

From the President

This year marks the twentieth in the history of the Virginia Conservation Association, it having been established in 1989. With the passing of so many years, now is a good time to look back at the roots of the organization. Fortunately, some of the people who were involved with the VCA at the very beginning still are on the scene. Very recently I spoke with well-known Richmond paintings conservator Cleo Mullins, head of Richmond Conservation Studio, and source of the seed that blossomed into the VCA. Cleo graciously agreed to discuss the inception of the group.

Frederick Wallace: How did the VCA begin?

Cleo Mullins: Though I had been in Virginia for a long time, and I knew there were other conservators in the region, I felt somewhat isolated from colleagues. Previously when I was at the Smithsonian (National Collection of Fine Arts, now the National Museum of American Art) I had been a member of the Washington Conservation Guild (WCG). One day I thought, we should have something like that here. So I made a list of conservators in the area using the IIC (International Institute For Conservation) Directory and sent them an invitation to get together. We met at the 2300 Club at Church Hill in Richmond, had some food, and then discussed forming a conservation guild.

Fred: Who came to the first meeting?

Cleo: I sent out letters to, I don't know, maybe a dozen people. I know Wallace Gusler was there. And I know that, gosh...I'm pretty sure Carol Sawyer came to that first one. I think Stuart Bailey (now Stuart Austin) came. I'm pretty sure Cary Howlett was there, and probably Sandy Jensen.

Fred: What were the meetings like back then?

Cleo: In the beginning we had just 3 or 4 different officers. Wallace Gusler was the first president. I was membership chairman. Meetings were held at the Virginia Historical Society, Monticello, Colonial Williamsburg, sometimes at people's houses. We modeled our group very loosely off the WCG. But we purposely decided from the start to form an association, rather than a guild for conservators only. We wanted our group to be very inclusive and open to curators, collectors...any person who wanted to learn about conservation.

Fred: What are your thoughts about how the group has evolved over time?

Cleo: I was really kind of surprised at how it grew. Maybe the first couple of meetings might have had 15 to 30 people. At one point I think we had close to 300 people come to certain events, when we started to publicize some we thought might have a broader appeal to curators, and invited them to those specific talks. It's gotten a little quieter over the years.

Fred: Do you have a favorite VCA memory?

Cleo: The Christmas party at Cary Howlett's. It was so wonderful to be invited into his home. They had a candle-light march, like a fife corps. I thought that was absolutely magical.

Fred: Any other standout thoughts or memories?

Cleo: One of the main reasons for starting the VCA... I had people come to me and say "What is this conservation thing? What is different from what you do versus what I do?" I thought, here are all of these people working by themselves, in isolation... we should have a group. So, and we did.



Much thanks to Cleo for sharing her recollections about the early days of the VCA.

I look forward to seeing the full membership at our next meeting, on 19 November at Maymont in Richmond. Part of the meeting will be spent discussing our collective thoughts about the state of the VCA and its possible growth and evolution. Please be thinking in advance about how the VCA can be improved to best meet our needs and those of our colleagues and clientele, and be ready to share your opinions.

Alert! The November 15 deadline for early renewal of VCA membership (and inclusion in the new directory) is fast approaching! Please remember to do so as soon as possible.

Thank you very much. See you all soon at Maymont.

~ *Frederick Wallace, President*

September Members' Meeting at The University of Virginia

The Virginia Conservation Association kicked off its 2009-2010 season with a visit to the Preservation Services Department at the University of Virginia. Kara McClurken provided an overview of the UVA preservation program, including the short-term and long-term vision for Preservation. Then Eliza Gilligan led a tour passing by the old circulating collections book repair room in the Alderman Library. Cramped conditions and lack of equipment in the old Alderman facility required that a separate lab be outfitted for conserving rare materials. The new lab is located a short distance from the Albert and Shirley Small Special Collections Library.

in the old lab. There is a Nederman fume extraction “elephant trunk” system for solvent work. The lab is equipped with a large stainless steel washing sink and will have a deionized water filtration system. Given the value of the rare materials, such as original documents from Thomas Jefferson, Ms. Gilligan explained that they were also adding a secure storage vault to the lab.

