

NATIONAL PRESS CLUB LUNCHEON WITH WAYNE CLOUGH

SUBJECT: SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION

MODERATOR: DONNA LEINWAND, PRESIDENT, NATIONAL PRESS CLUB

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DONNA LEINWAND: (Sounds gavel.) Good afternoon, welcome to the National Press Club for our speaker luncheon. My name is Donna Leinwand. I'm president of the National Press Club and a reporter for *USA Today*. We're the world's leading professional organization for journalists and are committed to a future of journalism by providing informative programming and journalism education and fostering a free press worldwide. For more information about the National Press Club, please visit our website at www.press.org.

On behalf of our 3,500 members worldwide, I'd like to welcome our speaker and our guests in the audience today. I'd also like to welcome those of you who are watching us on C-SPAN. We're looking forward to today's speech, and afterwards I will ask as many questions from the audience as time permits. Please hold your applause during the speech so that we have time for as many questions as possible.

For our broadcast audience, I'd like to explain that if you hear applause, it may be from the guests and members of the general public who attend our luncheons, and not necessarily from the working press.

I'd now like to introduce our head table and guests and ask them to stand briefly when their names are called. From your right, Katherine M. Skiba, writer and author; Llewellyn King, syndicated columnist and television host for *White House Chronicle*; Koko Wittenberg, Associate Editor of the *Current* newspapers and *Voice of The Hill Newspaper*; Anson Hines, director, Smithsonian Environmental Research Center and a guest of our speaker; Austin H. Kiplinger, chairman of *The Kiplinger Washington Editors*

and a Golden Owl at the National Press Club; Betsy Broun, Director, Smithsonian American Art Museum and a guest of the speaker.

Skipping over the podium, Angela Greiling-Keane, *Bloomberg News* and chair of the NPC speaker's committee. Skipping over our speaker for just a moment, Marilou Donahue, Producer/Editor of *Artistically Speaking*, and the speaker's committee member who arranged today's luncheon. Thank you very much, Marilou.

Lonnie G. Bunch, Director, National Museum of African-American History and Culture and a guest of the speaker; Doris Margolis, President of Editorial Associates; Richard Dunham, Washington Bureau Chief of Hearst and a former National Press Club president; and Sonya Gavankar-McKay, host of *Newseum* and a new member.

If you've ever been to Washington, D.C., it's almost a sure thing that you've been to the Smithsonian Institution. With its 137 million things, from the Hope Diamond to Dorothy's ruby slippers, with its 19 museums and 20 libraries, with its world class research centers, and who can fail to mention the world's famous pandas at the National Zoo, it is surely one of the world's greatest repositories of history, science and education.

But the Smithsonian has fallen on some hard times recently. In 2007, its secretary resigned in shame after spending lavishly from the Smithsonian's coffers on his personal whims, what Senator Charles Grassley of Iowa called his champagne lifestyle. Our guest today took the helm of the Smithsonian amid congressional ire and low staff morale exactly one year ago today. G. Wayne Clough, a civil engineer and the former president of Georgia Tech, was elected Secretary of the Smithsonian by the Smithsonian's board of regents just over a year ago. Since then, he's visited nearly every Smithsonian program, museum and outpost, Tweeted his take on the opening bash for the new Ben Stiller flick, *Night at the Museum: Battle of the Smithsonian*, and gotten the blessing of a Bhutanese priest.

Clough says that the 163-year-old institution is "changing the way we do business through the new technology tools available by digitizing its collection so the world can access the museum's holdings." As the 12th Secretary of the Smithsonian, he'll also have to restore the institution's integrity and its aging buildings. Secretary Clough is at the National Press Club today to share his vision for the Smithsonian. We also hope he'll give us the inside scoop on *Night at the Museum*. So ladies and gentlemen, if you will please welcome to the National Press Club Wayne Clough. (Applause)

MR. CLOUGH: Thank you very much. Donna, thank you for that fine introduction, and it's an honor and a privilege to serve as Secretary of the Smithsonian and to be with you today, especially on my one-year anniversary. And I can promise you based on the lavish spending previously, this is the best lunch I've had all year. (Laughter)

But it is fun to end the first year on what I consider a high note, being here. But that's due to my great colleagues and our volunteers and the Congress and the American

people who've made it a good year for this institution. And three of my distinguished colleagues join me here on the dais, there are others here in the audience. But certainly, these are individuals from whom I have gained wisdom and who I find have an innovative spirit, and it is a privilege to work with Tuck up at SERC, with Betsy over at American Art, and with Lonnie at the soon-to-be-museum of African-American History and Culture. So, I welcome them here as well.

I truly believe this is a unique time in history for this 163-year old institution, the Smithsonian. It is a time for renewal and rethinking what our role is in the life of the nation and, indeed the world. We are a global institution. We're entering a new era, one that I'm personally optimistic about. And that's what I want to talk to you about today.

In San Francisco a few months ago, I was at a brainstorming session about the future of the Smithsonian with a group of what we call New Millennials. And for those of us of my generation, those are younger people than me, and many of you in the audience. So, I asked them how could we reach out to them, given the way they communicated? And obviously, it's different than we do. We had a lively discussion, and at one point a young woman looked me in the eye and said, "If you want to reach me, surprise me." And I've thought about that since then. Course, this could be kind of a generational thing where you would say, "Millennials (sic) are always looking for something new and different," or it could be something where you might say they have a different approach. But I think she was saying something more fundamental, at least she meant to say so.

We know that creativity and surprise are two sides of the same coin. And I think what she meant by "surprise me" was doing something not necessarily new and different, maybe, but also bringing creativity to bear on what you need to know, or what you want to know, in an intriguing, delightful, and interesting way so that you will want to know more. That's the advice I think the Smithsonian can take to the bank from this young woman in California.

