

From the President

Greetings to the entire membership. On behalf of the VCA Board I thank all of you that have renewed membership in the Association. We offer a hearty new welcome to those that are joining our ranks for the first time, and hope that you will stay with us for many years to come.

Last year was the twentieth in the history of the Virginia Conservation Association, a history that includes a fine share of memorable and significant events. As we move ahead into the future, each of us should look forward to a rejuvenation of effort for serving the needs of the collections in the region. Our organization should recognize that a primary *raison d'etre* is as a resource for education about conservation and a primary source of aid for those responsible for the care of cultural artifacts. Over the years the VCA has crafted its programs towards these aims, but certainly there is more that we can do, on a more consistent basis.

I encourage every member to participate as much as you can in Association programs and activities. The VCA is not some abstract body that holds bi-monthly meetings and produces periodic newsletters. It is all of us working together to make a meaningful contribution to our own lives as related to conservation and to those who share our interests in preserving important materials of our culture. Indeed, you may expect to be called on for some direct aid as the scope of the organization expands. If so, I hope that you respond enthusiastically.

Please do express your opinions, priorities and wishes for development of future VCA activities. The Board is eager to hear from you and act upon your majority of desires. This Association will "be and do" whatever is the consensus of the membership. As we work to serve the membership, the VCA Board will continue to do our best at proposing and producing interesting and informative programs for your enjoyment.

Thank you very much. See you all at the next Members Meeting, March 18th in Fredericksburg at the James Monroe Museum.

~ Frederick Wallace, President

Members Meeting
Thursday, March 18th
5:30 p.m.



James Monroe Museum

908 Charles Street

Fredericksburg, VA 22401

540-654-1043



Reception & Business Meeting follow at
St. James House, 1300 Charles Street
(walking distance)

For Details and Directions
See page 6 - 7

January Members' Meeting T.K. Asian Antiquities

On Thursday January 21, about 40 people disregarded the rain and cold to spend an evening at TK Asian Antiquities in Williamsburg. Melanie Roy, Senior Researcher and Mike Burr, General Manager, hosted VCA members and guests in their large showroom filled with Asian decorative arts.

After a short business meeting (see Meeting Minutes p.3), Melanie began the tour by explaining that her role at TK was often that of an investigator to determine whether the artifacts, mostly imported from China, are authentic and as old as they purport to be. Using techniques such as thermoluminescence, x-ray fluorescence, radiography, lead and thorium analysis and radiocarbon dating, she and Mike concretely determine the age of the decorative objects. TK also employs a crew of restorers, framers and office staff and has been in business for more than 30 years.

Moving to the lab tour, VCA members wandered in and out of studios for restoration and conservation as well as storage areas for sculpture, humidified storage for lacquered wood and stone object storage as well as a dedicated framing room.

~ Thomas Snyder, Programs



Above: A rare behind the scenes glimpse at T.K. Asian's back room showing their extraordinary inventory of early Asian objects.



Right: VCA Members enjoy a reception in the beautifully appointed showroom at T.K. Asian Antiquities, Williamsburg

VCA Business Meeting Minutes TK Asian Antiquities -January 21, 2010

Fred Wallace thanked T.K. Asian Antiquities owner, Michael Burr and material scientist, Melanie Roy, for hosting the meeting.

The Treasurer, Dotty Robinson, could not attend. In her absence Fred reported the bank balance as of January 19th was \$8251.00.

The Outreach Committee Chair, Dale Wheary was unable to attend but Fred reported that the VCA will participate in the 2010 Virginia Association of Museums Annual Conference held at the Omni Hotel, Richmond. As part of the conference program the VCA will be hosting a session on March 15th titled "When to Call a Conservator."

Fred Wallace also announced the upcoming workshop on how to make "Fake Food." This workshop will be held at Maymont on February 19-20. You can make a reservation with Dianne Roland. It will also be posted on our Facebook page and website.

Fred Wallace reported that he is coordinating with Robin Hodgson to present a workshop featuring a new suction table. This workshop will be on May 20th at the Mariner's Museum which will also be the same day as our members' meeting at Hampton University. There will be more information regarding registration for this workshop coming out soon.

Fred reported on behalf of Beth Fulton, the Disaster Response Committee Chair, that the CCAHA in Philadelphia is hosting a disaster planning workshop for cultural institutions on March 24th in Charlottesville. The cost of the workshop is \$110. You can visit their website for more information.

Tracy Bernabo of the Publications Committee reported that the deadline for submissions to the next newsletter is February 18th with the newsletter publication date being February 25th. Tracy Bernabo together with Dale Wheary of the Outreach Committee have completed a draft version of a new rack card which they hope to have finalized for the Virginia Association of Museums Annual Conference. This card will provide succinct information about VCA activities and membership.

Bienvenida Ochs of the Membership Committee announced that the directories were available that evening for members to take with them. There are currently 120-130 members.

Valinda Carroll of the Programs Committee reported that the next meeting will be at the Monroe Museum in Fredericksburg. Colleen Callahan will present on a collection of clothing that she has conserved and mounted for this museum. A reception for this meeting will follow in another building owned by Preservation Virginia near the Monroe Museum.

The meeting in May will be at the Memorial Chapel at Hampton University. Carey Howlett and others have worked on the doors, pews and other wood work on the chapel.

~ Kathy Garrett-Cox, Secretary

Patience, Needleskills and Cutting Edge Technology

Conservation of the James Monroe Costume Collection

March 4th, 2010, at 7:00 PM

Combs Hall, Room 139
University of Mary Washington
Fredericksburg, VA, 22401
For more information call:
540-654-1043

Colleen Callahan and Newbold Richardson will present a PowerPoint lecture detailing the traditional conservation methods and innovative techniques used to stabilize clothing in the James Monroe Museum's collection. Among the items discussed will be the gown that Elizabeth Kortright Monroe likely wore to her 1786 wedding to James Monroe. The stabilization of the gown's overskirt and petticoat panels required several hundred hours of skilled stitching, and collaboration with a graphics design firm using 21st century technology to digitally reproduce fabric to recreate the 1786 bodice. The conserved clothing is on display until April 30, 2010 at the James Monroe Museum in the exhibit, "Our Face to the World: the Clothing of James and Elizabeth Monroe."



VCA BOARD

Meeting Minutes
February 18, 2010

ATTENDEES:

FRED WALLACE
KATHY GARRETT-COX
BIENVENIDA OCHS
LARRY OCHS
DALE WHEARY
VALINDA CARROLL
TRACY BERNABO

Fred welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Report from the Secretary (Kathy Garrett-Cox)

Kathy Garrett-Cox had no report.

Report from the Treasurer (Dotty Robinson)

Dotty Robinson was not able to attend.

Fred reported that the balance is healthy. He recommends that during budgeting for next year the budget lines are examined more closely so that we can be more accurate. He recommends that costs we are aware of such as printing the directory that we get estimates for next year before we do the budgeting.

Membership (Bienvenida Ochs)

Bienvenida reported that we currently have 105 members. She also reported that she will be mailing out directories this week to members who had not picked one up at the last member meeting. She also mentioned that she has many issues of past directories and wanted to know what to do with the leftovers. It was determined that she would talk to Stacy Rusch and make sure that there is an issue in archives and then any further extras could be recycled.

Publications (Tracy Bernabo)

Tracy reported that the deadline for submissions for this month's newsletter is today, February 18, 2010. In the upcoming issue there will be an article by Scott Taylor regarding a treatment of a Tiffany stained glass window. Fred thought that this upcoming newsletter article written by a conservator on the subject of a recent project would be beneficial to the members. He therefore proposed that the Education Committee ask presenters if, in addition to their presentation, they will write a short article summarizing their presentation for the newsletter. The members are also invited to submit articles for the newsletter. This proposal will be brought before the members at the next members meeting. Fred will talk to Dianne, chair of the Education Committee, regarding this new item. He will also ask Colleen Callahan if she will submit an article for the May newsletter following her program at the March meeting. Valinda Carroll mentioned that in years past members have

interviewed other members for the newsletter. This helped everyone learn more about each other. She questioned if this is something we would like to revive. The deadline for submissions for the next newsletter is April 22, 2010.

