



NEWSLETTER OF THE VIRGINIA CONSERVATION ASSOCIATION

P.O. Box 4314, Richmond, VA 23220

October 2013 ~ Volume 23, No. 2

From the President

Dear VCA friends,
Your Board has been very active in planning some remarkable and fun events for the coming season:

- ❖ Our November Members Meeting at the Dewitt - Wallace Gallery at Colonial Williamsburg will have four brief presentations by CW staff members and will also we be able to tour the galleries.
- ❖ Our Holiday Party is unique this year as it will be held at Bacon's Castle, an as yet unused but fascinating venue for our annual get together.
- ❖ In January we will be meeting at Maymont and hear presentations on "Conservation Conundrums" that all of us have had to deal with from time to time. As of this writing, we still have openings for speakers for the Maymont meeting - so please share your story by contacting Karri or Mary to get on the program.
- ❖ Our spring field trip looks like it will be at Gari Melcher's Belmont Museum and Studio in Fredericksburg.

Additionally, we're working on an outreach event at VCU to draw in students from the surrounding colleges to hear presentations designed to inspire and attract students to consider careers in conservation.

(continued)

VCA Members' Meeting
Thursday, November 21st
5:30 p.m.



Photo credit: Shelley Svoboda

DEWITT-WALLACE MUSEUM
326 West Francis Street, Williamsburg



"A Colonial Williamsburg Sampler"

Featuring:

John Watson Christopher Swan
Pam Young Shelley Svoboda

See Information on Page 3

Carpooling is encouraged

REFRESHMENTS NEEDED

Please volunteer to bring a dish
Contact Marla Curtis
mncurtis@verizon.net

We are also working on the possibility of a day or weekend long seminar on a variety of conservation issues. More information will follow on these projects as they develop.

Payment of membership dues has been extended to the November meeting. Help us meet our membership goals and renew today. Encourage new members as well!

I look forward to seeing everyone at the November meeting!

Best regards,
Rick Vogt

We're on the Web!

Visit us online at
www.virginiaconservationassociation.org



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Virginia-Conservation-Association



CONSERVATION CONUNDRUMS!

CONTRIBUTORS NEEDED

JANUARY 16, 2014
Maymont

Provide a short (10 min or less) Powerpoint presentation on your unusual conservation situation/treatment: obscure materials, non-traditional treatments, unusual art forms, fixing previous "conservation" efforts

**A GREAT OPPORTUNITY TO SHARE YOUR
PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE**

CONTACT KARRI RICHARDSON KJRICHARDSON@MAC.COM
OR MARY ANDREWS ANDREWSMM@MAC.COM

Save the Date

~ December 14, 2013 ~



VCA Holiday Party 6-9 pm

BACON'S CASTLE
465 BACONS CASTLE TRAIL
SURRY, VIRGINIA

Built in 1665, Bacon's Castle is Virginia's oldest documented brick dwelling. It is owned by Preservation Virginia.

TOURS will be offered during the party
The **GIFT SHOP** will be open



VCA Member's Meeting

Thursday, November 21, 2013

"A Williamsburg Sampler"

Featuring

*John Watson, Christopher Swan,
Shelley Svoboda, and Pam Young*

*DeWitt Wallace Museum
Williamsburg, Virginia*

Join the VCA for an enlightening evening of insightful talks by four conservators from Colonial Williamsburg. All presentations will take place at the DeWitt-Wallace Museum with some additional time to view exhibits in the galleries. Admission to the museum for VCA is free.

**Please plan to arrive by 5:30 for refreshments.
The meeting will begin promptly at 6:00 pm.**

- ❖ John Watson will discuss conservation issues in the exhibit currently open at the Museums of Colonial Williamsburg, "Changing Keys: Keyboard Instruments for America 1700-1830." The exhibit includes 28 instruments, of which 14 can be played, along with 6 interactive action models and 13 audio stations.



- ❖ Christopher Swan will host a short tour in the Museum gallery, "A Rich and Varied Culture: The Material World of the Early American South," highlighting some of the latest furniture findings and treatments. This new exhibit was organized regionally with a rolling installation and will open February 2014.

- ❖ Shelley Svoboda will highlight recent treatments on paintings by Robert Feke and William Dering.
- ❖ Pam Young will discuss treatment of a rare watercolor, "Portrait of an African-American Woman." Treatment included removing an acidic paper lining that revealed an inscription and information about its provenance.



