

# Virginia

# Conservation Association

May 2019 Vol. 28 Issue 5



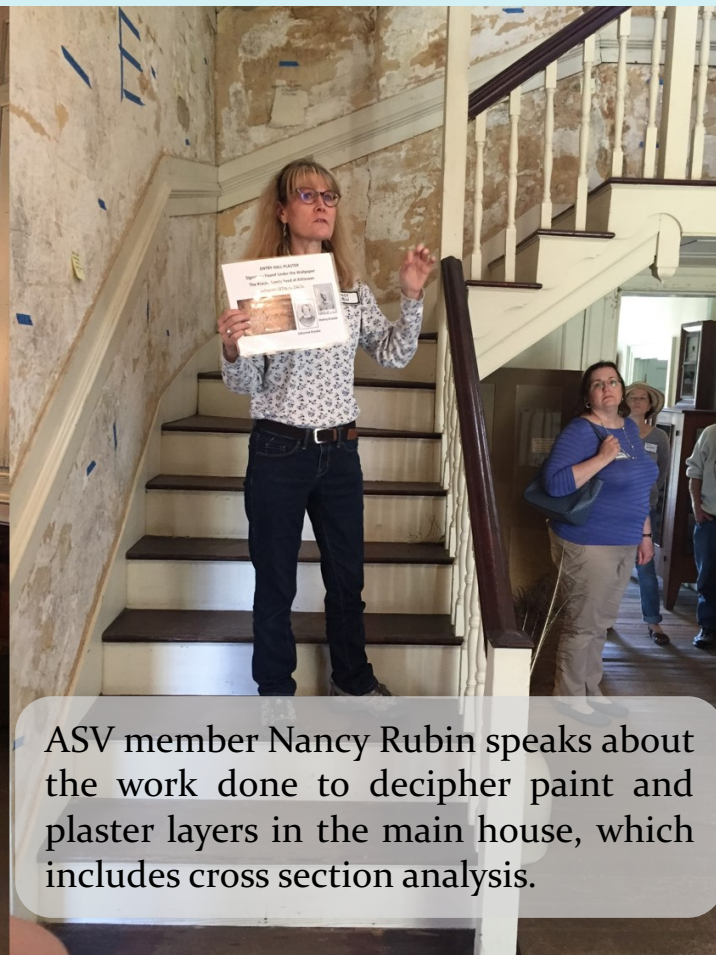
The Virginia Conservation Association promotes the care and preservation of cultural materials. The VCA offers education and training for those involved in conservation and provides a forum for discussion of pertinent issue and developments in the field.

## A Lovely Day at Kittiewan!

Members learned a great deal at our well attended April 7<sup>th</sup> meeting at Kittiewan Plantation with our gracious hosts from the Archaeological Society of Virginia (ASV). See a further summary of the day's events inside.



ASV member Patrick O'Neill describes the ornate paneling in the 'best room,' which is unprecedented in a house of this period and stature.



ASV member Nancy Rubin speaks about the work done to decipher paint and plaster layers in the main house, which includes cross section analysis.

# Letter From the President



*Kate Ridgway, VCA President*

I never really know what I am going to write in these letters and then the deadline approaches and inevitably something has happened in my world or the world of conservation that gives me a topic. Sadly, as I am writing this Nôtre Dame is still smoldering. No matter what your faith, an icon of world history will never again be the same. However, in this day and age, with a camera in every phone, the rise of crowd sourcing, and with advanced ways of recording information such as laser scanning, conservators and preservationists can make it whole again, if not exactly the same.

While disasters such as this are heartbreaking, this is when conservators and other museum professionals really shine. From having and following a disaster plan, to meticulous records from previous conservation and preservation efforts, this is when you realize, in stark black and white, the incredible value of the “boring” part of preservation and conservation: record keeping.

I have been struggling in a more mundane way with record keeping issues in my own work. We have acquired a collection that was once in corporate hands. The records of the conservation treatments have been maintained at DHR the whole time, and I did not really understand them until I started working more closely with the collection. It is a struggle. There is so much information missing from these artifacts. In many cases, all or part of their context is lost. However, there are some amazing drawings, showing that records keeping can save the day. Because of the meticulous drawings, we have been able to re-associate the records with approximately ninety-five percent of the collections to date, and that is amazing, especially when there has been forty years of separation between the records and the artifacts.

