

# VCA News

P.O. Box 4314

Richmond, VA 23220

Newsletter of the Virginia Conservation Association

Volume 16 Number 4 February 2006

## Upcoming Members' Meeting

### March 16 — Wilton House Museum

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The VCA News is published five times a year and is distributed free to members of the Virginia Conservation Association. The next newsletter will be published in late April 2006. If you have any information (employment opportunities, articles, events) you would like to include in the newsletter, please forward to Tracy Bryan at [tbryan@vahistorical.org](mailto:tbryan@vahistorical.org) by April 24.

#### Hazardous Holdings

For the March VCA meeting, Susan Peckham will report on the Hazardous Holdings panel discussion from the Minneapolis 2005 AIC meeting. She will provide an overview of the panel discussion, including handling suggestions and health and safety policy. The moderated panel discussion focused on hazards found in collections, including bird and rodent droppings, radiation, blood borne pathogens, mold, and chemical agents responsible for contaminating artifacts and surroundings. Chemical agents discussed included arsenic, asbestos, DDT, and Zyklon B.

Not all materials in an archive are paper-based, and artifacts stored along with archival materials may require special handling to keep objects, archives, and handler safe. Handling suggestions were made for ammunition, medical equipment, and cellulose nitrate. Health and safety policy and one institution's chemical hygiene plan was shared. Panelists provided images of hazards and described solutions and resources to use when hazards are encountered.

The presentation of each speaker will be summarized and original handouts will be distributed. The proceedings were summarized in the Health and Safety section of the *AIC Newsletter*, September 2005 (together with answers to questions posed by the audience that were answered by an industrial hygienist), and will appear in its entirety in the next *Book and Paper Annual*.

The co-moderators were Linda A. Blaser, Preservation Officer, and Susan Peckham, Paper Conservator, National Archives and Records Administration; Susan Lee-Bechtold, Research Chemist, National Archives and

Records Administration, College Park, MD; Glen Ruzicka, Director, CCAHA, Philadelphia, PA; Eileen Blankenbaker, Objects Conservator, US Holocaust Memorial Museum, Washington, DC; Nancy Stanfill-McCarty, Senior Preservation Specialist, National Personnel Records Center, National Archives and Records Administration, St. Louis, MO; Jo Anne Martinez-Kilgore, Cariño Conservation of Books and Paper, Albuquerque, NM.

Paper conservator Susan Peckham has treated a variety of historic and artistic works, natural history paper collections, and archival materials. She holds a Master of Arts degree in Art Conservation from Buffalo State College, and a Bachelor of Science degree in Biology from Indiana University. Currently, Susan is employed by the National Archives and Records Administration in College Park, MD. In June 2005, together with Linda Blaser, she co-moderated the 2005 Archives Discussion Group entitled *Hazardous Holdings*.

#### Meeting Details

**Date:** Thursday, March 16

**Time:** 5:30 p.m.—Refreshments and business meeting

6:30 p.m.—Program

**Location:** Wilton House Museum

#### Directions:

From the North, take I-95 to 195. Take the Cary Street Exit. Turn right (West) onto Cary Street Road. South Wilton Road is on the left at the 5400 block of Cary Street Road. Wilton House

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## Virginia Conservation Association 2005-2006 Board

[www.virginiaconservationassociation.org](http://www.virginiaconservationassociation.org)

The VCA is open to anyone with an interest in the care and preservation of art and historic artifacts. Membership includes conservators, curators, historic house directors, collectors, dealers, students, and non-specialists with strong interest in the growing field of conservation.

Bi-Monthly meetings, scheduled from September-May, feature speakers within the VCA and from outside the state, speaking on topics ranging from basic techniques for storage and preservation to the elaborate conservation of some of the most important art and historic artifacts in Virginia.

Meetings are held at many museums and historic sites in Virginia, providing members rare opportunities for behind-the-scenes tours of these prominent institutions. In addition, the VCA sponsors fieldtrips and short courses on conservation topics, enabling members to study and learn in a friendly, collegial setting.

