

VCA News

P.O. Box 4314
Richmond, VA 23220

Newsletter of the Virginia Conservation Association

Volume 17 Number 5 April 2007

Inside this issue:

| | |
|---|----|
| <i>Upcoming Members' Meeting—May 24</i> | 1 |
| <i>Report from Members' Meeting, March 15</i> | 3 |
| <i>Proxy Form for May 24 elections</i> | 5 |
| <i>Photoshop Workshop</i> | 6 |
| <i>VCA Board Members</i> | 7 |
| <i>Job Postings</i> | 8 |
| <i>Notes from the President</i> | 9 |
| <i>Calendar of Events</i> | 10 |

Upcoming Members' Meeting May 24—VCU Library

Preservation Training Initiative for Small Libraries and Museums in Virginia and South Carolina

In 2003, Ms. Holly Herro organized a partnership between the Virginia Conservation Association, the Virginia Association of Museums, and the University of South Carolina for Phase II of a National Leadership Grant to fund the Preservation Training Initiative for Small Libraries and Museums in Virginia and South Carolina. The grant extension created an "ask the conservator" virtual reference service for small libraries and museums lacking in-house conservation or collection care specialists.

The Preservation Training Initiative for Small Libraries and Museums in Virginia and South Carolina was launched in February, 2004. Several VCA members served as consulting conservators on the project. Ms. Herro will describe this pilot project and provide a demonstration of some of its features.

Holly Herro is the Preservation Librarian and Head Conservator for University Libraries at the University of South Carolina. She started the new Preservation Services Department in October of 1997. Previously, she worked for over five years as an associate book and paper conservator at the Virginia Historical Society in Richmond, VA.

Ms. Herro received her M.S.L.S. from The Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C. She received six and one-half years bench training in rare book conservation from Tom Albro, Chief of Library of Congress' Rare Book Conservation Section;

and for two and one-half years, she trained in advanced paper conservation under Sylvia Albro, Senior Paper Conservator at the Library of Congress. Her training took place at the Albro Conservation Studio in Arlington, VA.

Ms. Herro has organized workshops and talks given to professionals, students, and the general public on various preservation and conservation issues. She is a Professional Associate of the American Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works.

Where:

Virginia Commonwealth University
James Branch Cabell Library
901 Park Avenue
PO Box 842033
Richmond, VA 23284-2033

When:

Thursday, May 24
5:30 p.m.—Refreshments & business meeting
6:30 p.m.—Program

Parking is available at the Main Street Parking Deck, one block from the Library. The cost for parking is \$5. Some street parking may be available since it's between spring finals and summer session. Drivers are advised to heed signs.

Directions to Monroe Park Campus Public Parking Facility
Arriving by I-64 West (from VA Beach, Williamsburg, etc)

- Take Exit #190 for 5th Street and Down-

(Continued on page 2)

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.

(Continued from page 1)
town/Coliseum.

- Turn right at the 7th traffic light onto Broad Street.
- Drive 11 blocks and turn left onto Belvidere St. (US 1 and US 301).
- Drive 3 blocks and turn right onto Main Street.
- Drive 2 blocks and turn left onto Laurel Street and entrance to VCU Parking Deck.

Arriving by I-95 South (from Washington DC, Fredericksburg, etc)

