

VCA News

Newsletter of the Virginia Conservation Association

P.O. Box 1314, Richmond, Virginia 23220

www.VirginiaConservationAssociation.org

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VCA NOVEMBER MEETING STUDIO TALKS

5:30 PM. November 20, 2008

VIRGINIA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The November VCA meeting features two presentations addressing two very distinct conservation endeavors: 1) the intensive conservation treatment of a single massive work of art, and 2) the use of survey and analytical techniques on a large body of objects to answer broad questions about human migration. We will hear from a very familiar face to the VCA, president Andrew Baxter, as well a conservator newly arrived in Virginia, Caitlin O'Grady, who recently began work as archeological conservator at the Department of Historic Resources.

In addition to the presentations described below, there will be a short business meeting which will include discussion of the recent proposal to establish a new Outreach chair on the VCA Board of Directors. Refreshments will be served at 5:30 PM, and the program will begin at 6:30.

Conserving the White Marble Pavilion. Andrew Baxter, Conservator in Private Practice.

The White Marble Pavilion, an impressive mid eighteenth-century Indian Mogul Empire structure with inlays of black and mottled red stone, will be installed in the new wing of the

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts in the spring of 2009. The marble structure is currently housed in the loft/studio of Scott McKee and is being worked on by McKee, Andrew Baxter, and James Robertson. Andrew will



discuss approaches to the conservation and restoration of the Pavilion.

Research and Analysis for "Journeys of Our Ancestors: Migrations in the American Southwest"

Caitlin O'Grady, Conservator, Virginia Department of Historic Resources.

Conservation and conservation science research have played a key role in the development of the exhibition "Journeys of Our Ancestors: Migrations in the American Southwest" at the Arizona State Museum, University of Arizona. A

comprehensive survey and analysis of all exhibition materials has provided nuanced technical descriptions of objects, identified new areas of research, as well as provided context regarding material and object provenance. Caitlin O'Grady will discuss the ways in which the tools of conservation, conservation science, archaeology and archaeological science inform the reconstruction of ancient and historic migration pathways, providing a central focus to the planned exhibit footprint. □



The Virginia Historical Society is located at 428 N. Boulevard (at the corner of Kensington and N. Boulevard). Parking is directly behind the building.

UPCOMING VCA MEETINGS



January 26, 2009

The Library of Virginia

An Evening With The Stars: A Sampling of Treasures From The Library of Virginia's Special Collections with Tom Camden, Director of Special Collections, 5:30 PM, January 26, 2009. The Library of Virginia, 800 W. Broad Street, Richmond.

The Library of the Commonwealth of Virginia, established in 1823, is extraordinarily rich in its holdings. Some of its most dazzling items are housed in the Library's Special Collections Department. Tom Camden, Director of that department, will talk about "what's so special about Special Collections" sharing his own passionate interest in special materials while also sharing some of the treasures of the Commonwealth. On hand for private and up-close viewing will be items related to Thomas Jefferson and Patrick Henry; an exceedingly rare atlas with a startling provenance; special and unusual format materials such as a pre-Braille story book for blind children published in Staunton, Virginia; and the ever-popular miniature books and fore-edge paintings, to name a few.



March 19, 2009

The Virginia Historical Society

Andrew Baxter will speak on the conservation of metal sculpture and objects in the Oval Office, the Presidential Study, the Lincoln Bedroom, and most notably, the Monroe Plateau in the State Dining Room at the White House. A follow-up field trip to the White House will be scheduled for April.



May 21, 2009

Mariner's Museum, Newport News

Tour and presentations on the ongoing conservation and exhibition of the USS Monitor. □



LAST CALL!

Membership Co-Chair Bienvenida Ochs reminds us that NOVEMBER 15th is the DUE DATE to send your Application / Renewal and money, in order for your information to be included in the 2008 - 2009 membership Directory.

See the membership renewal form on page 8. □

VCA FIELD TRIP - THE WHITE HOUSE

April, 2009; The White House, Washington, DC
Join Andrew Baxter for a tour of the White House to view some of the objects he has treated including the Monroe Plateau. The date will be announced in early 2009, and must be flexible because of scheduling issues at the White House.



Please Note...