### Officers

President	Carol Boyers Givens	cbgivens@comcast.net	804.364.2096
Vice President	Traci Horne-Flores	LaArtsa@hotmail.com	804.358.2006
Secretary	Karri Richardson	kjrichardson@mac.com	804.304.0244
Treasurer	Diane Ball	dartisian@comcast.net	804.282.7307

### Chairs

Bylaws	Jayne Harding	jayneharding@yahoo.com	804.746.1348
Disaster Response	Mary Scott Andrews	andrewsmmm@earthlink.net	804.741.8970
Education	Patricia Selinger	patricia.selinger@vcu.edu	804.828.1096
	Kathy Gillis	kgillis@vmfa.state.va.us	804.340.1532
Membership	Melba Myers	mmyers@dhr.state.va.us	804.367.2323 x130
Programs	Stuart Bailey Austin	studan@comcast.net	804.716.1309
	Valinda Carroll	valinda.carroll@hamptonu.edu	757.727.5553
Publications	Tracy Bryan	tbryan@vahistorical.org	804.353.4251
	Michelle McClintick	mmclintick@vahistorical.org	804.342.9653
Refreshments	Mary Studt	mestudt@earthlink.com	804.359.2929
	Jennifer Zemanek	jazemanek@yahoo.com	804.725.1928
Webmaster	Lorraine Brevig	HISSTAH@aol.com	804.358.2006

Minutes from the VCA Board meetings will be published on the VCA website. Visit

## Upcoming Members' Meeting — March 16

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is at the end of South Wilton Road.

From the South, take I-95 to 195 North. Follow 195 and take the Cary Street/Floyd Avenue Exit. Turn right onto Thompson Street. Remain on Thompson Street until reaching Cary Street; turn right onto Cary Street. South Wilton Road is on the left at the 5400 block of Cary Street Road. Wilton House is at the end of South Wilton Road.

From the West, take I-64 East. Merge onto 195 and follow to Cary Street Exit. Turn right (West) onto Cary Street Road. South Wilton Road is on the left at the 5400

block of Cary Street Road. Wilton House is at the end of South Wilton Road.

From the East, take I-64 West towards Richmond, merge onto I-64 West/I-95 North. Continue to 195 South and follow to Cary Street Exit. Turn right (West) onto Cary Street Road. South Wilton Road is on the left at the 5400 block of Cary Street Road. Wilton House is at the end of South Wilton Road.

## Minutes from the January 19 Members' Meeting

The business meeting of the Virginia Conservation Association was called to order at 6:18 p.m., President Carol Boyers Givens presiding.

Mrs. Givens thanked Kathy Gillis, VMFA Conservator, for hosting the members' meeting, and the Refreshments Committee (Mary Studt and Jennifer Zemanek) for the delicious food and drink.

Mrs. Givens announced the Board openings for next year:

- Vice President
- Secretary
- Treasurer
- Disaster Response Co-Chair
- Education Co-Chair
- Programs Co-Chair
- Refreshments – both chair positions but anyone is encouraged to serve.

Per the bylaws, nominations are due one month prior to voting which will take place at the members' meeting on May 18. Accordingly, nominations are due by April 18.

Mrs. Givens called for nominations for the Nominating Committee. The following people were nominated:

- Amy Fernandez nominated Bret Headley
- Kathy Gillis nominated Talitha Daddona, VMFA
- Stuart Bailey Austin nominated Kate Hricik, Wilton House Museum

Scott Nolley moved that Bret, Talitha and Kate be elected to the Nominating Committee. The motion was seconded.

Mrs. Givens asked for the e-mail addresses for Bret, Talitha and Kate. These will be made available to the membership in the near future.

Mrs. Givens asked for any nominations for the open board positions. The following nominations were made:

- Nancy Beck volunteered for Refreshments Committee
- Karri Richardson nominated Mary Scott Andrews for Disaster Response

### Committee Reports

#### Membership

Mrs. Givens announced that the VCA Directory will be distributed shortly.

#### Programs, Stuart Austin

The next members' meeting will be held at Wilton House Museum, and the program will be *Hazardous Holdings*. Planning is underway for a fieldtrip in April to Weatherburn's Tavern in Williamsburg (date and time TBA). The final members' meeting will take place on May 18 at Colonial Williamsburg.

Andrew Baxter is planning a fieldtrip in February to Scott McKee's studio in Fredericksburg to see part of the VMFA's Indian marble pavilion. Details regarding time, date and place will be posted on the website.

#### Publications, Tracy Bryan

The deadline for the next newsletter is mid-February.

The next Board Meeting will be held in February 2006 at Wilton House Museum.

The Business Meeting adjourned at 6:27 p.m.

Following the Business Meeting, Claudia Walpole gave a fascinating presentation on textile conservation entitled, *George Washington and the Schoolgirl: The Conservation of an Early 19<sup>th</sup>-Century Silk Embroidered Picture of the Washington Family*.

Amy Fernandez also gave an impromptu presentation on the conservation of the VMFA's Tiffany punchbowl.

### **Nominating Committee Announcement**

The nominating committee was recently voted in by members at the January meeting. We are Kate Hricik, Talitha Daddona and Bret Headley. We've gotten a great response so far from members for the following positions due to be filled this year: Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer; Committee Chairs: Refreshments (one vacancy), Education (one vacancy), Programs (one vacancy), Publications (one vacancy), Bylaws, and Disaster Response.

So if you haven't already, please submit your nominations through the website or by contacting us directly ([katehricik@comcast.net](mailto:katehricik@comcast.net), [tdaddona@vmfa.state.va.us](mailto:tdaddona@vmfa.state.va.us), [bretheadley@gmail.com](mailto:bretheadley@gmail.com)). The deadline is April 18th, so don't delay. Get your voice heard!

## ***In the Hot Seat: Using Local Resources for Innovative Disaster Training***

by Thomas H. Teper

### **Introduction**

Despite the continuing evolution of library preservation, disaster preparedness remains one of the most elementary aspects of any preservation and conservation program. It is also one of the programmatic elements most easily ignored by a library's staff and patrons. The feeling that "it can't happen here" prevails and increases likelihood of an institution neglecting its obligations to prepare for the worst. The basic need to prepare a facility and its personnel for disaster response remains a major concern.

The University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (UIUC) faces any number of potential disaster situations. Tornadoes and severe storms rage across the Midwest on an annual basis. The institution sits reasonably close to the New Madrid fault and the aging facilities housing the bulk of the Library's collections are susceptible to any number of age-related disasters. Moreover, given that the Main Library covers 500,000 square feet of floor space, the risk of accidental or purposefully set fires destroying portions of the collection remains a threat.

As the Library's Emergency Response and Security Task Force completed a new Disaster and Emergency Response Manual in 2004, the need for staff training became apparent. This work fell to the Library's Preservation Committee. As discussions about the training developed, it became obvious that the library's personnel as a whole remained unprepared. Many members of the disaster response team lacked basic familiarity with larger issues of disaster response, let alone familiarity with the plan. While everyone agreed on the need for training, the exact format remained undetermined until a Preservation Committee member mentioned the Illinois Fire Services Institute, a unit on UIUC's campus.

### **The Illinois Fire Services Institute**

Like most states, Illinois supports a fire academy for training or certification of first responders in firefighting, emergency medical response, fire investigation and prevention, hazardous materials, rescue operations and homeland security. Headquartered at the UIUC's campus, the Illinois Fire Services Institute (IFSI) fulfills this role in Illinois through classroom

education, hands-on training and distance education courses. The IFSI campus includes an administrative building with classroom spaces, a firehouse, a fire tower for simulating high rescues, several bunker-like burn sites for simulated fires, parked train cars for hazardous materials response training, simulated collapsed buildings and a number of other prepared facilities. IFSI's faculty consists of a combination of full-time and adjunct professionals.

### **Partnering for Success**

Although initially met with some hesitance by Preservation Committee members, the possibility of working with IFSI was quickly embraced as the training possibilities were considered. Working with IFSI's librarian, the committee arranged for several meetings to present the Library's needs to IFSI's administration and tour the facilities. Most importantly, these meetings provided an opportunity to size one another up, evaluate the potential collaboration and determine if the project would prove worthwhile. Within a short time, all agreed that the potential benefits outweighed the Library's limited budget for this exercise. The Library received support to develop an innovative training program and IFSI would get the opportunity to explore a potential avenue for expanding its mission.