All of this is to say, take some time to relish the boring parts. Sometimes the mundane things can make the most difference.

Vive la tenue de dossiers! Vive la France! Vive la Nôtre Dame!



# June Members Meeting in Richmond

**When:** Friday, June 7 at 5:30 PM

**Where:** The Virginia Museum of Fine Arts (followed by a meeting at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources)



The Object Conservation and African Art departments of the VMFA are involved in an Andrew W. Mellon Foundation funded three year project to carry out technical analysis, conservation, and scholarly research on the African collection. This grant has provided funds to increase in-house analytic capacity and as well as ongoing consultations with visiting curators, scientists, conservators, and scholars. The project goals have been to increase the body of knowledge about African material culture and to engage issues specific to the conservation and stewardship of these collections.

The talk will provide an overview of the project and will take place in the VMFA African Galleries and focus on the installation “When Metaphor Becomes Material: Life Histories of African Art” which features work done as part of the project.

After the talk we will gather at the DHR for the last business meeting of the year. Please try and attend, as we will be approving the budget and voting in new board members. There will also be an opportunity to share your thoughts about the future of the VCA, in response to the President’s letter in the March newsletter.

## Assistant Conservator, Objects Colonial Williamsburg Foundation

The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation is seeking applicants for the position of Assistant Conservator of Objects. This is a permanent full-time salaried position and is eligible for benefits. Hiring range is 38-41K annually dependent upon experience and with opportunity for advancement.

Responsibilities: Working with the objects conservator, the assistant conservator will assist with all aspects of the care and preservation of the Foundation's collection of decorative, folk, and sculptural objects.

Requirements: Graduate of recognized conservation training program preferred, though a combination of at least five years of relevant education and experience will be considered. Extensive knowledge of conservation principles and practices; demonstrated treatment skills that require superior manual dexterity and an aptitude for detailed hand work; museum experience; ability to work and think independently while also adhering to established guidelines. Good organizational, computer, interpersonal and communication skills - both oral and written. Ability to share workplace respectfully with others. All applicants must be capable of lifting up to 50lbs, able to stand or sit for long periods, work at heights on occasion, and be medically and physically capable of wearing a respirator equipped with organic vapor cartridges.

Preferred qualifications: Professional membership in art conservation organizations; 1-2 years of post-graduate conservation experience.

Using link below, please apply online. Position will remain open until filled.

[www.colonialwilliamsburg.org/foundation/careers](http://www.colonialwilliamsburg.org/foundation/careers)

Successful candidate must have US work visa. Colonial Williamsburg supports a drug- and alcohol-free workplace. AA/EOE

[Click here for more information about conservation at CW.](#)

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Tina Gessler  
Objects Conservator  
Colonial Williamsburg Foundation  
Williamsburg VA  
(757) 220-7039  
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## Meeting at Kittiewan Plantation

April 7, 2019

Submitted by Emilie Duncan

The April meeting took place at Kittiewan Plantation, an 18<sup>th</sup>-century historic house and home to the Archaeological Society of Virginia (ASV). It was an absolutely beautiful spring day, and all the attendees got a good dose of sunshine and fresh air as they toured the house and surrounding lands.



The main house at Kittiewan Plantation, originally known as Milford, is a rare surviving example of an 18<sup>th</sup>-century wood frame structure. The house was built in the Georgian style, and much of the original structure has been preserved intact by the occupants over the years.

Several members from ASV kindly dedicated their afternoon to giving us an in-depth look into the plantation's rich history; from the prehistoric site of Native American settlement, to the 17<sup>th</sup>-century construction and occupation of the main house by Dr. William Rickman (the first Director of Hospitals of the Continental Army in VA), as well as the Civil War battlefields complete with intact trenches and gun pits.

The ASV guides outlined the organization's continued efforts to research the architectural and social history of the house and lands. With help from Colonial Williamsburg, local Virginia conservators, and student researchers, the ASV have endeavored on a "dig" to see through layers of wallpaper, paint, plaster, and paneling to discern and, where appropriate, reveal the surviving original finishes and features of the main house structure.