The slight drizzle did not dampen the spirits of the members who made the trip to Charlottesville. An essential component of VCA programming is to meet in different regions, reducing the isolation of conservators and allied professionals outside of Richmond. To suggest future meeting sites in Lynchburg, Bedford, Forest, Appomattox or other areas west of Richmond (or anywhere else in the Commonwealth), please contact Valinda Carroll or Thomas Snyder (both east of Richmond).

~ Valinda Carroll, Programs



Left: While the Library's book conservation lab is being completed, the main preservation operations are located in Alderman Library.

Below: Eliza Gilligan leads the group across campus to the new book conservation lab currently under construction.



Monticello was visible on a hilltop in the distance as the group walked across campus to the new lab. Ms. Gilligan demonstrated the equipment and furniture that had just been installed. The cabinets and tables were set at a standard height, creating a flexible, modular layout. They selected reconditioned book presses and Jacques board sheer, because that sort of equipment is no longer being manufactured in the U.S. VCA members marveled at the beautiful custom-made wooden stand for the brass-edged boards and book press. As a major improvement over the old lab, there is space for conservators to work on flat paper in addition to bound materials. The new lab will accommodate a variety of wet treatments not possible



Above: David Voelkel and Carol Givens were among VCA members who attended the September Meeting.



Above: Kara McClurken, the recently appointed Head of Preservation Services, and Eliza Gilligan, the new Conservator for University Library Collections, hosted a reception for VCA members in the Alderman Library Staff Lounge.



Above: VCA members take a 5 minute stroll over to the Dell building for a tour of the Library's new book conservation lab in its final stages of construction



Above and right: Mary Studt, Wendy Cowan, Eliza Gilligan and Patricia Selinger discuss the joys of deionized water on tap at the University's new conservation lab.



VCA BOARD

Meeting Minutes
October 22, 2009

ATTENDEES:

FRED WALLACE
PATRICIA SELINGER
KATHY GARRETT-COX
BIENVENIDA OCHS
DOTTY ROBINSON
DALE WHEARY
VALINDA CARROLL
MARY STUDDT
STACY RUSCH
TRACY BERNABO

Fred welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked Mary Studt and Wendy Cowan for hosting it at their studio. He reminded the group that this year is the VCA's 20th anniversary year. Fred asked that if anyone has an idea for commemorating the anniversary, please let him know. He did think that it might be nice to do something at the Holiday party. He has interviewed Cleo Mullins, the founder of the VCA, for this month's newsletter. He suggested that it might be helpful for someone to go the Virginia Historical Society and look through our archives to see if that may spark an idea of how to commemorate the anniversary. Fred also suggested if we look through the archives we might see what some of the past successful events were hosted and it might inspire a future meeting idea.

Report from the Vice President (Stacy Rusch)

Stacy had no report. Fred then mentioned that it had been brought up that in the future maybe the VP should rotate to the presidency. This would need to be voted on and would not affect Stacy as it would be with the next VP.

Report from the Secretary (Kathy Garrett-Cox)

Kathy Garrett-Cox had no report.

Report from the Treasurer (Dotty Robinson)

Dotty reported that our current balance is \$7,729.22. She asked if we would like to have the monthly balance in the newsletter. It was decided that only the end of the year balance needed be published in the newsletter. She is happy to show anyone not on the board our balance if they request it.

Membership (Bienvenida Ochs)

Bienvenida reported that memberships have been slow to come in. At the time of the meeting there are 36 members who have renewed. It was decided that an email blast reminding the members of the dues will be sent out at the 1st of the month. Fred will also start

making calls to members to encourage them to renew before the November 15th deadline for the directory.

Publications (Tracy Bernabo)

Tracy reminded the board that today is the deadline for submissions to next month's newsletter. She is planning to send it out by October 29th or 30th. Tracy questioned whether an announcement about our new Facebook page should be in the newsletter. This will be put in a box in the newsletter as an announcement. A membership application will also be attached with the newsletter again this month.