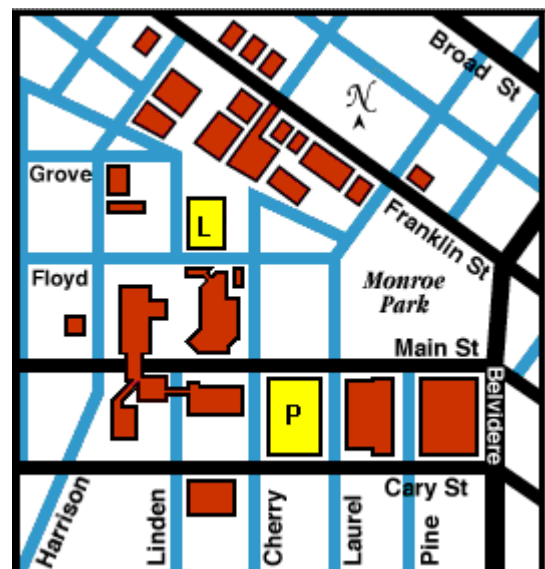
- Take Exit #76B for Belvidere Street.
- Turn left off Exit #76B ramp onto Leigh Street.
- Drive to first traffic light and turn right onto Belvidere Street (US 1 and US 301).
- Turn right at the 6th traffic light onto Main Street.
- Drive 2 blocks and turn left onto Laurel Street and entrance to VCU Parking Deck.

Arriving by I-95 North (from Petersburg, North Carolina, etc)

- Take Exit #74A onto Downtown Expressway (toll), I-195 (the exit ramp is actually on the James River Bridge).
- Drive 1/2 mile, take exit for Belvidere Street (US 1 and US 301).
- Drive 2 blocks along Canal Street to Belvidere Street.
- Cross Belvidere Street and go 3 blocks along Cumberland Street (extension of Canal Street).
- Turn right onto Cherry Street.
- Drive 2 blocks to VCU Parking Deck.

Arriving by I-64 East (Charlottesville, I-81, etc)

- Take Exit for I-95 South and I-64 East.
- Take Exit #76B for Belvidere Street (US 1 and US 301)
- Turn left off Exit #76B ramp onto Leigh Street.
- Go to first traffic light and turn right onto Belvidere Street (US 1 and US 301).
- Turn right at the 6th traffic light onto Main Street.
- Drive 2 blocks and turn left onto Laurel Street and entrance to VCU Parking Deck.



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 August 2007.

Report on the Members' Meeting—March 15

Submitted by Susan Adler

Terry Drayman-Weisser is Director of Conservation at the Walters Art Museum in Baltimore, MD. She has served as President of the AIC and as a board member for Heritage Preservation. She is currently chair of the Certification Development Committee of the AIC. She spoke on March 23 to the VCA general membership on the subject of certification for conservators—the proposed process and what it will mean to individual conservators.

Definition

Certification is a voluntary procedure by which a non-governmental organization attests to the qualifications of practitioners. To be certified, a person must satisfy minimum standards of professional education and/or experience. The minimum standards are established by the professional organization itself. Non-certified individuals can still practice.

Certification differs from licensing, which is set up state by state and is mandatory for practice. Certification is currently in effect in Canada under the term “accreditation,” as well as in the UK.

Benefits

In the 90's government agencies began to define the qualifications of professional conservators through requirements in contracts. Certification allows the professional organization to define qualifications for its own membership. Certification raises the standards of the profession by requiring continuing professional development. The resources that will be made available for candidates for certification will be useful for the profession at large. These include bibliographies; compilation of reference materials; continuing education workshops and programs; and documentation of what defines a conservator.

Certification will give conservators credentials alongside other professionals and in the public eye. Certification will have a leveling effect, removing perceived barriers between program-trained conservators and non-program-trained.

History

In the 1980's discussion was initiated on accreditation for paper conservators, but too many obstacles to the process were encountered. A survey of AIC members in the mid 90's showed strong interest in certification across all specialties and a task force was assigned to put together a model. In 2003 AIC asked its membership if it should proceed with the project; 62% responded favorably. The AIC board is committed to keeping a dialogue open with the membership on this subject.

The Certification Development Committee (CDC) was formed of members from other committees and specialty groups. At the first meeting, all members shared concerns, and each member became a leader of a working group with specified tasks. Some of these tasks required outside consultants—such as education specialists to advise on the wording of test questions. Grant support is being sought to provide these consultants.