Directions and Parking:



Traveling I-64 Eastbound:

(approximate travel time from Richmond is 1 hour)

- Take Exit 238 from I-64 East, toward Colonial Williamsburg/US 60/Camp Peary
- Merge onto VA-143 toward Williamsburg
- Turn right onto VA-132 South (becomes S. Henry Street).
- Francis Street will be approx 2.3 miles further. The Museum is on the corner.
- Please use designated parking areas.

Traveling I-64 Westbound:

- Take exit 242A to merge onto VA-199 West/ Marquis Center Pkwy toward Williamsburg
- Turn right onto S. Henry Street
- Francis Street will be approx 2 miles further. The Museum will be to the right.
- Please use designated parking areas.

The DeWitt Wallace Decorative Arts Museum is part of the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation. Programs and exhibitions at the Museum are supported by the DeWitt Wallace Endowment Fund.

VCA BOARD

Meeting Minutes
October 21, 2013
James City County Library

ATTENDEES:

RICK VOGT
MARLA CURTIS
NANCY BECK
BETH FULTON
TOM SNYDER
VALINDA CARROLL
KARRI RICHARDSON
PATRICIA SELINGER

Absent Board Members: Will Hoffman, Kathy Garrett-Cox, Mark Lewis, Mary Scott Andrews

Report of the Treasurer:

Nancy provided a detailed report for the budget from August through October. As of October 21, the VCA has a total balance of \$12,812.50. Only 30 Members have renewed so far, bringing in \$750. To-date expenses total \$213.39 out of a projected \$2155.

Nancy looked into investing money as a non-profit and it is possible. Wells Fargo recommended mutual funds. The problem VCA runs into, however, is not having a continuous person to manage the funds. Investment tools are now required to have a name and street address to attach to the investment. If we put this under the current President's or Treasurer's name, they will be responsible for the fund. Nancy and Rick will go back to the bank together to find out more information. Nancy also learned that we can donate to another 501c non-profit, so we will be donating \$500 to each the FAIC and the George Stout Fund.

Vice President's Report:

December 14 is the Holiday Party at Bacon's Castle in Surrey, VA. We can arrive at 5:30 to set up, and the party will run from 6-9 pm. Marla, who is heading the details for the party, is talking to Todd Balance, a board member of Bacon's Castle. He suggested a per person donation along with whatever sales they make in their gift shop. They are not charging us a site rental fee. The board decided to donate \$300. Tours will be offered during the party.

The board decided against catering and so a traditional potluck feast will be the menu. Patricia agreed to bring wine and champagne and to create and distribute invitations. Marla will check on necessary permits for alcohol.

Programs Committee:

The January 16 members meeting at Maymont features Conservation Conundrums. Kathy and Karri will plan

refreshments. Presentations will be 5-10 minutes with Powerpoint slides on unusual treatments that either did or did not work, or other interesting issues that have come up in a treatment. They need more speakers.

The March meeting is not set yet, but some possibilities include touring the private Lewis collection, touring the Robinson house at the VMFA, or hearing Sandy and Mary talk about recent treatments for Gari Melcher's Belmont Museum in Fredericksburg. The Belmont Museum was also discussed as a possible spring field trip in May.

The May members meeting may be at the Rice House in Windsor Farms.

Karri requested personalized stationary to write thank you notes to all the speakers. Patricia will find the VCA logo art work and send the job to the printer.

Education Committee:

Carol is exploring a respiratory fit test workshop. FAIC is willing to help out on conducting the testing and are currently working on an online course. We need to agree on a time frame and pricing. The possibility was raised of combining the fit testing with a few other classes for an extended session in the summer. Carol is trying gauge interest in the fit testing workshop and seeks feedback from the membership.

Outreach Committee:

VAM is adding an "Ask a Professional" column to their quarterly newsletter. They would like to include an "Ask a Conservator" in at least one publication and the Board decided on the Spring issue. The format is a single question with responses from 4-5 conservators.

Publications Committee:

The first newsletter went out digitally on 8/29. Print copies went out 9/7. The delay was at the printer's end as they mistakenly shifted the account from Ray, our VCA rep, to a VCU rep who knew nothing of our account. It's all straightened out now and subsequent publications should be on time. The next deadline is 10/24 with publication on 10/31.

The holiday party announcement will be distributed by 11/22.

Web Management:

Valinda has renewed our website, and asks for people to please send pictures! The pictures can be from anyone, and can be of meetings, or anything conservation related.

~Beth Fulton, Secretary



Photo Credit: Lisa Hall Isbell

VCA Members' Meeting

September 19, 2013

Lisa Hall Isbell

**“UP FROM THE DEEP:
Treating Records Salvaged from a
World War II Shipwreck”**

Virginia House
Richmond, Virginia

VCA welcomed Lisa Hall Isbell, Senior Conservator at the National Archives & Records Administration, as the first presenter of the 2014 year.

