

VCA News

P.O. Box 4314
Richmond, VA 23220

Newsletter of the Virginia Conservation Association

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Upcoming Members' Meeting September 21—The Hermitage Foundation Museum

Inside this issue:

<i>Upcoming Members' Meeting—September 21</i>	1
<i>Dues Reminder!</i>	2
<i>VCA Salon Report</i>	3
<i>Virginia Preservation Conference</i>	4
<i>VCA Board Members 2006-2007</i>	5
<i>Calendar of Events</i>	6
<i>Insert—Membership Application</i>	

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 October 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 by October 23.

The Virginia Conservation Association opens the fall 2006 season with a visit to the Hermitage Foundation Museum in Norfolk September 21, 2006 at 5:30 pm. On January 7, 2003, Norfolk's Hermitage Foundation Museum experienced a devastating fire. Caused by the spontaneous combustion of a pile of oily rags accidentally left on the site by a contractor, the fire scorched elaborate Gothic Revival woodwork in the museum's music room. Smoke, carried through much of the house by the ventilation system, covered architectural surfaces and extensive collections of Asian, European and American art and furnishings with potentially damaging soot. The initial recovery stages were discussed by Carey Howlett in the September 2004 issue of the *VCA newsletter*. This meeting will offer VCA members an opportunity to see the many changes at the Hermitage in the last three years.

Carey Howlett, who oversaw the recovery process, will present an overview of the disaster and the recovery. Hermitage Curator Kristin Law will provide a history of the collection on a tour through the building. Terry Green, Registered Piano Technician, will offer brief commentary on his work for the Hermitage. Chrysler Museum paintings conservator, Mark Lewis, will be on hand to tell us about the paintings treatments during the tour. Amy Fernandez, who is currently on contract with the Hermitage, will discuss recent treatments as the recovery process has come to a close. Other participating conservators will be on hand to answer questions about their work.

The Hermitage Museum consists of an early 20th century residence surrounded

by twelve acres of formal gardens and natural woodlands and hidden in a residential neighborhood. The property is bordered on three sides by the Lafayette River, a tributary of the tidal estuary that threads through Hampton Roads. Built by wealthy New Yorkers William and Florence Sloane, the house began in 1908 as a five room vacation home but soon became the Sloane's principal residence. Eventually under Mrs. Sloane's active direction, the house was reoriented and expanded to its final forty-two rooms. The original architect and builder of the Hermitage was Charles J. Woodsend, who lived in the Cottage and worked in a substantial workshop adjacent to the Water Tower, both still on the Hermitage property.

The Sloanes were among the leading founders of the Norfolk Society of Arts and the Norfolk Museum of Arts and Sciences, now the Chrysler Museum, also in Norfolk. They established the Hermitage Foundation, a non-profit corporation, in 1937, as a museum to encourage development of arts and crafts and to promote the arts within the community. Ultimately, they contributed the house and its contents, the Hermitage grounds, and all outbuildings on the property to the Foundation. The Hermitage house museum opened to the public on January 1, 1947, although Mrs. Sloane remained in residence until her death in 1953, and one of her sons lived in the house and lead the Hermitage Foundation until the early 1970s. A visit to the Hermitage gives the 21st century visitor a sense of the life and artistic interests of a wealthy family during the first half of the 20th century.

(Continued on page 2)

Membership Dues Reminder

Membership dues are now due. Fill out the enclosed membership form and bring it along with your payment to the September 21st Members' Meeting. If you can't make the meeting in Norfolk, mail your completed application and check, made payable to the Virginia Conservation Association, to the below address before November 15, 2006. Payment must be received by November 15 for inclusion in the 2007 VCA Directory. A \$5 late fee will apply to registrations submitted after November 15!

Treasurer
Virginia Conservation Association
P.O. Box 4314
Richmond, VA 23220

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.

Upcoming Members' Meeting September 21 (continued)

(Continued from page 1)

Description and history taken from www.hermitagefoundation.org

Location and Directions:

The Hermitage Foundation Museum
7637 North Shore Road
Norfolk, Virginia 23505
Phone (757) 423.2052
Fax (757) 423.2410
Info@thfm.org

The museum is located in a residential area east of Hampton Blvd, between Old Dominion University and the Norfolk Navy Base.