The Office of the Curator will be conducting the tour, and we will get access to areas exclusive of the regular tour. This special tour is only available to professional organizations related to the arts community. Initially this will limit the size of the tour to 30 with the possibility of adding a second tour, conditions permitting. This is the reason for limiting the field trip to current VCA members. They should have the first opportunity to take advantage of the benefits of membership. If desired, a future VCA trip may be arranged to The White House through our congressional representative. This tour can include spouses, guests and other interested parties.

A specific date has not been set for the field trip (probably in April) because the new administration needs to be settled in for this to happen. However, current VCA members who would like to attend the field trip should E-mail Andrew Baxter at bronzeetal@comcast.net. A list will be made in the order they are received. □

ANNUAL HOLIDAY PARTY

Mark your calendar for this year's VCA Holiday Party, Saturday, December 6th, 6:00 to 9:00 PM at the Headquarters of the Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities (APVA), 204 West Franklin Street, Richmond, Virginia. □

STUDIO SPACE FOR LEASE

Rick Vogt has a small studio available for lease. It is on W. Broad Street in Richmond. It has about 800 square feet with a small mezzanine and a private bathroom. The space is currently being remodeled and will be ready during the month of November. Contact Rick at 804-358-1651 □

PICTORIAL REPORT FROM THE OCTOBER 25 FIELD TRIP TO HAMPTON UNIVERSITY (HAMPTON) AND THE CHRYSLER MUSEUM (NORFOLK)



Valinda Carroll, shown here in her lab at the William R. and Norma B. Harvey Library at Hampton University, discussed her work to establish policies and practices for the care, storage and treatment of Special Collections. Valinda showed examples of a collection of rare ca. 1900 editions designed by Alice C. Morse and Margaret N. Armstrong. These two artists were responsible for designing covers and page borders for several poetry books with photographs by the Hampton Institute Camera Club. VCA president Andrew Baxter is at left.



Andrew Baxter described the techniques he used to conserve Anna Hyatt Huntington's "The Torchbearers", a remarkable cast aluminum sculpture at the entrance to Norfolk's Chrysler Museum of Art. Treatment to restore the bright aluminum surface of the sculpture included laser-cleaning by VCA member Scott Nolley.



Carlos Moya, conservation intern at the Chrysler Museum of Art, demonstrated the use of the lab's new Fujifilm IS Pro UV-IR camera. The camera and imaging software, originally developed for use in criminal forensic labs, is an extremely useful tool for examining art objects with specific wavelengths of light. Here, Carlos is conducting infrared examination of "Christ on the Cross", attributed to Gerard David.



Chrysler Museum of Art conservator Mark Lewis discussed the conservation of Gaston Lachaise's "The Man". Andrew Baxter used heat techniques to reduce greenish corrosion on the sculpture, followed by pigmented wax to enhance the patination.

REPORT ON THE ICOM-CC CONFERENCE, NEW DELHI, INDIA

by Emily Williams



The 15th Triennial ICOM-CC (International Committee of Museums-Conservation Committee) conference was held in New Delhi from Sept 22-26, 2008. ICOM-CC is the largest of all of ICOM's international committees with a membership of approximately 1600 conservators worldwide. ICOM-CC is divided into 23 working groups, which focus on a diversity of topics and materials ranging from Legal issues, Education and Training in Conservation to Wet Organic Archaeological Materials, Metals, Sculpture and Polychromy, Stone, Textiles and Scientific Research. ICOM-CC holds Triennial meetings in which all the working groups are brought together and in between the triennial meetings many of the working groups hold interim meetings.

The conference organized around the theme of "Diversity in Heritage Conservation: Tradition, Innovation and Participation" was attended by over 570 delegates from 75 countries. It was the first time that ICOM-CC has organized a triennial conference in Asia and was seen as a reflection of the growing diversity within the conservation profession. The 148 papers presented at the conference also highlighted this theme covering topics as diverse as the most recent scientific techniques being employed in conservation, the development of on-line conservation training programs in preventive conservation and the use of haptic sensory technology to deliver training materials by simulating a real experience, the establishment of sustainable conservation initiatives in Cambodia, the rewards and hardships of serving on a conservation team in the Antarctic and the need for a binding code of ethics to govern the treatment and display of human remains. Although on occasion, the conference could be frustrating, especially when three papers one wanted to hear were all scheduled in the same slot, it was an excellent opportunity to hear about the latest research in a number of areas all at once. Some of the more interesting developments included a call in the plenary session to abandon the term ethnographic conservation as its implication of "otherness" is no longer appropriate to the inclusion of indigenous and descendant communities. A move to set up a new working group focused on public engagement in conservation promises to be a useful way to pull together public education initiatives worldwide and develop new tools that can help conservators engage with the public. A paper given