Programs (Valinda Carroll)

Valinda reported that the March meeting will be at the Monroe Museum in Fredericksburg. The program will focus on an historic textile exhibit and will be presented by the exhibit's textile conservator Colleen Callahan, who also assisted with the installation. The reception will be in a separate nearby building owned by Preservation Virginia. Directions and information will be in the newsletter.

The May meeting will be held at Hampton University's Memorial Chapel on May 20th. Carey Howlett will be the presenter.

Outreach (Dale Wheary)

Dale reported that she and Tracy completed the new VCA rack card. They will have the cards available to distribute at the Virginia Association of Museums Annual Conference, March 14-16. She also reported that six members of the VCA will be on a panel as part of a conference session taking place on March 15th. The title of the session is "When to Call a Conservator." Fred suggested that future VCA presidents should become a member of VAM to continue building this relationship. Fred will also have an announcement in the next newsletter regarding the conference and the session.

Tracy asked if the website would be updated prior to the VAM conference. She felt that since the panel card directs people to the website it would be helpful if that was updated before the panel cards are distributed. Fred will talk to Patricia about what can be done before March 14th. General discussion broke out regarding whether there should be "contact us" link on the website or whether posting the referral list, which is not ready, would suffice. Valinda will look into what security measures our website has in place in order to determine what would be our best course of action. It was also suggested that the referral list be a pdf document that is emailed upon request but not just posted to the website. Dale suggested looking at the referral list that DHR has compiled as a starting point.

Dale reported that she will be meeting with the Outreach Committee to begin looking at next year. She would like to begin prioritizing how they would like to move forward.

Dale also mentioned that Maymont received an IMLS grant last year to study the museum environment. As part of the study it was planned that the consultants, Michael Henry, Engineer and Wendy Jessup, Conservator, would do a presentation to the VCA. At this time it appears that the meeting will need to take place in September. She proposed that the September members meeting be held at Maymont. Members of the Board agreed that this will be a beneficial presentation.

Fred reported that there will be a workshop on May 20th at the Mariners' Museum. He questioned how much we need to charge. The speaker is not asking for a fee but we will pay for the accommodations. Would we like to give an honorarium? Fred suggested that the price should not be prohibitive and that VCA members should receive a discount.

Fred also brought to the Board's attention that a nominating committee needs to be formed at the next members meeting. He will send an email out asking members if they are rotating off the board and report at the upcoming members meeting.

~ Kathy Garrett-Cox, Secretary



CONSERVATION AND IN-DEPTH MATERIALS ANALYSIS: Stained Glass from the studio of Louis Comfort Tiffany.

By E. Scott Taylor

Conservation of the *Resurrection Window* (illustrated above) began in earnest June 2009 with the window to be installed for the VMFA reopening in May 2010. The late 19th century Tiffany window had been recently purchased from a local church where it had been in their basement storage for the past 50 years. Fortunately the window was complete with only minor elements missing, but suffered numerous structural and cosmetic problems. Among the

more complex issues were the innumerable pieces of glass in the interior and exterior plating that were deteriorating. After consultation with other professionals it was decided that a chemical devitrification was most likely causing the degradation.

Knowing that this is a progressive deteriorative condition that is non-reversible, analysis of the material seemed prudent in that understanding the deteriorative process would help to inform possible treatment solutions. There was also a gritty but visually imperceptible texture on the surface of some pieces that could be easily removed mechanically but was not removable by means of balanced chemical formulas. Analysis of this was also deemed important as it could not be discerned whether this texture was part of the ongoing deteriorative process or was an element from the original manufacture. Nondestructive analysis was the path chosen for the glass that would be reinstalled into the window. Sources for this were reviewed with few options available locally until a professor in the Chemistry Department at VCU suggested contacting Dr. Everett Carpenter. Dr. Carpenter is the Director of the Nanomaterials Core Characterization facility. This facility was started using two National Science Foundation grants totaling \$1.5 million. These awards along with other support from the state and university have allowed the facility to acquire an even greater array of state of the art analytical equipment for materials characterization.

Analysis for the glass in question was performed utilizing a small segment of the center's capabilities but included scanning electron microscopy (SEM), x-ray photoelectron spectroscopy (XPS), and energy dispersive x-ray spectroscopy (EDS). Surface mapping and elemental analysis was completed which informed treatment possibilities and provided a clearer view of the inherent problems.

