



NEWSLETTER OF THE VIRGINIA CONSERVATION ASSOCIATION

P.O. Box 4314, Richmond, VA 23220

May 2014 ~ Volume 23, No. 5

From the President

Dear Fellow VCA Members,

This last week I was very proud and humbled to be a conservator and in particular a member of the VCA. This was due to the exceptional presentations made at the “Careers in Art & Object Conservation” seminar at VCU on Thursday, April 17th. Eight conservators shared with a large turnout of VCU students what motivated them to become a conservator, the education track they took and why it is important to them. The talks were well prepared, very upbeat, sometimes humorous, honest and inspiring. Words like passion, dedication, genuineness, self-sacrifice and perseverance – while never spoken – were evident in everyone’s very personal story and would certainly describe the motivation and character of each presenter.

If there was anyone in the audience with the least bit of interest in the preservation of art and historic objects, the seminar had to have stirred them deeply. Based upon the time the students stayed afterwards to discuss conservation careers, issues and educational opportunities with the speakers I would say we accomplished what we set out to do. Thanks so much to all of you who spoke, attended and organized this event. Hopefully it will be the first of many outreach efforts of this type and I would love to hear from you about ideas and formats for future programs along these lines.

May presents important opportunities for learning, fellowship and exposure to significant historic themes. The May 15 Members Meeting at Rice House in Richmond will give us an opportunity to view a rarely seen architectural treasure right under our noses, as well as participate in voting for new Board and Chair positions for the VCA.

VCA Members’ Meeting
Thursday, May 15th
5:30 p.m.



Photo credit: www.bellegroveplantation.com

RICE HOUSE

Richmond, Virginia



***A Special Evening at
the Rice House***

See information on Page 3

This meeting will be catered by Mosaic.
Please RSVP by MAY 5 to Karri Richardson or
Mary Scott Andrews or see your email for the
Google Doc. Non-members must pay \$10.

May 22nd is our annual Field Trip, this year to Belmont in Fredericksburg. The Program Committee has done an outstanding job this year of scheduling unique historic venues and stimulating speakers.

Lastly, the 42nd Annual Meeting of the AIC is in San Francisco on May 27-31. I look forward to seeing you at these events!

All the best,
Rick Vogt



RETURNING MEMBERS

Please update your directory:

SUSAN ADLER
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SUSAN.A.ADLER@GMAIL.COM
CONSERVATOR, TEXTILES

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KATHY.GILLIS@VMFA.MUSEUM
CONSERVATOR, FURNITURE AND OBJECTS

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(804) 340-1533
SHEILA.PAYAQUI@VMFA.MUSEUM
CONSERVATOR, OBJECTS AND SCULPTURE



NEW MEMBERS

Please update your directory:

HALEY BECK
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RICHMOND, VA 23225
804-232-0452
LIZZIBECK@GMAIL.COM
STUDENT

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KATE SULLIVAN
ASSISTANT CONSERVATOR
USS MONITOR CENTER
THE MARINERS' MUSEUM
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KIMBERLY TERBUSH WATSON
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WATSONKM@LONGWOOD.EDU
MUSEUM COLLECTIONS, ART HANDLER



Do you have images of yourself or your fellow conservators at work?

Please help us build our
**CONSERVATORS AT WORK
IMAGE FILE!**

Send to Patricia Selinger peselinger@vcu.edu

PRESERVATION WEEK WEBINARS

April 27-May 3

Preservation Week began in 2010 to address the need for awareness following the publication of Heritage Preservation's report indicating that 630 million items in collecting institutions require immediate attention and care. The report further stated that 80% of collecting institutions in the United States have no paid staff assigned responsibility for collections care and 22% have no collections care staff at all.

April 29

2-4pm

Low-Cost Ways to Preserve Family Archives

www.ala.org/alcts/confevents

April 30

2-4pm

Preserving Family Collections

Register: <http://bit.ly/preswkweb>

May 1

12:30-1:30pm

Beginner's Guide to Digitizing Collections

Register: <http://bit.ly/preswkweb>

2-4pm

Preserving Scrapbooks

www.ala.org/alcts/confevents

Previously recorded webinars, available anytime

On the ALCTS YouTube channel

<http://www.youtube.com/user/alctsce/>

- *Preserving Your Personal Digital Photographs*
- *Mold Prevention and Remediation*
- *Disaster Preparedness and Planning*
- *Archival 101: Dealing with Suppliers of Archival Products*
- *Accidents Happen: Protecting & Saving Family Treasures*
- *Digital Preservation: An Introduction to the Basic Concepts*
- *Preserving Your Personal Digital Memories*
- *Take Care: Family Textiles*
- *Personal Digital Archiving*
- *Preservation of Family Photographs*
- *The Art of Scanning*