by Mary Brooks decried the fact that although conservators are very successful at communicating meaning and identifying significance in art objects and have been at the forefront of some theoretical advances within the museum community, we are much less successful at communicating this information to the general public. Too often we allow ourselves to be pictured as disembodied hands wielding tools or hunched over an artifact with protective clothing which masks not only the wearer but also their engagement with the material. She encouraged conservators to find better ways to engage with the public and communicate the nature of artifacts, their materials, material degradation and the process of understanding the art. She cited the Nelson Atkins' website *Tempus Fugit* [www.nelson-atkins.org/art/PastExhibitions/tempusfugit/default.htm] as a successful example of this sort of interaction.

In addition to the papers, several cultural experiences enriched the conference including a wonderful exhibit of traditional art forms. Artisans specializing in the production of such as bidri-ware, parchment puppets, batik and embroidered cloth, miniatures and lac bangles, demonstrated their manufacturing techniques and spoke about traditional repair methods. Tours to conservation laboratories, museums and archaeological sites were also offered. The site I toured, the Mehrauli archaeological park featured among its masterpieces a 1600 year old pillar that is made of 98% wrought iron of such purity and workmanship that it has withstood corrosion throughout its history. The subject of several scientific studies, the most recent of which (Balasubramaniam, 2002) concluded that this is due to a naturally occurring passive protective film at the iron-rust interface.

The next ICOM-CC triennial conference will be held in Lisbon, Portugal in 2011. However in the Interim, both the Metals working group and the Wet Organic Archaeological Materials (WOAM) working group will be meeting in the US in 2010. WOAM will hold their meeting in early summer in Greenville, NC at Eastern Carolina University (home of the Queen Anne's Revenge Shipwreck project) while Metals will hold theirs from October 11th-15th in Charleston, SC.

Balasubramaniam, R. (2000) "On the Corrosion Resistance of the Delhi Iron Pillar", Corrosion Science, Volume 42: 2103-2129. □

VCA BOARD MINUTES FROM THE OCTOBER 7, 2008 MEETING

Attendees: Andrew Baxter, Carey Howlett, Dotty Robinson, Kathy Garrett-Cox, Bienvenida Ochs, Rick Vogt, Melba Myers, Stacy Rusch, Mary Studt.

Andrew reported that a Nominating Committee needs to be in place by the January meeting. He proposed that solicitations for the committee be announced at the next general meeting on November 20.

Andrew proposed that further discussion is needed regarding the "Outreach Board Position." Since there are many opinions on this position regarding whether it is needed and/or whether it should be combined with another position it was agreed that this needs to be put out for discussion at the November general meeting. Some of the suggestions are that the position should be a stand alone board position; combined with the Vice Presidents duties; or combined with the Chair of Education duties. After the discussion at the general meeting it would need to be voted on the May meeting in order to be added to the by-laws.

Rick Vogt attended two workshops recently one entitled "Chemistry for Conservators" and the other "Lab Safety." Dianne Roland also attended "Chemistry for Conservators." Rick felt that the "Lab Safety" workshop was really well done and might be something that we want to host in the future.

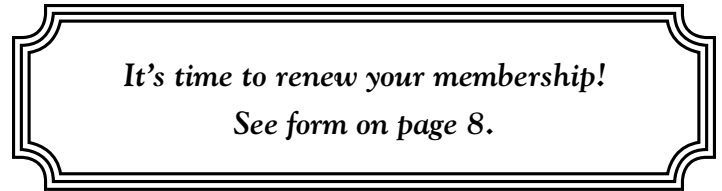
Programs

The field trip to the Hampton Roads area is scheduled for October 25th. The trip will include Hampton University, the Chrysler Museum, and the Moses Myers house. Valinda will be sending out the itinerary and lunch options this week.

There will be studio talks in November for the general meeting. The talks will take place at the Virginia Historical Society. Carey is still looking for people to present so if you are interested please contact him or Valinda.

Andrew is still planning the spring field trip to the White House. He will have a firm date for the trip in February.

The location for the holiday party is under discussion. Andrew contacted the Virginia House regarding the rule of having to have a licensed caterer. He felt that if we wanted to have the party there it was workable. We would be able to bring some dishes but we would need to have a caterer provide some also. Rick Vogt suggested a



friend who owns a mid eighteenth-century house. He will contact him and see if this can be arranged. Rick also suggested Walkerton Tavern in Henrico County as a possible location for the party. He will contact the curator and see if it is available. Any other location suggestions are welcome.

Andrew spoke with Tom Camden, head of Special Collections, at the Library of Virginia and he is willing to host a meeting there and do a talk regarding some of their works. Carey will talk to him about possibly hosting the January meeting.

We still need a location for the March meeting. Andrew will give a presentation about some of the items that he worked on at the White House before the field trip in April. Dotty suggested that the Henrico libraries have meeting space that is free and suggested in particular the Tuckahoe and Dumbarton libraries.

Andrew reported that David Voelkel is now at Red Hill in Brookneal, Virginia. This may be a good place for a future meeting or field trip.

Membership

We need to send out another email regarding membership. This one will only have the membership form and a reminder to renew or join by November 15th in order to be in the directory.

Treasurer

Dotty reported that we have had a slow start to renewals this year with only 25 at the time of this meeting. It was suggested that Bienvenida will send out an email regarding memberships. She reported that our current balance is \$5,741.03.

Vice President

Stacy Rusch will contact John Watson regarding receiving a color copy of the newsletter for the archives. If you have any old files regarding the VCA when you were on the board you need to bring them to Stacy for the archives at the Virginia Historical Society. Kathy Garrett-Cox ☐

2008 – 2009 VCA OFFICERS

President: Andrew Baxter
 Vice President: Stacy Rusch
 Secretary : Kathy Garrett-Cox
 Treasurer : Dotty Robinson

Refreshments: Patricia Selinger
 Mary Studt
 Education: Dianne Roland
 Membership: Bienvenida Ochs
 Melba Myers
 Publications: Rick Vogt
 John Watson
 Bylaws: Traci Flores
 Webmaster: Lorraine Brevig

2008 – 2009 Committee Chairs

Disaster Response: Beth Fulton
 Programs: Valinda Carroll
 Carey Howlett

REPORT ON SEPTEMBER MEETING

Richmond collectors Bill Royall and Pam Kiecker hosted the September VCA meeting at their recently-restored Tudor Revival home on Cary Street. The house, designed by the noted Richmond architect Carl Lindner, was built in 1928 for Mr. and Mrs. J.P. Hummel, and a garden was added in 1929 by Charles Gillette, Virginia's preeminent 20th-century



Tracy Bernabo, center left, describes her work as curator of the Royall collection and as project manager for the restoration of the 1928 Tudor Revival house.

landscape designer The house is furnished with an outstanding collection of art and decorative arts assembled by Mr. Royall over many years, including works by such artists as Francis Bacon, Theresa Pollak and Emilie Charmy. Of particular interest is Mr. Royall's collection of works by 20th-century metal artisan Oscar Bach.

Following a reception in the garden, VCA members received an introduction to the house, its restoration and its collections by Tracy Bernabo, who served as curator of Mr. Royall's personal and corporate collections beginning in 2001 and as project manager for the house restoration in 2006 and 2007. Tracy spoke of the various aspects of the restoration of the house and collections, which included significant work by VCA members Nancy Beck, Andrew Baxter, Scott Taylor and James Robertson. She also introduced landscape designer Anna Aquino and her assistant Jane Short, who discussed the restoration of the



A ca. 1930 door by Oscar Bach in the Royall collection, originally designed for the penthouse suite of New York builder Michael Paterno.

Gillette garden.

