.

The museum, therefore, has a critical role to play in helping to teach how to respond visually to the world of objects. Without this ability, "man" will never "know himself" in Goethe's terms.

On the level of the need determined by I.C.O.M. for enculturation, museums also have an important role in need satisfaction. If, as it is said, "a country with no past has no future", the development of
an "identity", or if you will, a nationalistic awareness of one's natural and historic heritage, is particularly suited to the museum's capabilities. There is a great need for exhibits on local culture and history (Kinard 1972:16) so that, after Cook and Gerard (1969:117), citizens can develop "experience and personal acquaintance with culture".

On the cognitive need level, Harrison (1960:81) identifies the need for adults to be taught to use their mental powers such as logical thought processes through exhibits which do not merely state facts, but show relationships, stimulate thought and encourage clear observation.

In beginning to meet these challenges, museums must first consider what have been referred to by Maslow as primary or biological needs. A good deal of the museological literature is devoted to the physical needs of visitors, but it is too often the case that these concerns remain only theoretical and are neglected in actual practice. Accessibility, comfortable floor surfaces, rest areas, lighting, temperature, refreshments, washrooms, information desks etc. should all be provided (Niehoff 1968). Physiological and sensory ranges must also be taken into account (Hudson 1975:74). The considerations concerning the physical arrangement of the museum become increasingly important as the age of the visitor advances and adjustments must be made to take into account such aspects as the sight, hearing, agility, and rate of comprehension limitations of the elderly (Bunning 1974:59).

In terms of adult emotional needs, visitors need to feel welcome (Zetterberg 1969:42), not repulsed, as many in fact are according to the Dixon study. Museums must also be particularly aware that, as was mentioned during the above discussion of motivation, adults are not children. Separate approaches must be taken.

Briefly, Zetterberg (1969:19-21) has identified the primary differences relevant in the museum setting. Adults have previously structured perceptions of the world which must be considered while attempting to fit the museum experience into their existing frame of reference; otherwise, it may be totally avoided or rejected altogether. Adults attending museums most often find themselves in very heterogenous groups with very much different social dynamics than a school class in terms of teacher--student rank and
status, age range, social class, familiarity with each other etc. Those such as Schueler (1960:41) identify one of the major difficulties in all adult education as being that it too often retains the characteristics of its formal institutional precursor to be really effective in adult learning. In specific reference to museum education, Bunning (1974:57-8) states...

...in my estimation, the main reason why adult education has not achieved the impact on our civilization of which it is capable is that most teachers of adults have only known how to teach adults as if they were children.

Because of their reasons for being in the museum, and in order to meet their need for self-esteem, adults must be treated as being much more autonomous and self-directed than children, or they will certainly resent the violations of their concept of personal maturity (Bunning 1974:58). After Malcolm Knowles, Bunning (1974:58-9) maintains that adult learning needs tend to be related to the immediacy of the situation, focussing on vocational, social and recreational concerns. Therefore, because they are more present-oriented, adults need more problem-centred rather than subject-centred learning opportunities from museums; and further, they require greater accountability for the expenditure of time (Bunning 1974:59). Dixon's (1974:129) study in fact determined that over 40% feel that museums should be oriented more toward the present and the future, although not at the expense of the treatment of the past.

Of course, museums have a responsibility to satisfy the needs of the entire community and must widen their relatively narrow range of clientele (Harrison 1960:81). Community needs should be met through local level planning, since the needs of different areas vary widely (Lowe 1975:47).

However, despite the very great difficulties involved because of the heterogenous nature of the adult clientele, and despite the fact that the needs of the individual cannot be assessed outside his/her community (Bunning 1974:62), museums must also attempt to satisfy individual needs. According to K. Hudson (1975:49) it is not only immoral but absurd to expect the museum audience will all have exactly the same needs. Hudson (1975:74) continues, however, by stating
To meet the precise needs of every member of every group is clearly impossible, and if its task is seen in this way, no museum can possibly succeed. What is more reasonable is to try to identify a very few important reasons for visiting a museum and to do one's best to make the arrangement of the museum satisfy these reasons.

Beyond the individual, there are several minorities who have particular needs. The elderly have already been mentioned in this light. Kinard (1972:15) identifies the need felt by minorities to be recognized in the actual exhibits of our museums. As well, Zetterberg (1969:33, 37) notes the low participation of the "working class" and recommends vigorous new initiatives with labour groups in order to end the "serious underserving" of this minority by museums. Museums should find this task relatively easy since unions are easily identified as groups and, contacted, being corporate and hierarchically organized. Unions are perhaps the closest any adult group can be quickly come to the ideal homogeneity of a school class.

The needs of other minorities such as rural dwellers, who, as indicated by the Dixon (1974:17) survey, participate less and with lower frequency than the majority, must be better served. New efforts in this direction are made even more logical and inevitable due to the recent pronouncements in the museum field about the ideal of "decentralization".

According to Dixon's survey museum visitors are expressing the need for increased participation and interaction with exhibits. Over 60% of respondents felt that museums would be more rewarding if they had more exhibits involving active participation of the visitor (Dixon 1974:130). Veverka (1979:5) confirms this high preference for active versus passive participation in interpretive settings. As Rabinowitz (1973:2) and others are now discovering, museum visitors must be allowed to actually do much more in museums if effective learning is to ensue. However, "active participation" on its own should not become an end in itself. Although "education by active participation is effective", the converse, is not necessarily true. "Active participation" does not always result in effective education (Zetterberg 1969:16). There is a sometimes severe, and perhaps healthy, resistance to "fun and games" in the museum setting.

Finally, it is beyond the scope of this paper to go into great
detail concerning all the ramifications of this examination of adult needs and motivations in the museum setting. A number of the major implications not dealt with above will now be outlined briefly. 

One of the most significant revelations to emerge is the need for a re-examination of the efficacy of one fundamental aspect in museum adult education, and that is the guided tour. At present the guided tour remains the mainstay of educational programming for adults in museums. Indications from this study, however, are that as a result of the individualistic nature of adult needs and motivations and the heterogeneity of adult audiences, the tour in many respects may be totally inappropriate for fostering significant learning.

As Kurylo (1976:22) points out, museums are in fact primarily suited to individual experience. In Zetterberg's (1969:24, 29) terms, museums are ideally structured to allow the learner to engage in self-paced learning through the process of "progressive self-selection". On their own, visitors can retrace and "recapitulate" at will, according to their own interests and comprehension needs.

The "guided tour" approach often must be highly structured and ends up painting with a very wide brush indeed. This may result in the visitor's feeling that he/she has had the museum "rammed down his/her throat".

G. H. Riviere (1971:27 ff) makes a number of suggestions for improving this situation centred on the concept of "controlled freedom" (see also suggestions by Dixon 1974:170-1, Finke 1969:61). A consensus is now beginning to form that the visitor must be increasingly allowed, and in fact coerced, to explore, organizing knowledge on his/her own (Murphey 1970:17, Bunning 1974:60). It is clear that museums must begin to develop a wider variety of approaches to adult education programming beyond the general guided tour.

It is also widely recognized that museums, although some are already at the saturation limit of their capabilities, should extend their adult education programming by collaborating with other institutions such as labour unions and agencies dealing with the elderly (see also Cook 1969:120, Coleman 1927:261, Bunning 1974:63, Sunderland 1977:22-3, Singleton 1970-71:108, Patterson 1968:41, 43).

As Taylor (1973:102) and others have also recognized, the
reverse is also unfortunately true. Museums are underutilized by other adult education institutions.

This basic communication problem, coupled with the type of public image with which museums find themselves saddled, makes a strong case for much increased effort in the area of public relations. Museums must begin to change their negative, stuffy, overly didactic image and begin to raise the curiosity of the non-goer. (Zetterberg 1969:34, Riviere 1971:32, Robertson 1973:100). Education programming has an important role to play here, since, according to Daifuku (1960:78), education programs in themselves are one of the most effective means of attracting visitors.

The public's image of the museum, because it is perceived as such, is real, and therefore must be dealt with as a real problem. The public's ideas for improvement as cited in Dixon's (1974:221-3) report must also be taken into serious consideration. They range from improving labeling, providing free guide books and pamphlets (again tying in closely with the need for individualized learning), better public relations, craft demonstrations and activities, easier accessibility, and free entrance (identified by the greatest number--33%--as being the most important).

In closing, museum educators must also begin to be able to demonstrate the effectiveness of their work in museums if they are to avoid the criticisms of those such as Washburn (1964) and if they are to maintain a significant role in the museum community. Of course, in order to do this, educators must begin to look more closely at the needs and motivations of the museum visitor.

The above discussion has set out what is obviously a demanding if not completely intimidating task for museums -- to really know the visitor. Despite the difficult nature of the problem however, there can be no justification whatsoever for failing to at least begin the planning of educational programs for adults on the basis of a thorough examination of needs and motivations of the adult learner vis a vis the "museum visitor" concept.

Museums are public institutions and must be able to justify their existence by their capacity to serve the interests of today's society, by satisfying the need of society to know itself.

83/03/31
Endnotes

1. Cheney (1977:16) reports that Stats Canada has determined that 5 million Canadians used museums the previous year as opposed to 4.4 million who used library services. Dixon (1974:1035) reports that Canada had over 20 million visits in 1973 and that over a five year period 84% of Canadians visit museums. In the United States, Rabinowitz (1973:1) reports 300 million museum visits which tops all major league sports combined. Patterson (1968:37) indicates that the rate of increase of museum attendance exceeds that of population growth.

2. Dixon (1974:162) found four major themes: learning, enjoyment, seeing the museum and exhibits (as famous or historic places), and social reasons including concern for the children. 82% agreed to the statement "I wanted to learn something"; 71% agreed "I thought the visit would be good for my education and growth; 79% agreed "I wanted to enjoy myself"; 69% agreed "the museum is an inexpensive form of entertainment; 54% agreed "I came because the museum is a famous place".
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