For my own part, I've been privileged to see the Smithsonian in a way that few have been able to do. Seeing an institution as diverse as the Smithsonian means hitting the road and getting out and doing cross-country in our country, as well as making visits to places like Panama, Kenya and Chile, three of the 88 countries where the Smithsonian does business. Now, if there's anything I've learned in my first year at the Smithsonian, is that it is surprising, and it is inspiring because we have brilliant, passionate people determined to make a difference, a positive difference, in the life of our country and the world.

This is a place where art, history and culture all come together in one institution. We have the capacity to tell the story of America in all of its hopes, struggles, triumphs, creativity, contradictions and courage. Today, we have the opportunity, too, to reach people in ways that literally were unimaginable ten years past. Now, I probably inherited an optimistic nature from my parents who were great people who survived The Depression and helped make this country great, I believe. I grew up in the small town of

Douglas, Georgia, in the Deep South of our nation. Some might say in my younger days, I was a bit wild in those days. I spent a little too much time focusing on fast cars, Elvis and Ann, who was my future bride. I worked my way through college and had the wonderful privilege of going to two great public institutions, Georgia Tech and the University of California at Berkeley. Well, the cars and Elvis are gone, at least Elvis is gone physically, still here in many ways, his music is still here (Laughter). I'm particularly grateful, though, that my wife, Ann, who is here today, is still with me. We're blessed to have two wonderful children and three grandchildren. And because of them, I take my job as Secretary of the Smithsonian, I think, even more seriously because I believe it is critical that this great institution reach out to the young people of our nation.

Now, you heard from Donna about the movie, *Night at the Museum: Battle at the Smithsonian*. It is, I believe, a great family movie, I'd encourage you all to go, we get a small share of the profits. It was a chance for the Smithsonian to let its hair down and to tell people it's okay to have fun and let a little magic seep into your soul when you visit the Smithsonian. Now, we find even though the movie was a little bit tongue-in-cheek, some people still take it too seriously because the Smithsonian was there. And we found in the Castle Building, where my office is, as we go down to the guard station, I find families down there insisting that they go downstairs and get into those archives under the mall. Of course, there are no archives under the mall that I know of. Maybe that's a secret that they're holding for me later. But nonetheless, we hope people did enjoy that movie.

But there's no worry to think that the Smithsonian has gone Hollywood. In fact, we really think where we're headed is going Silicon Valley because of the opportunities offered by technological advances. And among them are the enormous increase in digital storage capacity, the possibility of digitizing our collections and sharing them with people, and the advent of social networking tools. When we used to speak about digital storage, we talked in terms of bytes, tiny bytes. We now have in our grasp in storage devices a petabyte capability, one quadrillion bytes. That's bigger than the U.S. budget.

Now, that means we can put a vast amount of knowledge on devices like this. And this is called a thumb drive. This is just a sample. This one is actually a thumb drive with the Smithsonian logo, and it has a great deal of information about the Smithsonian on it, as well as gives you places to go to get even more information about it. In fact, there's more information on this little device than you can find in all of the bookstores combined at the Smithsonian. Yet, this represents just the beginning of what is yet to come.

Now, we know that many families in America can't afford a visit to the Smithsonian. Although we get 26, 27 million visits a year, there are many millions of people who can't come. So ultimately, we want to put all of our 137 million objects up on a thumb drive and online so that people can access them wherever they live and take part of what we call a learning journey. We want to offer the Smithsonian experience to everyone, not just those who can afford to come here.

Now, this theme extends, incidentally, to those beyond our borders because I believe the Smithsonian has a powerful role in not only informing us about ourselves, but other people about what it means to be an American. The Smithsonian has long reached millions of people through the public portals of its museums and its national outreach systems with our traveling exhibits and our museum affiliates programs. But soon, through technology, we will reach billions of people. And among them will be boys and girls growing up in Douglas, Georgia, like me and new millennials in California; and indeed, people of all the nations of the Earth.

Well, this sounds promising and all very new, but the transformational use of new technology is not new to the Smithsonian. The first Secretary of the Smithsonian, Joseph Henry who was a prominent physicist, was keenly interested in meteorological studies and the fact that there was no weather forecasting capability at his time in 1850. He kept a large weather map on the headquarters in his building, which was the Castle Building, and called on volunteers all over the United States to relay in real time information to him about weather conditions in their areas using that newfangled technology called the telegraph. Well, Henry was instrumental, then, in revolutionizing weather forecasting and actually created the National Weather Service.

So, how do we translate that to our own world? We began by convening a seminar called Smithsonian 2.0 in January where we brought together a group of experts and leaders in the world of new and social media, our digerati, also including Bran Ferren, Clay Shirky, George Oates, and Chris Anderson. And these folks met with a group of very bright and talented people at the Smithsonian who themselves are leading the way in the use of web technology. And working together, they produced a set of what they call mind maps to give us insights about how we can use new technology to connect to new generations and to use those also to help improve the ability to learn and communicate.

Well, during the seminar, one of these young people who had come to visit us through the Smithsonian, our digerati, visited what he called an old school scientist and he told me, "Man, I met this cool old guy who could explain the history of the universe in five minutes. I'm amazed." So generations, we believe, can be crossed at the Smithsonian.

Now, only last week, Richard Kurin's good friend, Mickey Hart, who's a drummer for the Grateful Dead, our generation, recently asked to talk to one of our young astronomers at the Smithsonian Astrophysical Observatory in Cambridge, Massachusetts, because Mickey is into taking light waves emanating from space and converting them into sound waves here on Earth to create the sound of the universe. You can actually see it on his website. And I call that an only at the Smithsonian moment, that someone would be seeking that kind of information-- Mickey Hart would be seeking that kind of information. And we can do it.

Well, picking up on one of the suggestions from our seminar, 2.0 seminar, and thanks to a very generous gift from Smithsonian regent, Alan Spoon, we'll soon hire a new media person who will capture this creativity that goes on behind the scenes at the

Smithsonian all the time, and post it on YouTube where generations can experience the wonder of discovery in real time.

But the larger point really is that surprise comes from creativity, from different ways of looking at the world. With its vast resources, the Smithsonian is a place where such surprising conversations can start and continue. This year, it's the bicentennial of Abraham Lincoln's birth. And in February, we conducted a two-day pilot using our six exhibits on Lincoln's life to see how we might use digital technology to inform people about our collections and inform teachers and students about Lincoln's life. With little fanfare, because it was a pilot, we had 5,000 people participate, logging in from all 50 states and 2,000 cities. Now in addition, the surprise factor was that people from 75 countries participated. We never anticipated that. And that, we think, is a good thing.

People from my own hometown participated, Douglas, Georgia, and a teacher said, "Thank you. This is the next best thing to being there. The moderators responded to any of our comments and the students said this was really cool." So I think this pilot illustrates how the Smithsonian can fill important gaps in K-12 education with our collections and our experts and reach audiences we've never reached before.

In the fall, we'll have a second seminar within a more formal approach where we'll advertise it more broadly, this time focused on global warming, a topic that the Smithsonian has many insights on. This month, I will travel to Wyoming to see the field work of Smithsonian scientist Scott Wing, who's discovered unambiguous evidence for a period of global warming that occurred millions of years ago. His work allows us to see what the world really looks like when global warming happens, as opposed to much of the speculation we hear about it, informing us about that. And there's much more to our climate change capacity through the work such as that being done at Tuck Heinz facility, the Smithsonian Environmental Research Center and the Chesapeake Bay, at the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute in Panama.

Scott's work, of course, couldn't have been possible without the development of new scientific tools we didn't have before that allowed for deep analysis and the sharing of knowledge across his fields. What's all the more exciting is that these new tools are opening knowledge arrays in different fields. In May, I visited the Las Campanas Observatory site in Chile in the high Andes where the Smithsonian's working with an international consortium to build a giant Magellan telescope, a device that will allow us to see stars and universes ten times more powerful and more clearly than those of present Hubble space telescope. The giant Magellan telescope, and similar telescopes, are like time machines in that they can-- What we see from Earth, from deep space, are light waves that have traveled in distant time to get here, millions of years. So future discoveries from this telescope will allow us to see all the way back, perhaps, to the beginning of our universe 14 billion years ago, which is estimated.

Well, not to be left out, our biologists and life sciences are using new technology to do what would have been inconceivable a decade ago, launching a collaborative partnership, an online Encyclopedia of Life, as it's called, that will have a web page for

each of the 1.8 million species known to exist on planet Earth. More than 160,000 pages have been created, they have a way to go, but on each web page, information is able to describe how the double helixes of our DNA strands make us all unique travelers on Earth.

The Encyclopedia of Life is already serving as a place of convergence to allow conversations to take place that would not have occurred before. K-12 science teachers are writing lesson plans and sharing them with other teachers. Children are sending in pictures from their iPhone and asking for “which web page should we look to in our sciences for helping them connect?” These kind of creative uses of the web happen, in large part, because the Smithsonian is a trusted source of information and a trusted meeting place in cyberspace.

But as you know, the Smithsonian is much more than science. We offer a world of history, art and culture, and our future there is no less surprising or less creative. We have a significant contribution, we believe, to make to the civic life of our country. For example, our Smithsonian American Art Museum Exhibition 1934, a New Deal for Artists, reminds us that we've suffered through difficult economic times and survived them before. This celebrates the 75th anniversary of the Public Works Art program with paintings that are poignant and powerful. And to expand the scope of the exhibition at the suggestion of one of our 2.0 participants, the museum put up its entire collection of 1934 paintings so you as a viewer can see the exhibition and then see everything that is there, and things that were not chosen for exhibit.

Now, these works, we believe, that started the conversation that spans generations and it continues at the National Postal Museum with an exhibition, FDR and the Stamps of the Great Depression. Turns out FDR designed stamps himself, and it's a wonderful story. Art can start conversations across cultures, as well as generations. And we offer a world of art; Asian, Latino, American, African, African-American through our collections and the many items also in the American Archives of Art.

And as our country becomes ever more diverse, and this is a strength, but as it becomes ever more diverse, it is important for us to strengthen the cohesiveness of our society. We believe our artifacts and specimens tell wonderful stories illustrating the great American spirit through the eyes of the different groups that make up our country. We're working with others with innovative collaborations to clarify what American means to its citizens as well as what we mean to those in other lands. The challenge for us, as any experienced teacher knows, is to tell these stories in exciting and engaging ways. We believe that's what the National Museum of the American Indian does, as it tells the story of the nation's first inhabitants through our nation's inhabitants. And that's what the nearly-reopened National Museum of American History does with its Star Spangled Banner Exhibition. It's much more than an exhibition, it's an engaging experience. I've been down there many times, and I get chills up my spine every time I go in it.

Through light, artifacts and interactive computer surfaces, you learn the inspiring story of how a flag and an anthem became prominent national symbols for us. And that's what our latest museum, the National Museum of African-American History and Culture, will do when its doors open in the future in its special place on the National Mall.

David Shayt, who was a beloved curator in the Museum of American History, collected unusual objects, often whimsical, that speak to our culture; bells, tools, Playboy bunnies costumes, Q-sticks, crayons surfboards, lunchboxes, and much more. And including poignant objects such as those from Ground Zero at 911, and from New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina. He died last year. He wants to explain his work at the Smithsonian. "There's an accurate perception that we are forever, that we take for and will honor an object eternally. That perception of immortality is very precious to people." I think he spoke for all of us at the Smithsonian, and I think he inspires us continually today.

The Smithsonian, we believe, is entering a new era, one where we will harness the latest technology in pursuit of an age-old mission. We know we can help our nation and the world face many of the challenges that lie ahead. And we'll do so with all the creativity we can muster. And I promise you, we will surprise you. Thank you very much. (Applause)

MS. LEINWAND: You mentioned that just 10 percent of the 1.6 million species have their own web page. How long will it take to get 137 million objects online?