The USS Perry was a destroyer commissioned on October 22, 1920 and was assigned to the Asiatic fleet in Manila. During WWII, the destroyer was ordered to join naval forces in Port Darwin, Australia. On February 19, 1942, Port Darwin was attacked by over 200 Japanese aircrafts and the USS Perry was hit and sunk in 90 feet of water. In 1959, the Australian authorities contracted with a Japanese salvage operator to remove the USS Perry wreckage from the harbor. The Japanese recovered the ship's safe containing registered publications and placed the waterlogged books and documents in burlap sacks. The sacks were delivered to the American authorities, who then transported them to Washington in 1961. The books and documents remained undisturbed in an uncontrolled storage environment for more than 40 years.

In 2007, an archivist with the National Archives contacted Lisa Isbell to see if it would be possible to recover enough information from the USS Perry documents in order to declassify them. The books and documents were still in their burlap bags, fused

together with dried mud, dirt and rust, and it was soon apparent to Lisa that she was involved in “archaeological paper conservation.” Lisa took a phased conservation approach, stabilizing as much as she could, and then carrying out the next steps in conservation and identification. Lisa's objective was not to return these documents to their original pristine state, but rather to treat them with little to no destruction of the materials themselves, so that they could be identified and eventually declassified

Lisa was expecting to find a great deal of mold in these once-waterlogged documents but surprisingly, she found very little. She attributes this to the fact that they were encrusted with hardened silt and this prevented any mold growth. However, the lack of mold could also be due in part to immersion in salt water.

Lisa submerged the larger books in deionized water and found that they responded well. She was eventually able to open the books for proper identification. For one especially challenging book, Lisa took the advice of her graduate school mentor and submerged it in ethanol. After initial discouraging results, Lisa left it to dry in the venting hood and found the next day that the pages peeled off relatively cleanly one by one. She was then able to use more traditional paper conservation techniques to conserve the pages so that they could properly identified.

Through Lisa's efforts, the archivists were able to identify British, Dutch and American intelligence materials, nautical charts, documentation of Japanese ship movements and several code books.



Photo Credit: Lisa Hall Isbell

- Get ERS, the free Emergency Response and Salvage app for your phone. Now available for Apple, Android, and Blackberry users through the app stores.
- Tune In to the AICONSERVATION channel on YouTube: “How to Make the Most of Your Pre-Program Internship,” an ECPN webinar held on September 24th is available. Emily Williams at CWF is a featured speaker.
- The Brooklyn Museum is offering two Mellon Postgraduate Fellowships of 2-year duration, one in painting and one in objects conservation. January 1, 2014 is the deadline.
- *MuseumPests 2014: Integrated Pest Management for museums, archives, libraries and historic sites*, Williamsburg, VA, March 27-28, 2014. Contact Ryan Jones, rjones@cwf.org
- University of Michigan Library Cathleen A. Baker Fellowship in Paper Conservation application deadline is January 31st.

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

www.VirginiaConservationAssociation.org



Next VCA Members Meeting
November 21, 2013, 5:30 p.m.
DeWitt-Wallace Museum
326 W. Francis Street, Williamsburg, VA

The Virginia Conservation Association 2014 Membership Application & Dues Payment

Name (as you would like it to appear in the Directory): _____

Address: _____

Title/Institutional Affiliation: _____

Work Telephone: () _____ Home Telephone: () _____

Fax: () _____ Email: _____

Website URL: _____

Are you a Conservator? ____ Conservation Technician? ____ Conservation Student? ____

Museum Professional? ____ Other (Specify)? _____

Areas of Conservation Expertise:

<input type="checkbox"/> Archaeological Objects	<input type="checkbox"/> Furniture	<input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> Architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> Objects	<input type="checkbox"/> Textiles
<input type="checkbox"/> Books & Paper	<input type="checkbox"/> Paintings	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify below)
<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? ____

Practicing Conservators / Consultant Conservators Only:

Would you like your contact information included in our website VCA Services Directory? ____

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 \$15.00 (Student; enclose copy of valid I.D.) Application and dues payment must be received by November 21, 2013 for inclusion in the 2014 VCA Directory. A \$5.00 late fee may apply to applications from renewing members received after this deadline. If you require an invoice or receipt for your records, please photocopy this form before sending. Note: If you are a renewing member mailing this form after the November 21, 2013 deadline, please apply the \$5.00 late fee to your payment. Thank you.

Mail your completed application and check made payable to the Virginia Conservation Association to the following address:

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