Tracy brought to the board's attention that a classified ad will run in this month's newsletter. She asked if we want to continue this or if it is an exception. Fred questioned if we are approached by vendors if we would want to use our newsletter in this way. Valinda thought that our new Facebook page may be a better location for ads. There could be a discussion page set up for anyone who wants to buy/sell/trade items. Dotty questioned that if we allow vendors to put ads in our newsletter are we then endorsing those products. She felt that Facebook was a better venue. Patty wondered if the directory wouldn't be a better fit for vendors. We could charge them for the space. Fred felt that it is appropriate for our members to make announcements in the newsletter and that we could try Facebook and see how it goes.

Programs (Valinda Carroll)

Valinda reported that a program by Natalie Larson will be presented on November 19th at Maymont. This will be on bed coverings and her recent work and discoveries. The January 21st program will be presented by Melanie Roy, at TK Asia Antiques in Williamsburg. They use an XRF machine in assisting them to authenticate their antiques. The March meeting will have a program by Colleen Callahan at the Monroe Museum in Fredericksburg.

VCA Classifieds

For sale: Willson Saf-T-fit plus P1130 particulate respirators, size small. Exhalation valve, full sealing flange, P100 protection. \$6.00 each. Contact Suzanne at 757.871.4866 or at marion7@me.com.

CS

Education (Dianne Roland)

Diane was unable to attend but Fred has been in contact with her regarding a workshop. Fred attended a workshop at the North Carolina Museum of Art presented by Robin Hodgson, of RH Conservation Engineering, who has invented a new suction heat table system. He can do a workshop in the spring after the AIC meeting. The VCA would pay his hotel and could give him an honorarium since he is not asking for a fee. Fred will ask at the next meeting if there is enough interest. The workshop could be on the same day as our May meeting. If that is the case then if we can find a location that could host both so that attendees of the workshop could just stay for the meeting that may be the best scenario. It was suggested that the workshop could be at the Mariner's Museum and the meeting could be at the CNU library. Christopher Newport University recently renovated its library to the National Archives' environmental standards in order to house the Mariner's Museum Archives. We have not yet confirmed with the Archivist if they wish to host a meeting.

Outreach (Dale Wheary)

Dale reported that she had a committee meeting to discuss ideas for this year. She sent out the minutes but a few ideas that the group discussed as wanting to accomplish this year are a brochure, logo, a referral list, working on the VCA/VAM relationship, and finding related organizations that may be able to put our link on their website. The brochure is the first big priority as it needs to be done in time for the VAM annual conference in March. It was proposed that Rick Vogt, David Voelkel, Stuart Austin, and Patricia Selinger will be on the Outreach committee. They will work with Tracy to put together a draft brochure by January. Fred will be sending out an email to survey the members regarding why they are members and what they like about the VCA and that this could possibly drive the copy for the brochure. Mary Studt mentioned that a brochure had been developed a few years ago and might be a starting point for this brochure. Dale will contact Cary Howlett regarding the old brochure.

With regards to the VCA/VAM relationship Dale and Fred will be meeting with the director and program manager of VAM in November to discuss how to better collaborate.

It was also discussed that a referral list should be made of those conservators who wish to have people contact them. Some people do not like the directory being given out as an outreach tool as they do not want everyone having access to their phone numbers. It was

decided that a referral list would work better and could be given out with the brochure and put on our website.

Dale also mentioned that another idea is for the group to host an Angel project or something similar to that in order to get out more in the community. If anyone has a suggestion of a location that may need this they should let Dale know.

Fred also reported that he attended through VAM a workshop supported by IMLS titled "Conservation 3." This is a two part workshop teaching museum professionals and conservators how to better educate and market the public regarding conservation. Fred talked to one of the presenters about how to get her involved in the VCA for next year.

Refreshments

Mary reported that the Holiday party will most likely be at Preservation Virginia (APVA). She will confirm the date.

Website (Patricia Selinger)

Patricia has created a Facebook page for the VCA. Facebook is easily accessible and updates can be made by all members. Patricia also showed the group that an ad can be created that would pop up on other Facebook users page encouraging them to "fan" our page. This would help spread the word of the VCA. It was discussed that we do not have the funds for this at the moment so for now we will see how the Facebook group evolves and if it is decided that an ad would be beneficial then it may be done later.

The next members' meeting is November 19th at Maymont.

