



NEWSLETTER OF THE VIRGINIA CONSERVATION ASSOCIATION

P. O. Box 4314, Richmond, VA 23220

January 2015 Volume 24, No. 3

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear members,

As we close out this year and begin a new one, I would like to thank all of you for your contributions to the VCA over the past year. Whether serving on the board or as a chairperson, assisting in organizing our meetings, giving a presentation or any other offerings of your time and knowledge - we have all benefitted from one another's largess. Having visited a number of state wide conservation organizations around the country, I consider the VCA to be among the best.

This coming January our members' meeting at Maymont will include presentations on how the Modular Cleaning Program, that many of us attended in the summer of 2013, has been put to practical and effective use by three of our members. For those who did not participate in the class, this should be an eye opening event that will inspire you to take the class when it is offered again. I believe MCP is one of the most important advancements in organizing a database of information on surface cleaning formulas and practical organic chemistry for conservation in many years.

I also hope that you will consider serving on the board or as a chairperson when the time for committee nominations arrives. Since we are a small organization with long term members, most of us have served in this capacity in one way or another previously. This can work to all of our benefit as you would bring experience and maturity to these positions. If you have never served in this capacity, doing so will give you a heightened sense of pride in the dedication and professionalism of our membership - as it has for me.

So here is to a joyful holiday season and the very best for each of us in the coming year!

Rick Vogt

VCA Members' Meeting Thursday, January 15 5:30 p.m.

Modular Cleaning Course Debriefing

Speakers:

*Fred Wallace, Marla Curtis,
and Carey Howlett*



**The Garden Hall, Maymont
1700 Hampton Street
Richmond, Virginia 23220**

See Page 3 for More Details

Please bring an appetizer to share.

Beverages will be provided.



VCA SPOTLIGHT

Stuart Austin
Retired Conservator

By Haley Beck

When you walk into the White House of the Confederacy, you will see several massive gilded mirror frames. These ornate items were conserved by VCA member Stuart Austin of Richmond. Now retired, Austin specialized in gilding conservation, primarily working on picture and mirror frames. She was successfully self-employed for many years, and actually owned her own studio on Broad Street in Richmond.

Austin's mother, an art major, and brother, an artist, influenced her interest in the profession. She also acquired an interest in antiques from her mother. "Art conservation seemed like a good way to be involved in the arts while making a living," she said.

Austin attended Hollins College in Roanoke and VCU School of the Arts. Through Hollins, she was able to study in Paris for a year, where she took a semester of Art History at the École de Louvre. After graduation, she took conservation courses from Cleo Mullins, who actually founded the VCA!

Austin worked to conserve different gilded mediums, which included gold and silver leaf, copper alloy leaf, and bronze powders. The majority of the pieces she worked on were nineteenth century American. Austin cites the giant frames at the White House of the Confederacy as being one of the largest and most time-consuming projects she undertook, but she also considers it to be one of the most fun. Working on Faberge items for the VMFA and a gallery in Nashville, TN are also among her credits.

Austin received much of her work by word-of-mouth referrals, which she says is "golden" for anyone trying to work for themselves. Her connections were essential in helping her find jobs. One of the main issues she encountered in her work was "educating the public as to the importance of caring properly for their collections and the work and expense that entails," she said. Austin remains busy, and is happy to be retired now, saying that the only thing she misses about working is the comradery.

Her advice to anyone wanting to be self-employed in the conservation business is to come up with a great business plan, work on the things you like to do, and network well. In the future, she plans to do some unpaid consulting work and continue to enjoy retirement.