From I-64 E:

After the Hampton Roads Bridge Tunnel, take the third exit (# 276) toward VA-406 / NAVAL BASE / TERMINAL BLVD.

Keep to the RIGHT to merge into I-564 W toward the Naval Base and exit immediately for TERMINAL BLVD toward HAMPTON BLVD (Old Dominion University Exit).

Follow Terminal Blvd until the Virginia Port Authority Norfolk International Shipping Terminal gate.

Turn LEFT (south) onto HAMPTON BLVD.

Turn RIGHT on DANIEL Ave, LEFT on MAURY Arch, and RIGHT on NORTH SHORE DRIVE.

Alternate route to avoid Hampton Roads Bridge-Tunnel:

Take I-664 in Hampton through Newport News to the Monitor-Merrimac Memorial Bridge-Tunnel.

At Exit 9 take the Western Freeway (VA-164) to US Route 58 toward MIDTOWN TUNNEL / NORFOLK / PORTSMOUTH MARINE TERMINAL.

Follow US-58 E/ Martin Luther King Highway to MIDTOWN TUNNEL / NORFOLK

The Midtown tunnel ends near the intersection of Brambleton Ave and Hampton Blvd. Follow Hampton Blvd north about 2 miles past Old Dominion University. Shortly after the bridge over Lafayette River, make a left onto North Shore Drive (or onto Daniel Ave, as described above).

From I-264 and I-64 W:

Follow I-264 to I-64 W

Take the Left exit lanes for the Norfolk Navy Base at exit 276.

Follow directions above to Hampton Blvd.

VCA Salon Report

April 2006

French American Partnership Art Nouveau Furniture in America

The Wooden Artifacts Group of AIC hosted a number of French Conservators and Curators for an exchange of information about collections and conservation practices in the USA. The Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, via Kathy Z. Gillis, was fortunate to be awarded one of the Partnership Grants funded by the Florence Gould Foundation and hosted Anna Østrup of Paris, who is a furniture conservator specializing in Art Nouveau furniture.

Among her many activities in Virginia, Anna attended a VCA Salon, organized in her honor. Many thanks to Bievenida Ochs, Mary Scott Andrews, and Carey Howlett for providing the wonderful refreshments for this event. The 13 VCA members who attended were treated to an informal (and tasty!) exchange with Anna regarding conservation practices in France.

Anna and Kathy together examined 14 pieces of furniture in the VMFA collection. All pieces date between 1896 and 1910 and with the exception of one desk by Victor Horta (Belgian), all were designed and/or fabricated by the French masters, Louis Majorelle and Émile Gallé. Two and a half days at VMFA were spent on the careful examination of the 14 designated pieces of furniture. Another day was spent in Williamsburg where Anna enjoyed a tour of the Furniture and Upholstery Conservation Labs and the Anthony Hay Cabinetmaking Shop at Colonial Williamsburg. While in Williamsburg, we consulted with Susan Buck, observing and learning the preparation, examination, and analysis techniques carried out on microscopy samples previously provided to Susan of the VMFA's Art Nouveau furniture. While aware of the technique, this was the closest Anna has come to the actual implementation of examining cross-sections of finishes. She was surprised (and impressed) by the amount of information that could be gathered from such small samples. We came away with a clear conclusion that combining both macroscopic and microscopic information was essential to getting the entire picture of the finish history.

From Anna's experience treating the Art Nouveau collections in France, and the writings of Émile Gallé regarding his techniques, we learned that original applications of finish on Majorelle and Gallé furniture typically would include linseed oil followed by a coat of wax. Additional samples will be taken in the continuing study of this furniture. Anna's insight and experience provided VMFA with guidance on the appropriate appearance of the Art Nouveau furniture in our collection and insight into the methods and materials used to create it. This information will be used to guide us in treatment strategies for this collection. Anna was delighted to be able to familiarize herself with a heretofore-unknown collection of Art Nouveau furniture for future reference in her work. Kathy also hopes to revisit the collections in Nancy with Anna in the not too distant future. A full report of Anna's visit and the findings from our collaboration will be published by WAG and AIC through the generosity of the Florence Gould Foundation.