### **The Classroom Training**

Library members and IFSI quickly settled on a schedule that would include classroom training and hands-on exercises. Limiting attendees to those named within the Library's disaster plan, the training began with a classroom session focusing on library disaster preparedness and response, followed by a presentation by a division fire chief that serves the campus. His presentation focused on a first responder's role during an emergency with heavy emphasis on saving lives over property and the benefit accrued by developing and sustaining open lines of communication with first responders prior to an emergency.

After this discussion, participants received boxed lunches and viewed a computer generated walk-

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## ***In the Hot Seat: Using Local Resources for Innovative Disaster Training*** **(continued)**

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through of a *Fire Dynamic Simulation of the 2003 Cook County Administration Building* produced by the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST). The model dynamically illustrated the space in question and included separate time-lapse demonstrations of the spread of fire and smoke through the un-sprinkled site. It then modeled the spread of fire and smoke in the same facility if automatic sprinklers were present.

After lunch, a display of the Library's disaster response supplies and fire fighting equipment provided participants with an opportunity to acquaint themselves with the tools of the trade and organizers a chance to finalize preparations for the afternoon's controlled burn and recovery exercise.

### **The Controlled Burn**

The controlled burn focused on illustrating three points—the destructive force of a fire, the results of extinguishing a fire with fire hoses and the preventative role of sprinkler systems. Conveniently, it also provided materials for the afternoon's final exercise—a recovery exercise and discussion of the difficulty of salvaging materials. Located within a bunker-like structure designed so that observers outside the building could watch a developing fire, the controlled burn provided an opportunity to see how a fire spread, to feel the intensity of a relatively "cool" fire and to participate in the recovery of materials from a burn situation.

Facilities personnel from IFSI set up two shelving units ten feet apart with thirty books on each of their six shelves. A "grill" was then placed five feet in front of each shelf and piled with a combination of wooden pallets and straw. Finally, a sprinkler stand was placed in front of one grill. Equipped with a fusible link, the sprinkler would react once the elevated temperature triggered it, extinguishing one fire while permitting the other to burn freely for a period of twenty minutes. This period roughly calculated to approximate the estimated time needed from the time a call was received until first responders located a fire within the deepest portions of the campus' Main Library.

### **The Controlled Burn's Results**

The most anticipated portion of the day, the controlled burn, provided an opportunity few experience. Yet, it was also dependent upon the most contingencies. Given the cool temperatures and cleanliness of a fire composed of pallets and straw, would the materials burn as expected? If they did catch fire, would there be anything left to salvage after twenty minutes of free burning? What type of smoke damage would result? Moreover, how long would it take to cool the space to enable the salvage exercise to begin?

To obviate some of these concerns, two Preservation Committee members spent a day at IFSI prior to the day of training to pre-burn some items. Intended as a precautionary exercise, the pre-burning ensured that some materials in a variety of conditions remained for the follow-up discussions about on-the-spot priority setting and the salvage exercise. These materials were then placed inside the burn site at a safe distance from the demonstration set for that day.

The material for the controlled burn was set up by IFSI's staff during the last portion of the classroom exercises. As everyone assembled outside, IFSI staff described the particulars of fire behavior, answered participants' preliminary questions and provided a brief tour of IFSI's campus. Then, IFSI personnel lit the fires. As the fires consumed the available fuel and smoke began to fill the room, discussion among participants turned to specific questions about what they were witnessing. Of particular interest to many were the smoke's layering effect and the sudden ignition of the shelved library materials.

Unfortunately, the one major glitch in the training program occurred during the controlled burn. When the sprinkler reacted, it extinguished both fires. While IFSI staff reset one fire to permit the materials on that side of the room to cook further, some of the immediate drama was lost. Yet, the results of the burn exercise could not have been better. Not only did the attendees witness the burn, several actually handled the fire hoses used to extinguish the fire.