MR. CLOUGH: Well, okay. Yeah, we have made progress because that's a lot of web pages. Funding is a big issue, funding is important to that. And I want to say, first of all, we've had tremendous support from sponsors like the Macarthur Foundation, the Sloane Foundation, and others to help us get to where we are. So, we are building on this and through those contributions making enormous progress.

I think it's estimated in about a year, we'll have it all done, or we'll be very close to the 1.8 million. And the important thing is it's not just standard information. First of all, the photographs are very beautiful photographs, so that takes a while to develop. And in addition, there's information about DNA of the species and what makes a species a species, which is always an interesting question.

The other side of it is we don't really know that there's 1.8 million, that's just approximate, because we're constantly discovering new species. There are maybe hundreds of thousands of species we don't know about. And that's the great danger, that we may be losing them before we know what they are.

MS. LEINWAND: How much money will you invest in digitizing, and will that money come out of the budgets for exhibits?

MR. CLOUGH: Well, that's a good question. And with 137 million objects, we don't expect to do that right away, it'll take us a little while. So we're going to be

working our way through our collections by making choices about those things that we think relate specifically to exhibits that we have, and those things we think that can be used most strongly to support our efforts in education, for example. And so we won't do it all right away. It's probably not necessary for you to see every tick in our collection, and we have lots of ticks and we use that to study infectious diseases. But once you see-- No, I wouldn't say that, once you've seen a tick, you've seen them all, not really. But, the point is that there are things you don't need to have pictures of at this point in time that will be used. Many of those are research collections. So, we'll take our time doing it and do it well and triage into the most important things to come first.

MS. LEINWAND: Will it affect the funding for exhibits? I mean, will it come out of the exhibit money at all?

MR. CLOUGH: No, it shouldn't. The things we see about digitization is it will be complementary to what we do. Everything we do in terms of the digital world could not exist without exhibits and the scholarship that goes into the exhibits in the existing collections. Otherwise, we wouldn't be even thinking about digitization. But we found that the idea that the Smithsonian can do something it's always wanted to do, and that is be a national institution and connect to people all over the country, if not the world, can only be accomplished through digitization. And so, we made it a bit of a priority and if we're lucky in the FY10 budget that we have, we'll be funded and we'll be able to get started on this in the most important areas that we have. No, it won't come out of our exhibits. We need to work to maintain those exhibits in order to give substance to the digitization efforts.

MS. LEINWAND: Speaking of the FY 2010 budget, how is your relationship with Congress going? A couple of years ago, they threatened to withhold, I think, 17 million of the Smithsonian's budget. Are you getting along better with the appropriations folks, and do you expect to get what you asked for?

MR. CLOUGH: Well, we're very grateful for every dollar we receive because we know those are taxpayers, hard-earned taxpayers, dollars. And the Smithsonian gets almost 70 percent of its budget from the federal government. But, I've made probably 30, 35 visits on the Hill. I've always been received very well. What I find is this enormous well of love and respect for the Smithsonian. And so, when I walk into an office and begin speaking to a congressman or congresswoman, it's always on a positive basis and they understand that.

Now, they're facing challenges, they have to make difficult choices. The Smithsonian is a great place, we think, to invest taxpayer dollars, but there are many others as well that the government has to make those decisions on. But we've been, I think, very well treated. Since I've been here, I've seen very positive recognition of what the Smithsonian can do, both on the facilities side as well as helping us on the programmatic side. So, we're very pleased with the support that we've gotten from Congress, and we believe it will continue to be as strong as it's possible, given the budget circumstances.

MS. LEINWAND: By digitizing the museum's holdings, will you be diminishing the museum experience? After all, there's nothing like sitting down at a civil rights era lunch counter, or walking through a rocket ship.

MR. CLOUGH: Well, I think the questioner answered the question, that the real experience can never be duplicated. It's been my belief, and I've been in this digital world for a long time as an engineering faculty member and President of the Georgia Institute of Technology, that the real thing can't be beat. And I also believe that technology is simply something that supports human aspirations. It's not there as a function to itself. Human beings are a tribe, we like to experience things together. We still like to go to movies together, to plays together. We like to go to museums to be with our own kind and see the reaction of other people when they experience wonder at an exhibit.

And the story that I've told people a number of times, but is very true, I had as a young person been very impressed with the starry, starry night idea, that van Gogh painted this beautiful painting, he ended up in Don McLean's song, which was emblematic of my generation. And I had always heard that song and that theme, and I never knew there was a real painting "Starry, Starry Night." And I was at MoMA in New York one time and wandering around, as you often do in a museum. I went around the corner and that painting was there. I almost fell on the floor, I couldn't believe it. And I couldn't believe how long it took me to see this painting. And nothing like that could have ever prepared me for that experience, not a digital one. You can't see the brush strokes on a flat screen, you can't see the passion that an artist put into a painting unless you see the real thing. You can't have that feeling go up your spine when you look at the Star Spangled Banner unless you've been in the exhibit and the Star Spangled Banner. You see how fragile that flag is and know how close our country came to losing it. And so these are things you can only get by having the real thing. So I don't think digital will ever come close to replacing the real experience. I think it will enhance it and encourage more people to want to see the real thing.

MS. LEINWAND: How do you acquire objects, and what in particular are you seeking now?

MR. CLOUGH: Well, we don't have a big budget for acquisitions. We often depend on donors. Betsy and her museum recently, for example, received a gift of the Lichtenstein Head, which was a wonderful gift of a marvelous object of art, which actually had survived the 911 direct hit, it was there at the time. And it was a gift to us. And so, many things are given to us. Many things that we want, every now and then we have people who offer us things, we respectfully decline that we don't need. We have 137 million things already, and so it has to sort of qualify to be in our collection; something that's unique, something that adds to our collection and something our-- It really is a decision made by the curators, not the Smithsonian Secretary. The curators are the experts in all these matters and they know whether we should accept things or not.