Along with the house and lands, the ASV acquired the extensive Americana Collection of the Cropper family, the former estate owners. The collection is currently displayed throughout the house and in the basement. The ASV strongly encourages those who are interested to come and make use of the extensive research library located in the Visitor's Center.

Special thanks to the ASV and particularly Nancy Rubin, Patrick O'Neill, Bob Wharton, Tom Dudon, Joey Moldenhauer, and Myron Rolston for spending the day sharing their knowledge and enthusiasm for this bit of local Virginia history!



ASV member Patrick O'Neill takes members out on a dock for a clear, unadulterated view of the mouth of the James River from Kittiewan Creek, which is believed to look much the same as it would have when seen by John Smith as he sailed down the James. On the shore, ASV members have begun a small dig that has already turned up evidence of a Native American settlement.

## Re-Cap of the Field Trip to “Horse Country”

Submitted by Keri Ragland, Photo Courtesy of Maeve Bristow

On May 8<sup>th</sup>, VCA members met for the annual Field trip. This year the group journeyed to Middleburg, Virginia meeting at The National Sporting Library & Museum. Andrew Baxter spoke about his work on two pieces in the collection that sit outside of the museum in the sculpture garden: “*Sea Hero*” and “*Civil War Calvary Horse*”, which has a raw bronze patina.



The group met with Curator, Claudia Pfeiffer, and toured through selected galleries. Highlights included special exhibit, *Deconstructed: The NSLM Sporting Screen*, which details a recently conserved four-panel decorative screen, and the temporary exhibition, *NSLMology: The Science of Sporting Art*, which melds art with science to discuss physics, meteorology, chemistry and color theory. VCA members also gained access to the Library’s Rare Book Room where Head Librarian, John Connolly, permitted an up-close view of three bibles with ‘secret’ fore edge paintings depicting various forms of sporting art. The Library’s collection includes an original 1886 hand written manuscript by Teddy Roosevelt on the virtues and values of fox hunting and a printed 1631 book on animal husbandry.

After the Museum & Library tour, the group was welcomed for lunch at the beautifully restored home of Chris Ohrstrom, co-founder of Adelphi Paper Hangings. Chris’s home, now located in The Plains, was moved from Mecklenberg County, Virginia, and is filled with antique furnishings that he has collected.

Following the lunch, VCA members visited Oak Spring Garden Foundation in Upperville, where they were invited to tour the estate of Rachel “Bunny” and Paul Mellon. Members viewed the “*Mill Reef*” sculpture, which is a copy of the original that is owned by VMFA, and also conserved by VCA member, Andrew Baxter. Andrew also spoke about his work reproducing the original Schlumberger finial that adorns the top of Mrs. Mellon’s glass house. During a tour of the estate, the group viewed the original finial pieces as well as original drawings by the artist located in Mrs. Mellon’s private library. The day ended with a tour of the Gallery, or “memory house”, which houses rotating exhibits of the Mellon’s art collection and personal belongings and also a reproduction studio on the lower level, dedicated to making copies of the original artwork in the Mellon collection.

**VCA BOARD MEETING MINUTES**  
**Libbie Mill Library, Richmond, Virginia**  
**April 11 2019**

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**ATTENDEES:** Kate Ridgway, Maeve Bristow, Suzanne Collins, Lesley Haines, Jane Hohensee, Paige Schmidt, Debbie Pellmann.

**CALL TO ORDER:** President Kate Ridgway called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM.

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**PRESIDENTS'S REPORT:**

President Kate Ridgway reported positive feedback regarding her article on possible future directions that the VCA might take. The Nominating Committee is continuing to work on a slate of officers for the upcoming year.

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**COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

**Programs:**

The April 7 Meeting at Kittiewan Plantation was well attended with 27 members and guests participating. A donation of \$100.00 was approved by the Board. The site is being considered as a possible Helping Hands Project.

The next membership meeting will be in early June. A program will be presented by the VMFA at the DHR and will be on the research of the African program. New Board members will be voted on at this meeting.

A field trip to the National Sporting Museum in Middleburg, VA, followed by a special luncheon and then a tour of Bunny and Paul Mellon's home at Oakspring in the afternoon will be held on May 8, 2019. At this time, all slots are full.