As the room cooled from the near 1200-degree temperatures reached during the burn, the participants entered the space. One of the most shocking portions of the session was the wall of humidity that

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## ***In the Hot Seat: Using Local Resources for Innovative Disaster Training*** (continued)

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engulfed individuals as they walked into the still steaming room. While everyone intellectually recognized that the room would be humid, the combination of heat, humidity and smoke generated by a relatively clean fire of wood and straw served to drive home the impact of such a disaster. Discussion quickly turned to the library materials—many of which were still too hot to touch. Armed with the knowledge that it might be hours or even days before library personnel would be permitted into a site after a fire, the oppressive humidity and heat provided ample opportunity to discuss the ongoing risk of damage from mold and moisture.

### **The Fire's Results**

Falling off shelving bowed by heat and scattered on the floor from the force of the fire hose, the library materials in this exercise clearly illustrated a fire's threat to collections.

Some, charred beyond all hope, illustrated the difficulty of recovering a collection from such conditions. While items may be bypassed in an initial salvage, the absence of burned off title pages or barcodes served to demonstrate the difficulty of developing an accurate inventory. Heavier damage on higher shelves clearly illustrated the fire's tendency to rise and inspired discussion about fire behavior in the Library's antiquated hanging stacks.

Melted cassette tape cases unveiled problems of recovery and the costs associated with salvaging content from damaged audio-visual resources. Within the short time that passed between extinguishing the fire and re-entering the burn site, even materials with relatively minor damage from the fire had significantly swollen from the moisture.

When the materials cooled enough to permit handling, participants engaged in exercises typical of more common disaster exercises. Discussion about the selection and evaluation of library materials after a disaster, handling and packing wet and damaged materials for freezing or drying, washing materials damaged with a combination of soot and mud and air-drying wet materials composed the final portion of this exercise. Perhaps the most difficult and the most

rewarding portion of the exercise was the realization that, in some cases, materials would be damaged beyond all hope of salvage. The potential emotional toll associated with seeing one's own library—in some cases, one's life's work—destroyed became apparent to the attendees. While the total items destroyed during this training process was limited, the training's purpose—familiarizing individuals with disasters, the amount of labor required to move even small numbers of damaged material and the potential impact of such an event on a campus' research and educational programs—was clearly articulated.

### **Conclusion**

While disaster training like this may not be possible at all institutions, familiarizing library administrators and disaster response team members with their disaster plan and the potential results of an event remains crucial to the success of an emergency response. The potential for individuals to freeze or retreat from working with such a situation remains high, no matter how well acquainted they are with a printed plan. Engaging these individuals within disaster response exercises and implementing the disaster response plan provide crucial firsthand experience to those with little familiarity with intricacies of disaster response and management. It also provides preservation administrators with an opportunity to vet those selected to fill key roles in the library's disaster plan.

**Thomas H. Teper is Head of Preservation at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. He can be contacted at [tteper@uiuc.edu](mailto:tteper@uiuc.edu).**

***In the Hot Seat: Using Local Resources for Innovative Disaster Training* by Thomas H. Teper was previously printed in *Archival Products NEWS* by Archival Products, Des Moines, Iowa, [www.archival.com](http://www.archival.com).**

## Seminars and Classes

**The National Archives and Records Administration 20th Annual Preservation Conference**  
**Thursday, March 16, 2006**  
**Beyond the Numbers: Specifying and Achieving an Efficient Preservation Environment**

National Archives at College Park  
 8601 Adelphi Road  
 College Park, Maryland 20740

Collecting institutions must fulfill their mission of preserving and providing access to their holdings while operating within a specified budget. Achieving the long term benefits of a preservation environment given fiscal realities is both challenging and achievable.

This conference will explore how institutions - including the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) and others - are approaching environmental control and building design issues given escalating construction costs, increasing energy rates and shrinking budgets.

Cooperative participation in the design and review process allows project managers, preservation and conservation specialists, designers, mechanical engineers, financial officers, facility managers, archivists, curators and others involved in building projects to look beyond the numbers to arrive at efficient environmental control systems that effectively provide for the long-term preservation of the collections.