2014 Calendar

April 27-May 3

Preservation Week

May 1

Heritage Preservation MayDay

www.heritagepreservation.org/mayday

May 10

Charlottesville, VA

Bookmakers Workshop: Pocket Book

Virginia Arts of the Book Center

Contact Barbara Nordin: Bjnordin16@gmail.com

May 28-31

San Francisco, CA

42nd AIC Annual Meeting

Hyatt Regency Embarcadero

Angels Project: rseyler@conservation-us.org

Pre-meeting session: "Energy and Sustainability – at what cost? A Socratic Dialogue" May 28, 4:30-6:30pm

May 30

Deadline: Mellon Fellowships in Paper

Conservation, Object Conservation, Textile

Conservation

Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco

Full time 2-year advanced post-graduate fellowship

August 1

Deadline: applications for the 19th International

Course on Stone Conservation

ICCROM in Rome in 2015.

Contact: stonecourse15@iccrom.org

July 1

Deadline for application.

Durham, NC

Photograph Conservation for Book and Paper

Conservators, October 14-17

Duke University Libraries

gawainweaver.com/dukeconservationworkshop/

Intermediate-advanced level. Participants should have experience in book or paper conservation.

VCA Members' Meeting Thursday, May 15, 2014

**“A Special Evening”
Rice House
Richmond, Virginia**



Photo Credit: Phil Riggon

It's the last VCA meeting of the year! Meet your friends and colleagues for an exclusive tour of the Rice House and a beautiful evening overlooking the James River.

Built in the mid-1960s for Ambassador Walter and Mrs. Inger Rice, the house is sited on Locke Island in the James River. Internationally renowned architect Richard Neutra designed this modernist masterpiece to not only conform to the rocky site but also to complement the surrounding environment and capitalize on the expansive river view. The 6000 square foot house features a floating staircase, sunken living room, and a poolside terrace. The house served as the Rice's family home until 1996 when they donated the property to the Science Museum of Virginia. Science Museum staff members will be on hand to discuss the challenges of rehabilitating this property for modern use while at the same time preserving Neutra's architectural vision.

Directions and Parking:

Only members who have responded by calling Karri Richardson or signing the Google Doc will be admitted to the event. Information regarding parking and the address will be communicated a few days before the event to those responding.

Careers in Art and Object Conservation

Conservation is an interdisciplinary field involving studio practices, sciences, and the humanities. Eight practicing conservators presented their personal professional journey to a rapt audience of students and faculty on April 17th at Cabell Library. Some pursued rigorous academic study while others focused on studio skills. The academic path emphasizes the importance of chemistry, art history, and internships toward acceptance into the very competitive conservation programs both in the US and the UK. Academic conservation programs accept roughly 10% of the total applicants so classes are small. Once in a program, funded opportunities abound and extensive travel often is involved. Many academic programs are involved in educating local people and building programs in foreign countries to care for their patrimony.

Studio practitioners relied more on wits and luck that reveal dedication to craftsmanship and the deep passion to care for historical artifacts so evident in all who pursue the field. In truth, it isn't as much luck as it is recognizing opportunities where you are and taking a risk. Deficits in the sciences can be found through auditing classes, the American Institute for Conservation workshops, and online courses.

These themes became clear:

- Have a career plan but be flexible
- Build a portfolio
- Know limitations
- Money will be tight
- Work is meaningful, provides enormous satisfaction
- Never a dull day
- Expect to travel
- Learn how to run your own business
- Working conditions can be brutal

Scott Nolley was part of an undergraduate program in paintings conservation offered at VCU until about 1989. He credited this program with the wealth of conservators working in the region and the formation of the Virginia Conservation Association. The VCA seeks to develop a new generation dedicated to the profession and advocates for educational opportunities.

Images of the work the conservators do were captivating. Participating conservators included: Andrew Baxter, Adrienne Bell, Jill Deiss, Lauren Fly, Scott Nolley, Bob Self, Kirsten Travers, and Emily Williams.

Even though the program ran over time, questions and conversations following it clearly expressed enthusiasm for more.

VCA BOARD

Meeting Minutes
April 22nd, 2014
James City County Library

ATTENDEES:

MARLA CURTIS
NANCY BECK
BETH FULTON
TOM SNYDER
VALINDA CARROLL
PATRICIA SELINGER
CAROL BOYERS GIVENS
WILL HOFFMAN

Rick Vogt could not attend, and Marla Curtis presided over the meeting for him.

Treasurer's Report

Nancy started the meeting with the Treasurer's Report and stated that so far our CD has earned \$1.31 and that 3 previous members rejoined after last month's meeting. The balance as of April 24 is \$2,828.36.

