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Recovery of Wet Materials Following a Disaster — submitted by Julia Merkel

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With summer revisions in mind for the Library's Disaster Plan, I spent a week in May of this year at an intensive training session, *The Recovery of Wet Materials Following a Disaster*. The session was presented by the American Institute for Conservation of Historic & Artistic Works in partnership with the National Park Service at the National Conservation Training Center in Shepherdstown, West Virginia. Program funding was also provided by the National Endowment for the Humanities' Preservation and Access Grant, and by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

The instructors were M.J. Davis and Barbara Moore—both conservators in private practice. M.J. Davis specializes in paper conservation and has certification from the Straus Center at Harvard, and Barbara Moore has a graduate diploma in conservation from the University of London and has held positions at the Peabody and the Strong Museums among others. Monona Rossol and Gary Albright were guest instructors addressing safety and health factors in disaster mitigation and recovery of photographic materials respectively. Monona Rossol is an artist, research chemist and industrial hygienist who gained notoriety for co-authoring with Cate Jenkins, a senior chemist at the EPA, a memo to the NYC Department of Health criticizing their disregard of federal asbestos abatement laws in the aftermath of the World Trade Center collapse. Gary Albright is the conservator at the George Eastman House in Rochester, NY. Previously, he was senior paper/photograph conservator at the Northeast Document Conservation Center for 19 years.

Sixteen participating conservators and curators from across the country were in attendance including six members of the National Parks Service's Museum Emergency Response Team. Other institutions represented were the National Archives, the Charleston Museum, the LA County Museum, the Balboa Conservation Center, and the Hagley Library among others. Several of the participants are instructors themselves; the collective experience of the group was remarkable. The NPS Emergency Response Team has been very active and well-versed in setting up "incident command centers" responding to Hurricanes Isabel and Ivan while many of the other participants also had first-hand experience in disaster recovery efforts. It was a humbling and gratifying experience to be among so many highly trained professionals.

The format of the workshop was a combination of lectures, salvage exercises, and hands-on laboratory experiments. Because the workshop spanned a five day period, participants were able to rehearse a disaster salvage effort by subjecting a variety of materials to water damage, tracking their condition over 48 hours and experimenting with drying techniques appropriate and/or inappropriate to the material composition of the collection materials. In real-life disasters, access to compromised collections may not be possible within the first 48 hour window as first the area must be stabilized by emergency personnel. Establishing the structure of the salvage operation and having pre-existing contingency plans in place be-

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The next newsletter will be published in October 2005. If you have any information (employment opportunities, articles, events) you would like to include in the newsletter, please forward to Tracy Bryan at tbryan@vahistorical.org by September 30.

Membership Meeting

Thursday, September 15

VCU Library

On September 15, 2005 the VCA will present its first program of the new season, "Postural Pain Syndromes for Conservators and Curators" by Walter J. Personius, Sr., P.T., Ph.D. Dr. Personius will be addressing a number of issues relating to pain and its treatment emphasizing common problems encountered with sustained and repetitive postures that can cause difficulties in the workplace. He will discuss a self-evaluation method of recognizing posture and pain symptoms, the aim being to enable the individual to treat him or herself and to recognize when professional help is needed. Dr. Personius will demonstrate, with the participation of VCA members, that many problems can be handled on the job with proper instruction. He will focus his discussion on problems with pain in the back, shoulder, hand, arm and head.

Dr. Personius received his Bachelor of Science degree in Physical Therapy from Ithaca College in 1967 and his masters and doctoral degrees in Physical Therapy from the University of Iowa in 1977 and 1984, respectively. In 1977 he joined the PT faculty of the Department of Physical Therapy at MCV. Throughout the nineteen eighties he taught, did research, and practiced in the departments of Physical Therapy and Surgery (Neurosurgery). He co-founded and directed the MCV Spine Center and directed the Henrico Institute of Orthopedic and Sports Physical Therapy at Henrico Doctors' Hospital from 1980-1984. In 1989 he became professor and founding chairman of the Shenandoah University of the Physical Therapy Academic Program. In 1997 Dr. Personius

moved to Chicago where he was the founding Chairman of the Physical Therapy Academic Program at Rush-Presbyterian-St. Luke's Medical Center. In 2000 he returned to private practice in Fredericksburg, Virginia and in the fall of 2002 established a solo practice in Richmond at Personius and Associates Physical Therapy, Parham Medical Center.