It doesn't do us any good, too, to accept something that we might never show. And that's another thing digitization does for us. You accept an art collection and you may never exhibit some of these things, that's a loss. And so, with digitization we can make sure everything is available to people. But we don't accept things unless they meet certain criteria.

MS. LEINWAND: Is there anything that you personally would really love to see at the Smithsonian, like, say, a Michael Jackson lunchbox, or a particular piece of art?

MR. CLOUGH: Well, we've had a number of conversations about that. Of course, Michael Jackson's much on our mind, a great and gifted artist. And if someone was willing to share some of those artifacts with us, I'm sure we would love to have them. We do have, as David Shayt's work shows you, a popular culture section. Just recently, I was in Boston with a number of my colleagues, and Brent Glass, and jointly we accepted from the Boston Red Sox third base from the 2004 World Series victory breaking Bambino's curse. And that was a lot of fun, but there's a problem when you do that because everybody wanted to see it right away and it took us a little while to get it up. But we have it now, you can actually see it.

And, of course, we were looking for-- And I know we're working hard on getting Aretha's hat from the inauguration. Where are we on that one anyway, Brent? Are we getting close?

MR. GLASS: That's the subject of another luncheon. (Laughter)

MS. LEINWAND: What percent of your collection is displayed at any given time?

MR. CLOUGH: The percent that's displayed at any given time is less than 1 percent. And so you can imagine that you don't see a lot of the things, the average person doesn't see a lot of the things at the Smithsonian. I mentioned some of them you might not want to see right away, but most of them are interesting. We do have giant collection centers, two of them in Maryland, that maintain these things. As David Shayt mentioned, when we take in an object, we take responsibility, as Brent says, forever. And that means we have to put them under protected conditions. So that means temperature, humidity control, we have to protect.

For example, we have five signed baseballs by Babe Ruth, one of which I wanted to put in my office. And yes, they do say no to the Secretary. (Laughter) Because my office doesn't have a temperature and light controls and you'd lose the signature over time. So the key is, once we take in an object, is to take care of it. And then I think through digitization, actually share it with people. So ultimately, digitization is the key for people to see everything we have. And as the 2.0 people said, we're getting out of the mode where a few selected individuals make choices about what we the people can see. As I told the New Millennials in California, you own, you, you own 137 million things that you've never seen and that's not fair to you.

And so really, we should not be in a position of hiding things, we should be in the position of sharing things. And what we do also is learn from you about things that we may not know. So, it's a two-way street from social networking. We will learn from you. You may know more about an object than we do, and that can only help in our educational capabilities in the future.

MS. LEINWAND: Can you tell us about a couple of things that are in the basement? What haven't we seen?

MR. CLOUGH: There are all kinds of magnificent and wonderful things. I associate them more with people than I do with the things. For example, I had a wonderful experience of visiting with Terry Irwin, who is-- I would call him our beetle guy. Terry is one of those unique individuals at the Smithsonian, there are many of them, who's passionate about a subject and his just happens to be beetles. And we have one of the best beetle collections in the world, and that's not the music group, that's something else. And we do that in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture because beetles are pests, guess what. And they eat your gardens and they're eating down the beautiful pine trees and the wonderful conifer trees out in the west and we have to find ways to combat these little animals. And so Terry and his colleagues help make those kind of decisions. They understand the creatures and their habits and their evolutionary pattern. So those kind of things are fun.

And recently, of course, we had the case where our feather identification lab became very important because of the Hudson River emergency landing. And when they landed, of course, it was discovered as the pilots indicated, that some birds had been, as they say, ingested into the engines. And so the question came, who were these guys that got into the engines, and where did they come from? And the first place they go, there are seven-- I don't want to make you nervous about flying-- But there are about 7,000 bird strikes in the engines a year. There are about 4,000 or so of those are serious enough to end up at the Smithsonian. And the feather identification lab is headed up by a person aptly named Carla Dove. (Laughter) And Carla is a wonderfully bright, talented, passionate person about birds, and she helped identify that these were indeed Canadian geese. But, they went further working with our migratory bird lab and at some of our special facilities, through isotope analysis, were able to determine these were not Canadian geese that just hang around New York. These were migrating Canadian geese, and so we can't blame that on the Canadians. They did fly down from Canada.

But the important thing for those who are worried about our safety, if they were the kind of geese that just hang around, you can run them off. You can drain the habitat so they don't find them inviting. But if they're migrating, it's hard to do a lot about that. So there's a lot of rethinking going on around that, but that gives you an example of the kind of thing that's a collection that's important to our science and important to our safety.

MS. LEINWAND: You have mentioned that you don't like to hear the Smithsonian referred to as "America's Attic." What bothers you about that phrase?

MR. CLOUGH: Well, for me, of course I grew up in the Deep South and the homes down there don't have basements, but they have attics. And as I remember, something about boyhood and growing up in the south and crawling up into an attic. And what comes to your mind, it's hot, lot of dust motes floating around, a lot of things the people forgot. Now, those could be interesting things, we always love those kids to probability around in things that belong to somebody else. But, those really weren't going anywhere. They weren't of interest to anybody but a little kid who'd crawled up into the attic.

The important thing for the Smithsonian is, it is a place where research and scholarship and creativity takes place and drives the ethic of the institution. It is not a place where collections collect dust and aren't taken care of. In fact, they're very much cared for and they're used in endeavors, if not daily but frequently. They're there for the future. Many of the things that we have that we keep, for example, some of the birds that we have, you can now go back and do DNA studies and figure out something about their evolution and the patterns and what's happening to them, for example, in climate change and what's going on. And so it's an active process, it's a dynamic process. It's not an attic.

MS. LEINWAND: Okay. One audience member asks, or says, his young cousin recently saw the Hope Diamond. I told him it was cursed. He asked if the Smithsonian had been cursed for having it in its collection. What is your view?

MR. CLOUGH: Well, fortunately if you want to really know the answer to that question, the real expert is Richard Kurin, who's written a book on the Hope Diamond. I recommend Richard's book highly to you. We, again, get a small slice of the profits of that book. But, it is a fascinating book about how the Hope Diamond came to be, how it was discovered and how it entered into the French families and part of the Louis sequence of kings, down to the XVI, and how it was captured by the revolutionaries in France. They didn't do a very good job of keeping those things, it got lost. So somewhere in there, through all of these machinations involved with this great stone, a legend built up around it that it was cursed.

Richard proves it is not. Now, some people still like to believe it's cursed, that's okay. In fact, I was told, I think in Richard's book, they say when Harry Winston agreed to give the diamond to the Smithsonian, some people were convinced the Smithsonian would be cursed. I don't believe that's true, I haven't seen that at all. In fact I was, as you mentioned, blessed by Bhutanese monks and I think that eliminated the curse anyway. (Laughter) But, I would say one of the wonderful things to me about that gem collection, and being a geological engineer, it's great, is that it changes all the time. Yeah, the Hope Diamond is there, they have a beautiful new way to display it.

But if you go up, they're acquiring stones all the time. They have people who've left them jewelry collections and stones and so it's funny to me when I talk to people about the Smithsonian and then say about going to see the gem and mineral collections,

say, "Oh, I saw that three years ago." Well, it's different now. There are new stones, there are new, magnificent things in the collection. And so, it's always being updated and I would encourage you not to be deterred by the curse and go see all these beautiful gems the are up there.

MS. LEINWAND: What are some of the top misconceptions about what gets in or what is refused in the Smithsonian's collection?

MR. CLOUGH: Well, I'm not sure, but I suspect-- When it was first learned that I was coming here, I got lots of letters from people who wanted me to present things to the Smithsonian. And some lady had found a coffin buried on her property, she thought that would be perfect for the Smithsonian. And I had to respectfully decline to bring that with me. (Laughter) But it really is a scholarly discourse about whether or not we will accept an object into our collections. It has to have some value, it has to be differentiated. It may have science content that's important to us, it may be quite different than what you would expect, that something that is a fossil, for example, that we would like to have, a fossil collection.

It turns out our collections are very important because they are America's collections. They are the largest collections in the world. We don't willy-nilly take things in and we do, as they say, de-accession things as we find that we have duplications and no need for things, that somebody else has them in another collection that can serve the same purpose. People with collections are getting very serious about this issue because nobody can keep all these collections. So the great museums are doing it.

Many universities, as you've read in the newspapers with their financial problem, are divesting themselves of their collections, which is-- You have to be concerned about that because some of these objects are irreplaceable. The question is who will take care of them, and who will insure that you get to them? So it's a big issue about collections and taking care of them and making sure that we preserve them for America's posterity. Our story, our history, are in these collections of our country. And it could be in science collections, it's certainly in cultural collections.

The Smithsonian is really all about telling stories. That's about it. And collections should tell stories. And the Smithsonian's great art collection, for example, one of the huge strengths is it tells the story of America's creativity, what we love as Americans, too, and the artistry of the creative people who made this country great. So, that's what we try to do, we try to tell stories. Do we have the right collection to tell a story?

Now, what we would be interested in in the future are collections that make sure we mirror the diversity of this country, as an example. I don't think we're there in terms of our collection. As I mentioned, we're going to have no majority in 20 years. Are we representing this new country of ours, and are we collecting things so that we represent the new United States? We have to be there, we have to represent our entire country because that's what we're all about, and we have to do this well and tell the story of America. Our collection should make it possible for us to do that.

MS. LEINWAND: Please give us much more detail about the new African-American Museum, which I understand will be open in five years?

MR. CLOUGH: Well, this is, I think, a wonderful opportunity for our country. And fortunately, it's just around the corner. Lonnie Bunch, our distinguished colleague, is the Director of the National Museum of African-American History and Culture. As you now, African-Americans paid a price to help make this country great in many ways, a long and complicated price in our country, and have made it a great place. They have contributed many things to make our country and our culture great, and we want to celebrate those things.

And so we're going to build a museum that will house objects that will allow us to tell the story. Now, this will be a museum that is projected to cost around \$500 million. It'll be about 300,000 square feet of space, is that about right, Lonnie? It will be about 300,000 square feet of space, and it will be on Constitution Avenue. And we just announced the selection of the architects, which was a wonderful experience, great architectural group. And they're architects who are very respectful of the position this museum has, both that it respect and understand that it is on of a series of museums about America. But also in front of the Washington Monument

And so, some of this building will go a bit underground so that we protect the view lines and respect the view lines of the Washington Monument, that's important. And Lonnie and his colleagues, even though they don't have a physical edifice to put things in, are already creating a collection. And Lonnie, and again his colleagues, have done a wonderful job of reaching across America where there are many wonderful regional African-American museums. Telling people we want to work with them, we want to be the national voice, but we don't want to be the only voice. And we want to work together with them to tell the story of the African-American people and their contributions to this country.

So, I see it as a tremendous opportunity for me personally to come in at this time and to be one of a series of individuals who hopefully can make this dream come true for all of us.

MS. LEINWAND: Okay, \$500 million, that's a lot of money. How's the fundraising going?

MR. CLOUGH: Well, it's going well, surprisingly, so far. Now, that's not to say we don't have work ahead of us. Five hundred million dollars and the deal that was established was that about 250 million would come from the federal government and 250 would come from private sources. And so the Smithsonian has been hard at work, even before I got there, into developing their plans about how to raise these funds. And so far, we've had very sympathetic ears to our visits. I've joined Lonnie on a couple of his visits, but he has been diligent far beyond me working with donors and foundations and corporations and individuals.