Nancy and Rick had prepared a proposed budget for next year which the board reviewed. The bottom line is that the VCA will have to raise dues in order to have a balanced budget next year, mainly due to declining membership and increasing costs overall. The proposed dues fee is \$30. We discussed adding PayPal to the website as an option to pay. However, there are extra costs associated with this: a 2.2% fee plus an additional \$.30 per transaction. The board opted to table the discussion until next year. Valinda has been learning Javascript to increase her web skills and can use it to create online services. She is looking into how to add PayPal.

The proposed budget includes a booth for the VAM conference again this year. It's expensive but the meeting will be in Richmond and we want to have a presence. We want to split the cost of the booth with the Washington Conservation Guild again as it was so successful previously. But to have this booth, the Board needed to cut costs to balance the budget. The refreshments budget took the biggest hit, mainly because no one is running to manage refreshments for our meetings next year. The discussion about refreshments at meetings is problematic. We enjoy refreshments because meetings are right after work when a snack is needed and it's helpful for networking but the Board cannot continue coordinating it. The Board struggled with options: using the refreshments budget only for the holiday party, cutting out alcohol at meetings or having byob, having potluck style meetings only.

Will said that Jennifer Thomas, VAM's Executive Director, will reciprocate membership to the VAM. The VAM is offering us one complimentary membership in exchange for two memberships for their Executive and

Assistant Directors. This reciprocation will not be included on the budget.

Outreach Committee

Will said that the banner came out really well and has already been used at both the VAM conference and the outreach program at VCU. The biggest obstacle was finding photographs to use. He suggests we create a stockpile of images for and from the VCA that we can use for various publications. Patricia collected photos for the newsletter into one file. We will set up a private file on Flickr or other photo-sharing website.

Patricia spoke briefly about the program at VCU. It went a little long but was well received by the 40 or so students and faculty who came. The presenters gave an excellent mix of educational backgrounds and representation of specialties. Will said that Christopher Newport University may be interested in having the same program next year.

Nominating Committee

Marla reported on behalf of the Nominating Committee. The ballot is prepared and will be included in the newsletter. No one was nominated or recruited for the refreshments committee.

Programs Committee

Mary and Kerri were unable to attend but sent an e-mail to Marla with updates. The next members meeting will be on May 15 at 5:30pm at the Rice House. An e-mail with a google document has been sent out to the membership to RSVP to the meeting due to space limitations. The event will be catered by Mosaic. The meeting is free to VCA members, but there will be a \$10 charge for guests/ non-members. The catering includes a vegan-friendly menu. No alcohol will be served. The cut-off date is May 5th.

April 25 is the deadline to sign up for the field trip to Belmont, the Geri Melcher Museum, scheduled for May 22. Mary suggests starting the day at Belmont at 10am with a presentation from conservators, and then breaking up for lunch, and then continuing with tours after lunch. Boxed lunches will be provided to those who purchase them.

E-mail reminders will be sent out ahead of time with more information about hours and parking.

Website Committee

Valinda continues to ask for people to please send pictures! The pictures can be from anyone, and can be of meetings, or anything conservation related. Valinda is working on updating the services directory on the website.

Education Committee

This is Carol's last meeting on the board and has talked to Lauren, the nominated chair for the education committee, about the workshops already in the works.

VCA Members' Meeting

March 20, 2013

Jay Barrows

“Sydney and Frances Lewis Collection of Modern and Contemporary Art”

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts



Jay Barrows talks about the Lewis' collecting philosophy

On March 20, 2014, the VCA membership was treated to a fascinating gallery tour of the Lewis Collection of Contemporary Art at the VMFA led by Jay Barrows, Curator of the Lewis's private collection. The tour opened with Jay giving the group a light-hearted narrative of how he came to be the curator for such an esteemed art collecting couple back in the 1970's and chronicled how his work for them developed through the subsequent decades.

He spoke of his humble beginnings as a house and dog sitter, slowly segueing into picture hanger, furniture mover and then art handler, learning by reading about art in the library and at the elbow of different specialists. Eventually, he worked his way up to travelling with the Lewis's during their buying trips where he attended auctions and met many of the emerging artists on the contemporary art circuit of the day. His favorite bit of advice given him by Sydney Lewis was “look with your eye and not with your ear” when evaluating a piece of artwork for purchase.

The Lewises collected heavily in Pop Art in the early 60's as it was emerging and made friends with all of the artists. Then, in the 70's, they moved into collecting art nouveau and art deco objects. He spoke of the challenges of curating objects which were made of “suspect” materials, such as paintings on shower curtains as many of the contemporary artists in the 60's and 70's were experimenting with all types of materials in their artwork.