Current Recommendations of the Committee

The initial certification process will be for practicing conservators. Certification for related fields (e.g. conservation scientists) may come later. Initial certification will be general, with the possibility of adding specialty-specific certification later. The certification exam will address what one needs to know regardless of specialty, and will include such topics as code of ethics, packing, environment, health and safety, among others. There will be education and experience requirements to take the exam. The exam will be written, proctored, and objective—most likely in a multiple choice format. It is a specific goal of the committee to avoid a subjective format. The exam is expected to be in two parts: the first to address general knowledge and the second to involve case studies that test concepts. A passing score will be required on both parts.

To initiate the certification process, some conservators will be fast-tracked. These will have to demonstrate a higher level of qualification than general applicants and will have to agree to participate in the exam development process; this may mean taking the exam more than once to test the questions. Certification must be renewed every 3 to 5 years (the exact time interval is still to be determined). Renewal will be based on a point system, with points being accrued through a variety of professional development activities. Attending AIC meetings, taking courses, and teaching classes are just a few examples.

AIC Involvement

It is still being determined whether or not a conservator must be a member of AIC to be certified, but AIC will provide support in various ways. If AIC membership is not required, it is likely that non-AIC members will pay a higher fee to take the

(Continued on page 4)

Report on the Members' Meeting—March 15 (cont'd)

Submitted by Susan Adler

(Continued from page 3)

exam. The exact cost for taking the exam has not been established; it will have to be sufficient to cover the cost of the program, but cannot be prohibitive.

The Process

The AIC has been working with the National Certification Commission and other consultants to determine the answer to such questions as “What works?” and “What kind of budget is necessary?” It is hoped that certification will be in place within eighteen months to two years. Applicants will receive study guides, bibliographies, sample questions, and resources for increasing relevant knowledge.

The goal is to have qualified conservators certified—not to set up barriers to the practice of conservation.

Question and Answer Session

Q: Will there be flexibility in the time allotted for re-certification to allow for exceptional family demands, health issues, etc.?

A: Yes, that is the reason for the 5 year suggestion. If 3 years is selected, there will probably be fewer points required.

Q: Can an extension be requested?

A: Yes, or possibly the option of retaking the exam, but professional development is most important.

Q: What if the time period for re-certification elapses?

A: You would probably have to start over at square one.

Q: Why are Europeans so far ahead of us on this issue?

A: The British moved quickly to establish accreditation because the Europeans were developing a program requiring program training. In France the government writes the requirements you must meet to work on government-owned collections.

Q: Will there be a conflict between PA status in AIC and certification?

A: No, both are voluntary and are important and signify different things.

Q: Will there be de-certification for cause?

A: Yes. There will be a commission on certification to decide such issues.

Q: How is this likely to affect granting?

A: Grant-writers already explain qualifications in detail. Certification will probably serve more to inform the public. Some government institutions may eventually make certification a requirement to bid on a contract.

Q: Who will decide what counts as professional development?

A: The committee envisions a very broad range of activities; they will not have to be offered only by AIC.

Q: Will there be prejudice against specialty groups that do not have specialty certification?

A: No. Initially there will only be general certification. Specialty certification may be added later as specialty groups are ready and AIC is capable of handling the added responsibilities. Information from AIC will clarify the meaning of general and specialty certification for the public. Generally there is not competition between the specialty groups.

Q: Will there be a directory of certified conservators?

A: Probably.

Comment by a curator: Curators will be grateful for conservation certification; it will lend credibility.

A: Certification will promote conservators as professionals. Certification will lend credibility that hopefully will be reflected in earning capacity.

Virginia Conservation Association

Proxy Form for Nominees for 2007-2008 and 2007-2009

To vote, please place an X on the line to the left of the nominee.