~ Kathy Garrett-Cox, Secretary

**Visit us on Facebook:
Info, Photos, Discussions, Events**

facebook

**Next VCA
Members' Meeting
Maymont ~ Garden Hall
Thursday, November 19, 2009
5:30 p.m.**



Photography Dennis McWaters

The November VCA member meeting will be hosted by Maymont and will feature Textiles Conservator, Natalie Larson.

Natalie is an independent textile consultant who owns her own business, Historic Textile Reproductions. Building on her experience of over 20 years working as a textile furnishings specialist for Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, Natalie provides expert advice and accurate, historic techniques to a wide variety of house museums as well as larger institutions.

Ms. Larson will present some recent and unpublished discoveries including slip covers for chairs and trunks, different types of beds and their attendant textiles and recent collaboration with other conservators and curators at Montpelier, Prestwold furnishings and the John Marshall House as well as touch on window treatments.

~ Thomas Snyder, Programs

Directions to Maymont's Hampton Street Entrance:

From Interstates 64 & 95

- Take the Boulevard exit #78 (Route 161)
- Go south on the Boulevard (Route 161) for two miles
- Turn left at Cary Street and go 1/2 mile
- Turn right at Meadow Street and go one mile
- Turn right at Pennsylvania Ave and go one block to the parking lot ahead

From the Powhite Parkway (Route 76) via the Downtown Expressway (I-195) (From Southside, Midlothian)

- After the James River bridge toll plaza, get in the right lane
- Bear right onto the Downtown Expressway (I-195 East)
- Take the first exit, bear left onto Maplewood Avenue, and go one block
- Turn left at S. Sheppard Street and go four blocks
- Turn right at Cary Street (Route 147) and go east 1/2 mile
- Turn right at Meadow Street and go one mile
- Turn right at Pennsylvania Ave and go one block to the parking lot ahead

From the Downtown Expressway (I-195) South (Heading south from the West End)

- Take the Cary Street/Grove Avenue exit ramp and bear left
- At the first stoplight, turn left at Cary Street (Route 147)
- Continue on Cary Street east for 1-1/2 miles
- Turn right at Meadow Street and go one mile
- Turn right at Pennsylvania Ave and go one block to the parking lot ahead

From the Boulevard Bridge (North from Forest Hill, Westover Hills)

- Once past the Boulevard Bridge toll plaza, get in right lane
- Take the first right at Shirley Lane and go one block (past the Children's Farm entrance)
- Bear left (not the hard left onto Westover Road) and go one block into Byrd Park
- Turn right at Shields Lake Drive and continue around the lake (past the Nature & Visitor Center on the right)
- Turn right at Amelia Street and go one block
- Turn right at Hampton Street and proceed to the parking lot entrance on the right

From Downtown Richmond (Heading West from Ninth and Main Streets)

- Take Main Street west about two miles
- Turn left at Meadow Street and go one mile
- Turn right at Pennsylvania Ave and go one block to the parking lot ahead

**Maymont
1700 Hampton Street
Richmond, Virginia 23220
www.maymont.org**

VCA
BOARD of DIRECTORS
2009/2010

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

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Membership	Bienvenida Ochs Larry Ochs
Outreach	Dale Wheary

Programs	Valinda Carroll Thomas Snyder
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Refreshments	Patricia Selinger Mary Studt
Website	Lorraine Brevig

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

www.VirginiaConservationAssociation.org



Photography Dennis McWaters

**Next VCA Members Meeting
November 19, 2009, 5:30 p.m.
Maymont, Garden Hall**

The Virginia Conservation Association 2009/10 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: _____

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

Museum Professional? ___ Other (Specify)? _____

Areas of Conservation Expertise:

___ Archaeological Objects

___ Furniture

___ Sculpture

___ Architecture

___ Objects

___ Textiles

___ Books & Paper

___ Paintings

___ Other (Specify below)

___ Ethnographic Objects

___ Photographic Materials

Are you willing to be a Disaster Response Volunteer in the event of an emergency? ___

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 15, 2009 for inclusion in the 2009/10 VCA Directory. If you require an invoice or receipt for your records, photocopy this form before sending.

Note: A \$5 late fee will apply to registrations submitted after November 15th, 2009.

Mail your completed application and check made payable to the Virginia Conservation Association to the address below before November 15, 2009:

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