Nancy Beck described the process she used to provide a decorative finish for the central hall, designed to complement the Tudor style interior: a pigmented glaze

above painted textured plaster. Tracy also introduced James Robertson, who was responsible for impressive stonework undertaken in the restoration of the garden,

and pointed out some of the glass conservation carried out by Scott Taylor. Andrew Baxter described the conservation of several of the objects by Oscar Bach, including nearly 400 hours of work on an intricate wrought and cast marble-topped console table. He removed black paint to reveal remnants of a paint-simulated vert antique surface on the legs, matched this surface where it was no longer present, and cleaned the highly ornamental pierced stretcher of the table, consisting of a Bacchanalian scene in cast bronze with a bright water-gilt finish over red bole.

Perhaps the most notable Oscar Bach object in the collection, with an equally notable story of acquisition, is a striking ca. 1930 door featuring a medieval knight in



Hosts Bill Royall and Pam Kiecker with VCA President Andrew Baxter, conservator of several Oscar Bach objects in the collection.

(Report from the September meeting, continued from page 7)

(Right) A marble-topped console table by early 20th-century metal artisan Oscar Bach, after conservation by Andrew Baxter. Treatment included extensive treatment of the gilded areas and partial repatinating of the green areas.

(Below) VCA members Kathy Gillis (left) and Stuart Bailey Austin stand next to an early European carved stone well head acquired for the property by original owner J.P. Hummel. The well head rests on a millstone found on the property during site preparation.



shallow relief, its surface glowing with a wealth of metallic patinas. The door, which represents an unusual confluence of arts and crafts sensibility with Art Deco design, originally served as an entry to the penthouse suite of builder Michael Paterno in New York City's Lincoln Building. Upon the building's demolition the whereabouts of the door became unknown to Bach collectors, with its early existence documented solely in publications by Bach and in periodicals such as *Country Life*. Tracy Bernabo described her remarkable 2001 rediscovery of the door, when it unexpectedly appeared for sale in an online classified ad. The door had been used for years in a now-defunct New Jersey restaurant, then stored for many more years in a horse barn. Despite this history, the door needed only light cleaning once acquired for the Royall collection.

The Virginia Conservation Association thanks Tracy Bernabo for her excellent presentation and Bill Royall and Pam Kiecker for their gracious hospitality and for the opportunity to learn about their house, garden and outstanding art collection.

Carey Howlett □

Photo Credits This Issue

Page 1: Andrew Baxter (left) and Caitlin O'Grady (right).

Page 2: Internet (no copyright found)

Page 3: Carey Howlett

Page 6: Carey Howlett (top left and bottom) and Ty O'Hair (top right)

Page 7: Carey Howlett (left) and Ty O'Hair (right).

**THE VIRGINIA CONSERVATION ASSOCIATION
2008/9 MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION & DUES PAYMENT**

Name (as it is to appear in the Directory): _____

Address: _____

City & Zip Code: _____

Title: _____

Institutional Affiliation: _____

Work Phone: (____) _____

Home Phone: (____) _____

Fax: (____) _____ E-mail: _____

I am a ...

<input type="checkbox"/> Conservator	<input type="checkbox"/> Curator
<input type="checkbox"/> Technician	<input type="checkbox"/> Student
<input type="checkbox"/> Administrator	<input type="checkbox"/> Other

Area(s) of Specialization:

<input type="checkbox"/> Archaeological Objects	<input type="checkbox"/> Furniture	<input type="checkbox"/> Preventive Conservation
<input type="checkbox"/> Architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> General	<input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> Books & Paper	<input type="checkbox"/> Objects	<input type="checkbox"/> Textiles
<input type="checkbox"/> Collector	<input type="checkbox"/> Paintings	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)
<input type="checkbox"/> Ethnographic Objects	<input type="checkbox"/> Photographic Materials	

Are you willing to be a Disaster Response Volunteer in the event of an emergency? Yes _____ No _____

The Virginia Conservation Association is open to all interested individuals. To become a member, complete this form and return it with your dues payment of \$25.00 (Regular) or \$20.00 (Student – Enclose a copy of valid student I.D.). Application and dues payment must be received by November 15, 2008 for inclusion in the 2009 VCA Directory. A \$5 late fee will apply to registrations submitted after November 15, 2008.

Mail your completed application and check made payable to The Virginia Conservation Association to the address below before November 15, 2008:

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