Presentations will discuss:

- Recent innovations in building design and mechanical systems
- Practical collection, interpretation and use of environmental monitoring data
- Participation in the process of new construction, renovation, and facility review
- Implications of temperature and relative humidity specifications on building and systems design and operations
- Building projects that have achieved a successful balance between providing a preservation environment and controlling costs

Please visit <http://www.archives.gov/preservation/conferences/2006/> for the most current information. For general information, please contact Richard Schneider, Conference Coordinator, at 301-837-3617 or at [richard.schneider@nara.gov](mailto:richard.schneider@nara.gov)

*The Use of Pigments in Manuscripts  
and their Conservation*

*April 10-13, 2006*

*Instructor: Cheryl Porter*

*Etherington Conservation Services*

*7609 Business Park Drive*

*Greensboro, NC 27409*

*Registration fee: \$300 for AIC members;*

*\$350 for non-members*

*Enrollment limit: 12 participants*

*Registration deadline: March 10, 2006*

*In a combination of lecture and hands-on sessions, this four-day course will address the history, geography, chemistry and the actual techniques of color manufacture, with special reference to manuscript painting.*

*For more information and details, visit  
[www.virginiaconservationassociation.org](http://www.virginiaconservationassociation.org)*

**Disaster Preparedness Workshop**

**March 15, 2006**

SOLINET is offering a one-day Disaster Preparedness Workshop at VCU. The session will focus on disaster planning and recovery in a classroom format. The class costs only \$25; \$13 for students. Go to [http://www.solinet.net/home\\_templ.cfm?doc\\_id=3855](http://www.solinet.net/home_templ.cfm?doc_id=3855) Click on "Richmond, VA" to register.

**Hurricane Preparedness Workshop**

**March 20, 2006**

SOLINET is also offering a Disaster Series: Hurricane Preparedness Workshop at Hampton Public Library, on March 20, 2006. You will learn what to do before, during, and after the storm, including where to look for available assistance. The class costs only \$25; \$13 for students. Go to [http://www.solinet.net/home\\_templ.cfm?doc\\_id=3855](http://www.solinet.net/home_templ.cfm?doc_id=3855) Click on "Hampton, VA" to register.

### Conservation Tech Position Agecroft Hall Foundation

Reports to: Curator of Collections, works with Conservation Consultant

Part Time Position/Mondays

Principle duties and responsibilities: Performs regular collection inspection and cleaning; monitors museum environment with particular attention to hydrothermographs and pest control management. Works with the curator and conservator in object movement and rehousing, record maintenance, and special projects as assigned, such as fabrication of facsimile food. Responsible for seasonal maintenance projects and inventory. Works to implement current year phased conservation plan with small treatments of works supervised by conservator. Responsible for some exhibition preparation including mat cutting.

Please contact:

Deborah de Aréchaga  
Curator of Collections  
(804) 353-4241

### CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Visit [www.virginiaconservationassociation.org](http://www.virginiaconservationassociation.org) for details on fieldtrips and workshops!

- MARCH 15 Disaster Workshop at VCU
- MARCH 16 VCA Members' Meeting at Wilton
- MARCH 16 *Feast* Exhibit opens at VMFA
- MARCH 16 NARA Preservation Conference in MD
- MARCH 20 Hurricane Preparedness Workshop in Hampton, VA
  
- APRIL VCA FIELDTRIP (Date to be announced)
- APRIL 10 Pigments in Manuscripts (Four day course)
- APRIL 18 Deadline for submitting VCA Board nominations
- APRIL 21 VCA Salon
- APRIL 24 Deadline for *VCA News* submissions
  
- MAY 18 VCA Members' Meeting in Williamsburg



VCA

P.O. Box 4314

Richmond, VA 23220

#### Next VCA Members Meeting

**Thursday, March 16**

**5:30 p.m.- Refreshments and business meeting**

**6:30 p.m.- Program**

**Location: Wilton House Museum**

**See page one for details!**

**VCA Directories will be distributed at the March members' meeting!**