**The 2014-2015 Directories
Are Ready and Will Be
Available at the
January Meeting.**

2015 VCA MEETINGS

March 26, 2015

*Tangier Island Skeleton Conservation
and
Mount Vernon Weathervane Conservation*
Kate Ridgway
Location: VDHR

April 16, 2015

Field Trip
Chrysler Museum, Norfolk

May 21, 2015

*Iraqi Jewish Archives
Conservation Project*
Katherine Kelly from National Archives
Location: TBD



**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**

VCA Members Meeting / January 15, 2015

The Garden Hall, Maymont

The Modular Cleaning Program and Its Application In Conservation Treatment

In July 2013, the VCA conducted a special workshop at the VMFA featuring the Modular Cleaning Program. Designed and taught by Paintings Conservator, Chris Stavroudis, the Modular Cleaning Program (MCP) is a systematic process utilizing a range of innovative materials to help conservators formulate specifically precise treatments for cleaning art and artifacts. VCA Vice President Marla Curtis was one of the workshop participants, and she will describe the MCP and the workshop in more detail during this members' meeting. In addition the meeting will include presentations by Fred Wallace and Carey Howlett who completed the workshop, discussing how they have utilized the MCP material in subsequent conservation treatment projects.

Photos of MCP Class



MEMBERS MEETING

November 20, 2014

Members of the VCA toured the recently renovated galleries of The Valentine. VCA members David Voelkel, Nancy Beck, Marla Curtis, and Rusty Bernabo discussed the work they've done.



David Voelkel, the Elise H. Wright Curator of General Collections for The Valentine talks about the new gallery



Nancy Beck introduces the time-lapse video of her work on the 1856 Richmond map covering the new gallery's floor



Beth Fulton gives an overview of her work on the portrait of John Heth and passes around images of the painting taken before restoration



Rusty Bernabo talks about his restoration of the portrait's gilt frame



New Exhibit Space



**VCA Members' Meeting Minutes
November 20, 2014
The Valentine Museum**



Marla brought the meeting to order, as Rick was unable to attend. First order of business is to discuss and vote on the proposed change to the bylaws. The proposal is to change the date of the dues deadline to the first members meeting of the year. The members present voted unanimously to make the change.

Nancy Beck gave the Treasurer's report, stating that our starting balance was \$2,042.62. We've now had 80 members rejoin. The income to date has been \$2,085.00 and our expenses have been \$187.79. We still have \$8,000 in CD's and they are continuing to earn interest. Our current balance is \$3,939.83.

Mary Scott Andrews listed the rest of the programs calendar for this year. The next Members Meeting will be on January 15 at Maymont and is a presentation about the Modular Cleaning Program. Conservators who went through the course and have found it helpful will share their own stories. The March 26th meeting will be at the Department for Historic Resources with a talk given by member Katherine Ridgeway. There will also be a field trip this year on April 16 to the Chrysler Museum, hosted by Mark Lewis, to highlight their recent renovations. The last program of the year will be on May 21, and Mary is hoping to get two conservators from the National Archives. They have a presentation on saving and preserving Jewish Iraqi documents from Baghdad. All of this information can also be found on the website. Mary is still trying to find a venue for the Holiday Party, as the venue we had hoped to use was unavailable this year. Mary then introduced the first speaker for the night, David Voelkel, the Elise H. Wright Curator of General Collections at the Valentine. *Beth Fulton, Secretary*

December Treasurer's Report:

Current Balance \$4,189.33



**CAREERS IN ART
AND ARTIFACT CONSERVATION**

February 5, 2015
4-6 P.M.

Christopher Newport University
McMurrin Hall, Room 101

This program is designed to give students an overview of what is necessary to get in to a conservation graduate program and the different paths that have been used by some working conservators.

Panel:

Emily Williams, Conservator of Archaeological Materials, The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation

Mark Lewis, Conservator, Chrysler Museum of Art

Valinda Carroll, Preservation Manager, Harvey Library, Hampton University

Kirsten Travers Moffitt, Materials Analyst and Associate Conservator, The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation

**Moderator:
Will Hoffman**

For More Information Contact:
whoffman@marinersmuseum.org

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The Virginia Conservation Association

2014-15 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: _____

Conservator

Administrator

Curator

Conservation Technician

Collection Manager/Registrar

Appraiser

Postgraduate (Intern/Fellow)

Framer/Preparator

Collector

Student

Librarian

Supporter

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? _____

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 \$30.00 (Regular) or \$15.00 (Student; enclose copy of valid I.D.) Application and dues payment must be received by November 15, 2014 for inclusion in the 2014-15 VCA Directory.

NOTE: If you are renewing after November 15th, please apply a \$5.00 late fee to you payment.

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