Dr. Personius' doctoral dissertation and student research advising while at MCV emphasized the evaluation of chronic neuromuscular pain syndromes, including low back pain and "sciatica", abdominal pelvic pain mimicking endometriosis in women, and chest pain angina-like symptoms mimicking myocardial symptoms. From this research and ongoing patient care, he developed the Symptom Reproduction (SR) Examination Method (copyrighted) for isolating neuromusculoskeletal pain sources.

Dr. Personius has worked in hospital, private practice, and faculty practice settings and is currently specializing in the evaluation and physical therapy treatment of neuromusculoskeletal chronic pain syndromes. Among his particular interests are neck and upper extremity pain syndromes, low back pain and "sciatica", headaches, hip, and knee pain, and "growing pains" in children.

Time and place: 5:30 p.m. VCU Library Preservation Department, 2nd floor for refreshments and a short business meeting; 6:00 p.m. Dr. Personius's talk in room B-35, the "smart classroom" in the

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It's that time again!

VCA dues for the 2005-2006 membership year are due October 1. Mail your completed application (enclosed with this newsletter) and check made payable to The Virginia Conservation Association to: Treasurer, VCA, P.O. Box 4314, Richmond, VA, 23220. A \$5 late fee will apply to memberships received after October 1. In order for a member to be included in the membership directory, dues must be received by November 15, 2005.



Thanks for your support of the VCA.

Care of Photographic Materials

SOLINET Class

October 10, 2005 at the Virginia Historical Society

Photographic materials present significant preservation concern in library and archival collections. They are often heavily used, and are fragile and susceptible to damage due to improper storage conditions. This full-day introductory class is designed to aid cultural institutions in developing preservation strategies based on real-world issues, for example, storage conditions and handling guidelines for photographic collections that provide protection and access. Examples of housing supplies, photographic materials, and deteriorated photographs will be provided. Class format is primarily lecture with ample time for questions.

Among the topics covered:

- Photographic materials and processes
- Issues with prints, color, film, glass, albums
- Environment and storage guidelines
- Handling guidelines
- Housing guidelines
- Exhibition guidelines
- Duplication/reformatting
- New technologies
- Collection maintenance/preservation planning.

Instructor

Andrew Robb is a photograph conservator whose clients have included the National Gallery of Art, the Library of Congress, The National Museum of American Art, and the National Museum of American History. He was the primary author of text on the care and preservation of photographs for a prototype CD-ROM being developed by the

Getty Conservation Institute.

Intended Audience

The workshop is designed for those who have photograph collections and will be particularly significant for those who are responsible for the care or use of these materials.

Notes

Because of support from the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) Division of Preservation and Access, ALL SOLINET members are charged the Governing Member rate for Preservation classes and non-members are charged the Affiliate Member rate. Any institution within the hosting state qualifies for the member rate.

Class Schedule and Details

Date: October 10, 2005

Time: 9 a.m. — 4:00 p.m.

Location: Virginia Historical Society

Fee: SOLINET Members \$145; Non SOLINET Members \$185

Early Bird Registration: Before September 9

Late Fee: Charged after October 3

Visit http://www.solinet.net/workshops/ws_details.cfm?doc_id=3041&WKSHPID=12PPM2 for details and registration.

Virginia Conservation Association
2005-2006 Board
www.virginiaconservationassociation.org

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Grant Deadlines

National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) at www.neh.gov

Challenge grants: November 1, May 2

Collaborative research grants: November 1

Consultation grants for libraries, museums, or special projects: September 16

Grants to preserve and create access to humanities collections: July 17

Grants for stabilizing humanities collections: October 3

Implementation grants for humanities projects in libraries and archives: February 3

Implementation grants for museums and historical organizations: February 3

Implementation grants for special projects: February 3

Planning grants for libraries, museums, and special projects: September 16

Preservation assistance grants for smaller institutions: May 15

Preservation and access education and training grants: July 3

Preservation and access research and development projects grants: July 3 (Precis due May 16)

Reference materials grants: July 17

United States newspaper program: July 3

National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC) at www.archives.gov/grants/index.html

Grant Proposals: June 1; October 1

Preserve America at www.preserveamerica.gov

Preserve America Communities: rolling deadlines: June 1; September 1, December 1, and March 1

Membership Meeting September 15 (continued)

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basement.

Directions:

From I-64 Westbound, exit at 76A Chamberlayne.
Turn left at end of ramp.
Turn right at first light onto Leigh Street.
Left on Belvidere
Right on Main Street.

From I-64 Eastbound, exit at 76B Belvidere.
Turn left at end of ramp.

Turn right onto Belvidere
Right on Main Street

Parking is available on the street and in the Main Street Parking Deck.
<http://www.bsv.vcu.edu/vcupark/onstrprk100.pdf>
The parking deck costs \$5

Upcoming November meeting: November 17 at Maymont for a look at conservation projects completed by some of our VCA members.

Recovery of Wet Materials — continued

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forehand buys precious time. Being ready to react quickly once the area is cleared for non-emergency personnel is important because the threat of mold looms large after 48 hours.

A basic structure for a wet salvage operation is: define roles, establish communication methods, procure supplies, assess damage, triage into damp, wet and soaked categories, and stabilize the collections accordingly. Pack out what can be transported wet. Shore up what cannot be easily moved. Know what to dry and vacuum and what to rinse. (The type of floodwater guides decision-making as well. For instance, the salts in sea water are corrosive while freshwater floods can be chemically active soups of solvents, sewage, etc. Is it the upper Mississippi or the lower? Source is most definitely a factor. Rainwater is full of whatever was in the atmosphere on its way down. Even the spray from fire hoses can pose problems—high pressure spray can make hazardous particles such as asbestos airborne. In Ms. Rossol's lecture she stated: "Asbestos doesn't care if it's wet or dry—it will kill you either way!") Freezing can buy time in a wet salvage effort, but the logistics and volume can be prohibitively expensive. Freezers were in limited supply after Ivan and Isabel, and collections are lower priority than food supplies in a regional disaster. It is also interesting to note that a conservator's code of ethics is compromised in a salvage operation much like a physician's is in a triage situation.

The lectures covered several relevant topics including: salvage guidelines and priorities, drying techniques, disaster residues, re-entry health & safety (regulatory

requirements, mold, and air quality standards), salvaging specific materials (from libraries to art museum to natural history collections), structure and identification of photographic and electronic media. Helpful discussions ranged from experiences with commercial vendors to which freeze drying methods are most effective for specific materials. For example, vacuum freeze drying, cryogenic or thermal drying are all acceptable practices, but vacuum thermal drying=cooking and should be avoided. Hidden costs of freezing vs. air drying need to be considered. Air dried books often require commercial re-binding and require considerably more shelf space. On the other hand, there are often hidden costs with freeze drying as well: shipping and handling, minimum charges...even shipping containers and crates can be added expenses. \$80 per cubic foot is a rough estimate for freeze drying library materials.

Monona Rossol shared several practical, entertaining, and terrifying tips regarding industrial hygiene:

- "Nitrile gloves are not approved for chemical use."
- "Latex is only good for water, blood and soap."
- "The most serious allergic reactants are not considered toxic."
- "The Department of Homeland Security is now God—they define national disaster sites—not the EPA, not FEMA."
- "You can't be fitted for a respirator if you wear a beard."
- "The most expensive worker

that can be hired does not speak English."

- (threat of injury claims)
- "Liability is the only thing that makes safety work."
- "De-greasers are non-standardized—citrus oil is a registered pesticide."
- "It may be natural, but Mother Nature is out to get you."
- "After a flood, cut out wall-board above the water line."
- "Carpet is a sink. If it's been wet more than 48 hours, it must go."
- "There are 80,000 chemicals in the work place, and only 800 have been tested. The rest are labeled non-toxic by default."

For those who were in Carrier Library this summer when it was evacuated for a strong chemical odor during the re-roofing project and were skeptical of the downplay of the health hazard of the incident, you may appreciate another of Ms. Rossol's comments: "air sampling is a joke." There is great variation as to what is considered acceptable parts per million between the American Conference of Government Industrial Hygienists (NCGIH) and OSHA regulations which are "seriously out-of-date." (79,200 chemicals and counting are labeled non-toxic by default simply because the list was created in the 1970's; no new chemicals have been added to the list since its inception.) Indoor air quality comes under American Society of Heat-

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Recovery of Wet Materials — continued

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ing, Refrigeration & Air-conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE) standards. As an experienced chemist and industrial hygienist, Ms. Rossol dismissed ASHRAE saying, "They know nothing."

Having participated in this immersion workshop for professional conservation practices, I am reminded how little I know and what a challenge it will be to pull everything together in the event of a disaster. Several library faculty and staff members will be attending a Solinet disaster workshop on July 21st. Stay tuned for meetings and updates to the Library Disaster Plan later this summer.



Conservation lab features gurneys ready with "specimens" for experimentation. Two indispensable autopsy tables with drain/pedestals can be seen in the previous picture.



Photo above shows a floodwater simulation.

Some recommended reading:

- Barton, John and J. Wellheiser, eds. *An Ounce of Prevention: A Handbook on Disaster Contingency Planning for Archives, Libraries, and Record Centres*. 2nd ed. Toronto: Scarecrow Press, Inc. 2002.
- Buchanan, Sally. *Disaster Planning: Preparedness and Recovery for Libraries and Archives*. Paris: General Information Programme and United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, 1988.
- Fischer, David J. and Thomas W. Duncan. "Conservation Research: Flood-Damaged Library Materials." *Bulletin of the AIC* vol.15, no.2 (Summer 1975): 27-48.
- Kahn, Miriam. "Mastering Disaster: Emergency Planning for Libraries." *Library Journal* (December 1993): 73-75.
- Lyall, Jan. "Disaster Planning for Libraries and Archives: Understanding the Essential Issue." *The Electronic Magazine*, Vol.1, No.2, March 1996.
- Morris, John. *The Library Disaster Preparedness Handbook*. Chicago: American Library Association, 1986.
- *A Primer on Disaster Preparedness, Management and Response: Paper-Based Materials*. Selected reprints issued by Smithsonian Institution, National Archives and Records Administration, Library of Congress, and National Parks Service. Washington, D.C.: 1993.
- Waters, Peter. *Procedures for Salvage of Water-Damaged Library Materials*. Washington, D.C.: Library of Congress, 1993.
- <http://www.archives.gov/preservation/damaged-library-materials-part1.html>

Calling All Volunteers—The ASTO Conference is Coming to the Science Museum of Virginia

October 13 - 18, 2005, the Science Museum of Virginia and the Richmond community will host the Association of Science-Technology Centers' (ASTC) 2005 Conference. More than 1,800 science center directors, scientists, educators and exhibit creators from ASTC's 550 member organizations worldwide will attend the conference.

The majority of the conference will be held at the Greater Richmond Convention Center but there are exciting events scheduled for the Science Museum of Virginia as well, including the All

Aboard at Broad Street Station! Party Saturday, October 15th and the Science Museum of Virginia Open Campus Day on Monday, October 17th.

As you know, volunteers play a key role at almost every museum throughout the nation on a daily basis, contributing countless hours and a wealth of knowledge to a wide variety of programs and services. This conference is as equally dependent on volunteers' generous contribution of service and expertise. Consider volunteering your time and talent to make this conference the best one

yet!

To learn more about volunteering for ASTC 2005, please visit our website at <http://www.smv.org/ASTC05/Volunteer.html>

Beth Voelkel



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