The possibility of a annual conference was discussed with a variety of papers being presented.

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**NEW BUSINESS:**

It was decided that posting on Facebook and linking to Instagram would be made a part of Outreach.

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**ADJOURNMENT:** Kate Ridgway adjourned the meeting at 7:20 PM.

Respectfully submitted,  
Deborah Pellmann, Secretary



## Board Position Openings

There are a number of board positions becoming available in the upcoming nomination period. The nominating committee is formed by Fred Wallace and Emilie Duncan. If you are interested in a board position, contact a member of the nominating committee. Elections will be held during the June members meeting.

The Board is Seeking the Following:

Vice President

Treasurer

Secretary

Programming Chair (1 seat available)

Education Chairs (2 seats available)

Outreach Coordinators (2 seats available)

## 2018 – 2019 Board Members

Kate Ridgway	President	katyridgway@gmail.com
Kate McEnroe	Vice President	katelmmcenroe@gmail.com
Deborah Pellman	Secretary	mpellmann@mindspring.com
Christi Barranger	Treasurer	gab1118@aol.com
Terri Blanchette	Education Co-Chair	Tsbhistory@gmail.com
Bob Self	Education Co-Chair	vabobcat@aol.com
Suzanne Collins	Membership Co-Chair	marion7@me.com
Paige Schmidt	Membership Co-Chair	paigelschmidt1@gmail.com
Casey Mallinckrodt	Outreach	casey.mallinckrodt@vmfa.museum
Maeve Bristow	Programs Co-Chair	maevebristow@gmail.com
Lesley Haines	Programs Co-Chair	lchaines86@gmail.com
Allison Kelley	Publications	allison.kelley22@gmail.com
Lorraine Brevig	Web Management	hisstah@aol.com
Jane Hohensee	Refreshments Co-Chair	hohenj@cox.net
Tom Snyder	Refreshments Co-Chair	thomassnyder2@cox.net

**The Virginia Conservation Association**  
**Membership Application & Dues Payment**

\*Required

\*Date: \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_\_

\* \_\_\_\_\_ New \* \_\_\_\_\_ Renewing

*(Name as you would like for it to appear in the Directory-Please indicate if you do **not** want to be included in the Directory)*

\*First \_\_\_\_\_ \*Last \_\_\_\_\_

\*Address: \_\_\_\_\_ \*City \_\_\_\_\_

\*State \_\_\_\_\_ \*ZIP \_\_\_\_\_ \*Telephone: ( \_\_\_\_\_ ) \_\_\_\_\_

\*Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Organization(s): \_\_\_\_\_ Website: \_\_\_\_\_

**I Identify As:**

_____ Administrator	_____ Conservator	_____ Librarian
_____ Appraiser	_____ Conservation Technician	_____ Post Graduate-Intern/Fellow
_____ Collector	_____ Curator	_____ Supporter
_____ Collection Mgr./Registrar	_____ Framer/Preparator	_____ Student
_____ Other (Specify) _____		

**Areas of Conservation Expertise:**

_____ Objects	_____ Furniture	_____ Paintings
_____ Ethnographic Objects	_____ Frames/Gilded Objects	_____ Painted Surfaces
_____ Archaeological Objects	_____ Textiles	_____ Conservation Science
_____ Architecture	_____ Books and Paper	_____ Preventive Conservation
_____ Sculpture	_____ Photographic Materials	_____ Accept Private Contracts
_____ Other (Specify) _____		

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

Are you willing to serve as a Mentor? \_\_\_\_\_ Would you like to have a Mentor? \_\_\_\_\_

Are you interested in serving on the VCA board in the future? (see website for details) \_\_\_\_\_

**Practicing Conservator/Consultant Conservators Only:**

Would you like your contact information included in our website's 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 check made payable to VCA for \$30 (Regular) or \$15 (Student: Enclose a copy of a valid student ID) to the address below. To join online, visit [www.virginiaconservationassociation.org/wp/](http://www.virginiaconservationassociation.org/wp/).

Application and dues payment must be received by **October 15th** to ensure inclusion in the VCA Directory.

**The Virginia Conservation Association**  
**P. O. Box 7023**  
**Richmond, Virginia 23221**