21st Virginia Preservation Conference and Restore Virginia! Workshop ***September 24-26, 2006***

The 21st annual Virginia Preservation Conference, *Sharing Solutions for Today's Environment*, will be held September 24-26, 2006 in Williamsburg and at Historic Jamestowne. APVA Preservation Virginia's annual meeting will take place in conjunction with the conference on Monday, September 25, and will include a track specifically for members.

This year's conference will feature a track, co-sponsored by the Virginia Association of Museums, for historic sites and house museums. The track's sessions will address effective alternatives to the traditional historic house museum; "green" museums; and care and maintenance of historic sites.

In addition, the Virginia Department of Historic Resources (VDHR) will offer opportunities for people to understand better the values of historic tax credits and easements. VDHR is also coordinating the track on Local Governments and Preservation. The track will include sessions presented by the National Alliance of Preservation Commissions on public outreach and education for architectural review boards and the fundamentals of federal, state, and local preservation law. Also included in this track is a session titled, "Creating a Community Resource Protection Certification Program for Virginia: What It Would Look Like and What It Could Accomplish."

The Preservation Issues track is structured to address the successes and failures of preservation activism in Virginia; the role of archaeology in preservation; and the resources of our national, state, and local preservation organizations.

An exciting addition to this year's conference is a restoration techniques and traditional building trades workshop offered in partnership with the Preservation Trades Network and the Virginia Department of Historic Resources. The workshop will be held at Bacon's Castle in Surry County and Colonial Williamsburg from Friday through Sunday preceding the conference. Restore Virginia! will bring together architectural conservators, architects, and preservation tradesmen to demonstrate and educate attendees about masonry, plaster, wood and timber framing, and building maintenance. This workshop is an absolute "must" for those who have ever tackled or who are contemplating the restoration or rehabilitation of a historic structure.

Registration information for the preservation conference and restoration workshop is available on the APVA's website, www.apva.org/register/.

Information from http://www.apva.org/pressroom/press_release.php?pr_id=34

We need your help!

We would like to provide AIC with a list of favorite restaurants, attractions, shops, wineries, galleries, etc. to be included in the participants' packets for the AIC Annual Meeting in Richmond. Please go to www.virginiaconservationassociation.org and click on Contact the VCA to send us your Richmond Favorites! If your favorite spot is not local, but less than an hour away, include it too. We will compile a list and forward the information to AIC.

Virginia Conservation Association 2006-2007 Board Members

Officers

President	Carol Boyers Givens	cbgivens@comcast.net	804.364.2096
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	Michelle McClintick	mmclintick@vahistorical.org	804.342.9653
Refreshments	Liegh Taylor Acosta	lieghacosta@yahoo.com	804.932.8211
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	Nancy Beck		804.232.0452
	Carey Thompson	jctompson8@yahoo.com	804.353.1811
Webmaster	Lorraine Brevig	HISSTAH@aol.com	804.358.2006

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

AIC's 35th Annual Meeting

April 16-20, 2007
Richmond, Virginia

Location:

Marriott Richmond/Richmond Convention Center

Rates: \$159-single/double; \$169-triple; \$179-quad

Tentative Schedule:

April 16 - Workshop

April 17 - Workshops and Tours

April 18 - General Session, Specialty Group Sessions, Exhibits, and Opening Reception

April 19 - Specialty Group Sessions, General Session, Exhibits, and Party²

April 20 - Specialty Group Sessions

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Visit www.virginiaconservationassociation.org for details on fieldtrips and workshops!

September 21st—Members' Meeting at The Hermitage Foundation Museum

September 24-26—21st Virginia Preservation Conference, www.apva.org

September 25-30—Gilding at the Smithsonian 2006, www.societyofgilders.org

October 23rd—Newsletter submission deadline

November 16th—Members' Meeting location to be announced



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Next VCA Members' Meeting

Thursday, Sept 21

5:30 p.m.— Program

6:30 p.m.— Refreshments and business meeting

Location: The Hermitage Foundation Museum—Norfolk, VA

See page one for details!