This type of analytical capability at the local level is something that our conservation community may find very useful for current and future analytical needs.

Provided as a separate attachment to this newsletter is a PDF with information about the center and the many instruments which it has at its disposal. For more information, please refer to the PDF that accompanies this newsletter or contact:

Dr. Everett Carpenter
VCU - Department of Chemistry
College of Humanities and Sciences
1001 West Main Street
Richmond, VA 23284-2006
Email: ecarpenter2@vcu.edu
Phone: 804-828-7508

Next Members Meeting at the James Monroe Museum



Above: Monroe waistcoat and breeches from c. 1780 in a before shot--note the visible moth holes!

On Thursday, March 18th from 5:30-6:30 pm, join other VCA members in Fredericksburg at the James Monroe Museum for a special tour of the exhibit, *Our Face to the World: the Clothing of James and Elizabeth Monroe*. This exhibit features clothing from the museum's exceptional collection of garments and clothing accessories worn by James Monroe and members of his immediate family, which were part of a three-year conservation project funded by Save America's Treasures. One of the conservators, Colleen Callahan of the Costume & Textile Specialists, will discuss the garments and the conservation treatments that she and Newbold (Newbie) Richardson used to stabilize and display these garments.

Unfortunately, Newbie is unable to attend this meeting but James Monroe Museum curator, Meghan Budinger, will be on hand.

Colleen and Newbie began this project by doing a NEH-funded conservation assessment of the fifty-piece collection, which also contains a number of items that belonged to Monroe descendants. This conservation assessment served as the starting point for the application to the Save America's Treasures program for the conservation of objects directly related to James Monroe and his wife, Elizabeth Kortwright Monroe.

The clothing in this collection presented a number of conservation challenges. Several garments were altered and worn for fancy dress by Monroe descendants, while others were exhibited for extended periods and suffered from damage due to exposure to light and particulate matter from a coal-burning furnace. Among the difficulties the conservators faced in conserving this collection were adapting the museum's workspaces for textile conservation, designing specialized tools and methodology to use during the treatment of the pieces, locating and scheduling skilled conservation stitchers, and fulfilling the paperwork and budget requirements of the grant. Colleen will discuss these and other unanticipated issues that arose during the treatment process and the traditional and innovative techniques that she and Newbie used as solutions.

Cathy Dean of Preservation Virginia has generously arranged for the VCA to use St. James House, a Preservation Virginia property at 1300 Charles Street, for refreshments and the VCA business meeting following the exhibition tour.



Above: Textiles Conservator, Colleen Callahan with a dress from the James Monroe Costume Collection.

Directions to James Monroe Museum
908 Charles Street
Fredericksburg, VA 22401
540-654-1043
www.umw.edu/jamesmonroemuseum

- Take exit 130A to Route 3 East.
- Follow Business Route 3 past the University of Mary Washington.
- Continue on Business Route 3 (William Street) to Charles Street.
- Turn right on Charles Street.
- 908 Charles Street is a one-story brick building on the right. On-street parking is available
- Members attending the tour will walk over to the Reception and Business meeting at St. James House.

Directions to St. James House
1300 Charles Street, Fredericksburg
<http://www.apva.org/stjameshouse/>

From Interstate 95

- Take exit 130A to Route 3 East.
- Follow Business Route 3 past the University of Mary Washington.
- Continue on Business Route 3 (William Street) to Charles Street.
- Turn Left on Charles Street
- St. James House at 1300 Charles St. is on the Left

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

www.VirginiaConservationAssociation.org



James Monroe Museum

Next VCA Members Meeting
March 18, 2010, 5:30 p.m.
James Monroe Museum, Fredericksburg

VCA Program Notice



Title: "When to Call a Conservator"

Location: The Omni Hotel, Richmond, VA

Date: March 15, 2010, 2 pm - 5 pm

Description: This VCA Seminar is presented as part of the 2010 Virginia Association Of Museums Annual Conference. VCA Conservators specializing in paintings, furniture, objects, textiles and works on paper will discuss how conservators can be of benefit for many collections care activities.

For further information about the seminar and registration for the meeting visit the VAM Conference website at:

www.vamuseums.org/Portals/0/Annual%20Conference/Program2010.pdf