Personally, I think that given the opportunity to participate in building one of the last museums on the mall is a remarkable one and that you should-- People and corporations and foundations should want to be there. And we're finding that to be true. So even in this down economy, even at these times, we find people are being very supportive of these aspirations that we have in front of us. So, I feel confident that we'll make it.

MS. LEINWAND: Although the Smithsonian gets most of its funding from the federal government, it's not subject to GAO audits. Why not? And wouldn't GAO audits add to your financial transparency and help make the case to Congress for more funding?

MR. CLOUGH: Well, we are subject to GAO audits, and we are subject to-- We have our own inspector general inside the Smithsonian who helps watch over our activities. As you know, most of the federal agencies have inspector general offices in them, and they are the people-- They're independent of the institution. They report to a governing board. And so our inspector general reports to our board of regents, not to me. And we work with them, we supply them with information, and we seek advice from the inspector general's office, but they do that.

Now in addition, GAO and other entities can conduct audits of the Smithsonian at any time they would like to. For example, we do a lot of research funding and contract research, upwards of \$150 million. The Office of Naval Research is our cognizant agency. They can conduct an audit-- Audit the Smithsonian and the way we expend federal funds at any time they would like. So, we do have a lot of oversight at the Smithsonian, and we respect that when 70 percent of our dollars come from the federal government and the American people, that we have an obligation to be clear, open and accountable for the expenditure of those funds. And we have tried to work to establish that ethic in everything we do since I have been there.

MS. LEINWAND: What kinds of innovative revenue opportunities are you looking at, like the movie?

MR. CLOUGH: Well, obviously we're in a position, like many of the institutions that are in the knowledge business, as we were talking about earlier. If you're in the newspaper business, the book business, the university business, the museum business, or the research business, these are interesting times because there's so much change going on, and in some cases, some fund resources are disappearing and others are appearing. And so, you've got to be an agile institution these days if you're going to survive.

Now, if you are an institution with 19 museums and 137 million objects in your collection, and so forth, you have to work at being nimble and being responsive. And so we are doing strategic planning to help position ourselves so that we will be responsive to the future. And we think that's important.

As we look at the Smithsonian, we're not going to go to the case of charging admission. That's been a tradition at the Smithsonian, we do not. I think it's great to walk into our museums and see families there enjoying themselves and able to do that without having to worry about an admissions charge. So, we're unique. We're open every day of the year but Christmas to the American public and other visitors from all over the world, and it's free admission. Pretty amazing proposition. The federal government needs to support us to that level.

But, that doesn't mean that we won't try to recover costs that are legitimate. Food service, we don't give food away, we actually charge for it. If you buy an object from our book stores or our stores, there is a cost associated with that. So what we're trying to do is to make sure that we recover the cost that makes sense for us to recover. We're not trying to make money. But, we do have issues about having enough curators to keep our collections up and to be able to support the scholarship that we need to support. And so if there are appropriate ways with admission for us to recover costs, then we will do that.

MS. LEINWAND: Would you consider having advertising on your websites?

MR. CLOUGH: Advertising on the website? Well, if you go to National Geographic, you'll find they do a good job of advertising, but we're going to be cautious about our advertising. We recognize that we are a federally supported entity and we have obligations and we have stakeholders who would want us to be very cautious about those concepts. We know National Public Radio and public television do indicate that they have sponsors. I don't suppose that's advertising, but that is an indication of sponsorship. So on websites, we do have a policy which allows the display of a sponsor's name if they've made a significant contribution to the Smithsonian. However, that indication cannot lead you to their corporate or commercial website, that's the distinction between that approach and us. We want to be cautious about it, and conservative about it. But we do want to recognize our donors.

MS. LEINWAND: What are some of the concrete effects the bad economy is having on the Smithsonian? Are layoffs planned? Any change in hours or anything that will affect the public?

MR. CLOUGH: Well, again, remember that maybe 35 percent of our funding comes from private sources and a number of those sources are under some duress. We are an institution that's a big of a hybrid because we have an endowment like a university would have, used to be a billion dollars and it's now around 815 million; still a lot of money. And it generates income for us to do creative things. And I tell people, look, this private funding that we get from our endowment and places like that is the funding that allows us to do the really creative things that we can do. The federal government can't give us that kind of money.

When we did Oceans Hall, which is a fabulous new exhibit in natural history, we had \$50 million in support from other resources than federal appropriation. We could not have made Oceans Hall as spectacular as it is if we hadn't been entrepreneurial about

finding that support. And so, those are the places where we worked to seek that kind of support to do that. But we are very conscious, again, that we are an entity that's supported by the federal government.

MS. LEINWAND: Okay, somebody may be heading at you with a resume after this is over. An audience member asks what are the qualifications to have a career at the Smithsonian?

MR. CLOUGH: Well, that's an interesting question because I'm not sure. When they first called me about this job I said, "Did you call the right person?" Because I was a university president, I'm not sure anything trains you in some of these jobs like mine to be prepared for it. Probably Thomas Jefferson and Leonardo da Vinci could have done a good job, but I don't know anybody else who knows enough of the breadth of the kind of institution like the Smithsonian to do it.

But there are many, many positions at the Smithsonian. And we're not looking for a particular kind of qualification, we're looking for a person. We're looking for a person who wants to create, who has a positive attitude, is a team player, wants to make things happen and bring-- An example would be we're really looking for people to help us with our web outreach, and in the past we haven't looked for that. So I don't think anyone out there should rule out the possibility. We may be looking for something they could bring. We don't have a lot of job openings because it is tight financing, but we do have some and we do have people who are retiring and leaving for one reason or another. And we always need bright and talented people.

And you look across the border, the Smithsonian does science, history, art and culture; broad portfolio. And we can use talented people from all kinds of backgrounds to make the Smithsonian a great place.

MS. LEINWAND: How has the lavish spending of your predecessor affected your tenure so far?

MR. CLOUGH: Well, our meals are a lot more like hamburger and things like that. No. (Laughter) Seriously, from that episode which was a difficult episode for the Smithsonian, a lot was learned. And that's all you should ask of an institution that goes through some difficult times. That it comes out, in some ways, better than when it went in. And I think the Smithsonian learned a big lesson. So, the regents working with the administration of the Smithsonian worked hard to put in an oversight and checks and balances system on the Smithsonian today. So, we have policies about how much you should expend on particular types of events. We have 25 new policies that were written into our charters and our guidelines and so forth for the Smithsonian as to the way we do business. Some of it, incidentally, was logical. It should have been done before the fact.

As having been at a public university, we put many of those things in way before. The Smithsonian was really just behind the time in getting it done. So, it's a good thing that these things were put in. The good news is we put most of that behind us. Those are

in place now, we're working to make sure the implementation is correct. And I can't guarantee you there might not be one person out of our 12,000 volunteers and employees who might misstep on any given day. But, the essence of it is in place now and the understanding is we're done with that, we're moving forward at the Smithsonian, we have exciting days ahead of us.

MS. LEINWAND: The National Zoo came under criticism in recent years for a spate of animal deaths. Has that problem been solved, or is there more that needs to be addressed?

MR. CLOUGH: Well, the National Zoo is a great resource. Of course, it's the only federally-supported zoo in our nation. It's a marvelous facility. Its complement is the Conservation and Research Center in Front Royal, Virginia, which many of you don't get to see, very few do, where we do habitat studies and breed endangered species around the world, particularly American species. That's another place where we hope through digitization to open it up so the rest of the world can see the marvelous work that goes on out there.

I would call your attention to webcam, so you go on the zoo site, look at the webcam. And we just had the successful birth of clouded leopard twins. They're absolutely amazingly cute, big, blue eyes. And there is a webcam for the clouded leopards. There's also a webcam for Cyrano, the newly arrived anteater. As I said, only a mother could love Cyrano, nose is that long. But it's absolutely delightful. There's a webcam for Cyrano. There's a webcam for Kibibi, the beautiful lowland gorilla girl baby who's delightful, these things are there.

Well, the bottom line with animals are they're lovely when they're cute, they're wonderful when they're mature. But they're like us, they die. And so there's always a life and death cycle when you're dealing with live animals. Obviously, we don't want to be the cause of the death of anything in our protection, and we work hard at that. So we put in millions and millions of dollars into the zoo recently to upgrade our fire protection system. The zoo was built largely by public work funds in the '30s, old building. And we're putting in millions of dollars to upgrade those buildings to protect those delightful animals. And in many cases, rare animals that we have in our protection. So we're working hard to see that all the appropriate measures are taken to have the appropriate care for them.

Now, the test of that is you have to go through every so often an accreditation process. And to the credit of the zoo, and John Barry, who was then the director of the zoo, President Obama lifted him out of the zoo and took him to head up the Office of Personnel Management, he's a remarkable guy. The zoo passed their accreditation requirements this year with flying colors. And we feel like we've done everything we should do, as judged by ourselves and as judged by the experts in the field. That's not to say every day, we don't have to work at it and every day we don't have to be cautious about it. But the fact of the matter is, we also know that some of them will expire because they're part of this structure, delicate structure of life.

MS. LEINWAND: We are almost out of time, but before I ask the last question, I have a couple of announcements. First of all, let me remind our members of our future speakers. On July 8th, Admiral Mike Mullen, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff will discuss recent developments in U.S. national security and priorities going forward. On July 10th, Morris Dees, the founder and chief trial counsel for the Southern Poverty Law Center will join us. And on July 21st, Gail McGovern, President and CEO of the American Red Cross, will address a luncheon.

And secondly, let me present our guest with the traditional NPC mug. (Applause) As our last question, can you tell us a little bit about the Bhutanese monk's blessing. We hear that it involved some yak butter?

MR. CLOUGH: I won't go there with the yak butter thing, but what I will say, it was a wonderful experience because we arrived at a time when the great Smithsonian Folk Life Festival was in full swing last year, and it's presently in full swing. We'd invite you all over, a little hiatus, I think, and then it reopens tomorrow-- It reopened today. Lots of fun at the Folk Life Festival.

Each year a country is featured, and Bhutan, a wonderfully remarkable country between India and Pakistan, was featured with some delightful people. And they brought over a number of monks, monks who had never left their monastery, much less their country and had their first time on an airplane. And when they came here, it was a delightful contrast because we were featuring Texas and NASA and Bhutan. And so we thought first of all, we needed to have a boot contest because the Bhutanese monks had these great curling things, and the Texas people had the big boots, and the NASA people had their moon boots, right?

But it was remarkable and the NASA folks had robots roaming around on the mall. And these monks had never seen a robot before. So, when they looked down and saw a robot, they thought it was a real thing. It was just delightful, it was a Wall-E kind of experience. But at any rate, the last day they closed down. They created a temple on the mall and they considered it a holy site and they closed it down with the appropriate ceremony. And Ann and I were delighted to be invited into a small group that were recognized by the monks. And so the yak butter was one thing, but we got the incense blown on us and were blessed. And since I've had a great first year, I think it worked at least for a year. (Laughter)

MS. LEINWAND: I'd like to thank you for coming today. I'd also like to thank National Press Club staff members Melinda Cooke, Pat Nelson, JoAnn Booz and Howard Rothman for organizing today's lunch. Also, thanks to the NPC Library for its research. The video archive of today's luncheon is provided by the National Press Club's Broadcast Operations Center. Our events are available for free download on iTunes, as well as on our website. Nonmembers may purchase transcripts, audio and video tapes by calling 202-662-7598 or emailing us at archives@press.org.

For more information about the National Press Club, please visit our website at www.press.org. Thank you all, and we are adjourned.

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