President (2007-2009 Term)

Andrew Baxter

Vice President (2007-2008) Choose one person:

Stacy Rusch
 Patricia Selinger

Secretary (2007-2008)

Kathy Garrett

Program Committee Chairperson (2007-2009)

Carey Howlett

Publications Committee Co-Chairpersons (2007-2009) Choose two people:

John Watson
 Rick Vogt

Education Committee Chairperson (2007-2009) Choose one person:

Kathy Gillis
 Catherine Dean

Webmaster Committee Chairperson (2007-2009)

Lorraine Brevig

Membership Committee Co-Chairpersons (2007-2009) Choose two people:

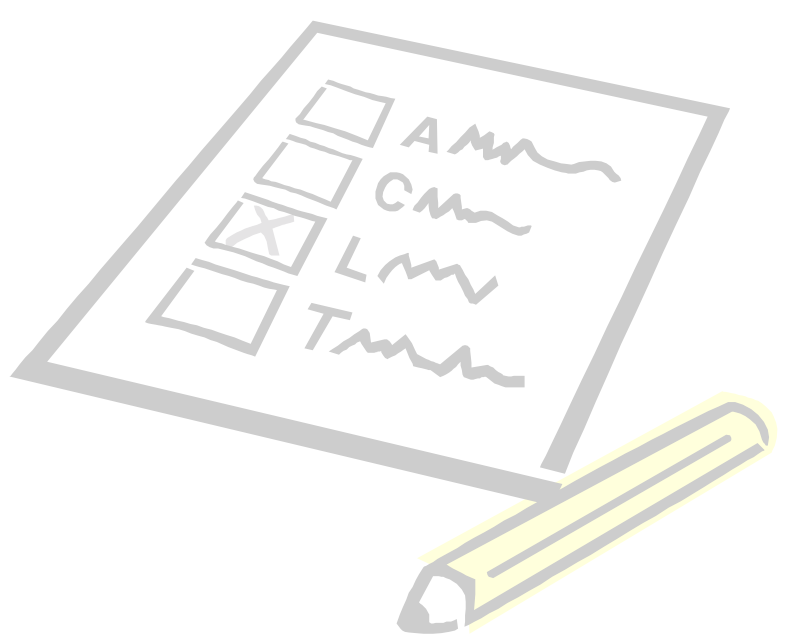
Kate Hricik
 Bienvenida Ochs

Please mail your completed Proxy Form to:

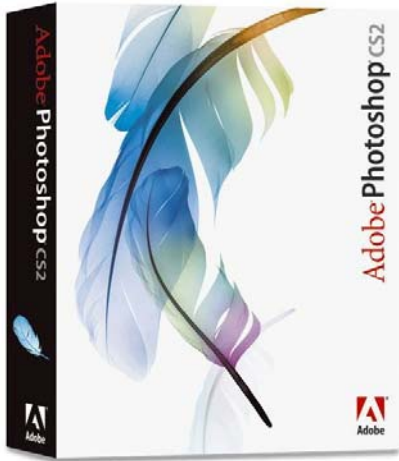
Jennifer A. Zemanek
PO Box 306
Cobbs Creek, VA 23035

Proxy Form must be postmarked by May 10th.

A Proxy Form is also available on the VCA website. Visit www.virginiaconservationassociation.org



A One-Day Workshop on Adobe Photoshop Skills



At the request of many of our members who participated in the Digital Photography Workshop last year, we are offering a follow-up Adobe Photoshop Skills Workshop for dealing with digital images taken for conservation documentation. It is not required, however, that you participated in the Digital Photography Workshop. This workshop will provide hands-on experience for operations most useful to conservation professionals who are interested in becoming more proficient with the tools available with Photoshop.

Instructor: Hil Scott - Media Production Coordinator for the Center for Teaching, Learning and Technology at University of Richmond.

Date: Saturday, May 12.

Location: Multimedia Lab in the Pauley Center for Education; Virginia Museum of Fine Arts Campus

Cost: VCA Members: \$115.00; Non-Members: \$125.00

Time: 9 AM - 5 PM

Parking and Directions: Visit www.vmfa.museum for directions and parking information.

Refreshments included; lunch on your own.

To register, contact:

Kathy Gillis
Virginia Museum of Fine Arts
200 N. Boulevard
Richmond, VA 23220-4007
(804) 340-1532
kathy.gillis@vmfa.museum

Virginia Conservation Association 2006-2007 Board Members

Officers

| | | | |
|----------------|----------------------|--------------------------|--------------|
| President | Carol Boyers Givens | cbgivens@comcast.net | 804.364.2096 |
| Vice President | Stuart Bailey Austin | studan@comcast.net | 804.716.1309 |
| Secretary | Dana Hand Evans | wiltonmuseum@comcast.net | 804.261.7812 |
| Treasurer | Dotty C. Robinson | dotrob327@aol.com | |

Chairs

| | | | |
|-------------------|-----------------------|------------------------------|-------------------|
| Bylaws | Dianne Frederick Ball | dartisian@comcast.net | 804.226.1970 |
| Disaster Response | Mary Scott Andrews | andrewsmmm@earthlink.net | 804.741.8970 |
| Education | Kathy Gillis | kgillis@vmfa.state.va.us | 804.340.1532 |
| | Scott Nolley | snolley@facva.com | 804.226.1970 |
| Membership | Melba Myers | melba.myers@dhr.virginia.gov | 804.367.2323 x130 |
| Programs | Susan Adler | saadler@comcast.net | 804.264.8296 |
| | 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 | Liegh Taylor Acosta | lieghacosta@yahoo.com | 804.932.8211 |
| | Christi Barranger | gab1118@aol.com | 804.741.1180 |
| | Nancy Beck | | 804.232.0452 |
| | Carey Thompson | jcthompson8@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

Job Postings

Bureau of Historic Sites, New York State Parks Position: Conservator (Paper)

The New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP) seeks qualified candidates for the full-time position of Conservator (Paper). The position has a starting salary of \$55,472 with annual performance advances to \$68,267, and is assigned to the Bureau of Historic Sites (BHS), located at the Peebles Island Resource Center in Waterford, New York. This is a permanent position which offers an outstanding benefits package.

Minimum qualifications: Masters Degree in Conservation and four years of professional experience as a paper conservator.

In addition to possessing excellent hand skills and proficiency in carrying out object conservation treatments, the individual must:

- * possess a good work ethic
- * have demonstrated ability to work collegially (and effectively) with other preservation/museum professionals and staffs at facilities that have paper collections
- * have demonstrated experience tracking bench and preventive conservation work and setting work priorities
- * have experience training staff in collections care and emergency response
- * have a demonstrated commitment to the AIC Code of Ethics and Guidelines for Practice
- * be able to stand for extended periods of time, lift and carry 50 lbs.
- * have a valid driver's license

Duties: Based at the Peebles Island Resource Center and working under the general supervision of the BHS Assistant Director, the Paper Conservator performs a broad range of conservation-related tasks for OPRHP's 35 historic sites and 176 parks throughout New York State. Duties shall include, but will not be limited to:

1. carrying out conservation treatment of paper-based collections consistent with AIC Ethics and Guidelines principally for museum exhibits or display within the historic house museum environment
2. conditioning, treating and rehousing works on paper for loan exhibitions
3. treating and rehousing manuscript holdings at sites and parks for use by researchers
4. as necessary, recruiting, training and supervising conservation technicians, interns and volunteers
5. managing the operation of the paper conservation lab - e.g. supply and equipment ordering, inventory, administrative paperwork
6. serving on BHS project teams of allied professionals - e.g. exhibit, emergency response and salvage
7. work with five other conservation disciplines to deliver a range of preventive conservation services principally to state historic sites - e.g. CAP and discipline-specific surveys, collections care and object handling, outreach training to site and park staff in emergency response and salvage, environmental monitoring within OPRHP facilities.

Please submit a letter of interest and resume to: John Lovell,
Assistant Director, Bureau of Historic Sites, OPRHP, P.O. Box 219,
Waterford, New York 12188 OR send letter and resume electronically to
John.Lovell@oprhp.state.ny.us.

Assistant or Associate—Paper Conservator

The Midwest Art Conservation Center (housed in the Minneapolis Institute of Arts) is seeking an Assistant or Associate Paper Conservator to work with the Senior Paper Conservator. This is a full-time position with occasional travel. Applicants must have an advanced degree in art conservation with a specialization in paper conservation or comparable training. The successful candidate will be interested in long-term employment with opportunities for advancement. The position calls for treatments on a wide-range of works. The title and responsibilities will be commensurate with experience. MACC provides excellent salaries along with outstanding benefits including full medical, dental, 403b contributions, 4 weeks vacation, AIC membership, and professional development.

MACC is an independent, nonprofit, regional center providing comprehensive conservation services in Paper, Objects, Paintings, and Textiles. The staff is collaborative, very collegial and works innovatively with the curatorial and collection professionals of hundreds of Midwest institutions including the largest art museums, libraries and archives, as well as small and mid-sized institutions with unique and varied collections. MACC has newly designed laboratories located within the latest expansion of the Minneapolis Institute of Arts.

Please mail or email your curriculum vitae and two references to:

Colin D. Turner
Executive Director
Midwest Art Conservation Center
2400 3rd Avenue South
Minneapolis, MN 55404
cturner@preserveart.org

Notes from the President


Submitted by Carol Boyers Givens

As my position comes to an end this May, I often think back to the wonderful exchange of ideas, accounting of history, conservation treatments, and information we have all shared. This was culminated for me at the AIC Conference, where I met new conservators, in all different fields, from all over the country. There was an astounding exchange of knowledge, new treatments, and even objects brought back to new light with extensive scientific research.


I hope this time for you has been similar, not just with the exchange of information for our profession, but a time for meeting new people and making new friends and contacts. Museum Professionals and Conservators are their own breed and strengthen each other like B-72.

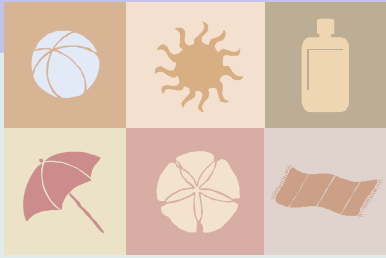
I want to thank the wonderful board I have had the chance to work with these past two years. They have incredible talents that were benevolently and generously used for the good of the VCA.

Hope to see you at the next meeting.
Carol Boyers Givens



A big thank you to Melba Myers for all her wonderful work designing, printing and setting up/taking down of the VCA booth. A congratulations to the people who manned the booth and a special thank you to Dotty Robinson, Stuart Austin and Nancy Beck for scheduling the booth.





THANKS TO ALL OUR MEMBERS FOR A GREAT 2006-2007. HAVE A GREAT SUMMER AND WE WILL SEE YOU IN THE FALL!

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Visit <http://www.virginiaconservationassociation.org> for details on fieldtrips and workshops!

May 10—*From Real Britannia to Duchess of Richmond: The Frances Stuart Story*—location: VMFA

May 11-13—*America's Anniversary Weekend*—Jamestown <http://www.americas400thanniversary.com/>

May 17—*Furnishing the American Interior from the Federal Era to the Gilded Age*—A Lecture Presented by Maymont and the Valentine Richmond History Center—location: Valentine Richmond History Center

May 24—Members' Meeting—IMLS *Ask the Conservator*—location: Virginia Commonwealth University James Branch Cabell Library

VCA

P.O. Box 4314

Richmond, VA 23220

Next VCA Members' Meeting

Thursday, May 24

5:30 p.m. – Refreshments & business meeting

6:30 p.m. – Program

Location: VCU Library

See page one for details!