In 1978, the Lewises decided to build a wing at the VMFA to house their collection because they wanted this artwork to stay in the city. Interestingly, when the collection was initially donated to the museum, it was valued at \$22M and it is now worth \$700M.

Jay closed his commentary remarking with fondness that the Lewises were always open-minded, enjoyed most making friends with the artists and only ever bought objects they loved.

Scott Nolley then spoke in some depth about the challenges of cleaning a three dimensional Rauschenberg in the collection. He addressed how Rauschenberg's strict religious upbringing and early art training in North Carolina informed his artwork and helped Scott to understand the movement and meaning of the piece. Using early photos of the piece supplied by the artist himself, he was then able to clean and repair the piece and return it to its original dynamic state.

Kathy Gillis spoke of the excellent record keeping they had from the Lewises and how it is a great resource for the conservators when they are trying to work on a piece. She made several remarks about some of the three dimensional pieces by Andy Warhol and Jim Dine and problems she encountered in getting them ready to go back on display when the new wing of the museum recently opened. In some cases, she was able to speak with the artist directly to get information about the piece when it was first made to help guide her in the necessary conservation work. As Head of Sculpture and Object Conservation at the museum, she also addressed the problems of security of the objects on display and some of the ways they have had to adapt the displays in order to thwart members of the public from damaging the items.



Kathy Gillis spoke about this work by Jim Dine

VCA Business Meeting Minutes March 20, 2014

VCA President Rick Vogt brought the business meeting to order just outside the Objects Conservation Lab.

Programs Committee: Karri Richardson reported that the field trip to Belmont in Fredericksburg has been set for May 22. Four conservators will discuss their work for the museum. This is a rare opportunity to hear four conservators in different specialties talk in one meeting. The cost has not been set yet, as details still need to be decided about providing lunch. Be sure to watch your email and the next newsletter.

The member's meeting in May will be held at the Rice House. Anyone interested should contact either Karri or Mary Scott Andrews, as the group must be limited to 100 people. The meeting will be catered and we will charge a \$10 fee for non-members.

Nominating Committee: Kate Sullivan said that she had filled every nomination category with one person except the Education Committee. Lauren Fly volunteered to change her nomination from the Membership Committee to the Education Committee, and Bill Ivey agreed to be nominated for the Membership Committee. Formal announcements will go out a month before the election in May.

Treasurer's Report: Nancy Beck handed out copies of the Treasurer's Report and declared that the VCA has now officially spent more money than was brought in this year. This is mostly due to a decrease in memberships- so encourage people to join! Rick pointed out that maybe we have spent more money on food for the meetings this year as there is more store bought food than homemade.

Education Committee: Carol Boyers Givens is still working on a workshop on respirator fit testing. She is currently in communication with the AIC about the workshop details, and what is needed. It appears as though a doctor's note attesting to the conservator's ability to wear a respirator is needed. Carol is looking into having a nurse present to sign waivers.

Outreach: Patricia Selinger confirmed that VCU is going to host "Careers in Art and Object Conservation" as part of Preservation Week on April 17. She has six, and possibly more, speakers lined up to talk about their educational experiences. She encouraged everyone to come and show their support for their fellow conservators and for the field of conservation.

The meeting then adjourned to the galleries where Jay Barrows, Scott Nolley, and Kathy Gillis gave interesting and insightful glimpses into the lives and collecting of Sydney and Frances Lewis.



Scott Nolley considers the challenges of Rauschenberg

**IF NOT ATTENDING
the meeting at the Rice House on May 15TH ,
SEND BALLOT ENCLOSED IN THIS ISSUE
to KERI RAGLAND
mail to: 10387 Walker Road
Mechanicsville, VA 23116**

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

www.VirginiaConservationAssociation.org



**Next VCA Members' Meeting
A Special Evening at the Rice House
Richmond, VA
May 15, 2014, 5:30 p.m.**

Ballot for VCA Board Election 2014

Vice President

Marla Curtis (incumbent)
Conservator, Williamsburg, VA
Write In:

Treasurer

Nancy Beck (incumbent)
Restoration Artist, Richmond, VA
Write In:

Disaster Response

Katherine Ridgway
Conservator, Richmond, VA
Write In:

Membership

Bill Ivey
Conservator, Richmond, VA
Write In:

Education

Lauren Fly
Conservator, Richmond, VA
Write In:

Programs Co-Chair

Kathy Gillis
Conservator, Richmond, VA
Write In:

Publications Co-Chair

Dotty Robinson
Richmond, VA
Write In:

Web Management

Valinda Carroll (incumbent)
Preservation Manager, Hampton, VA
Write In:
