

# VCA News

P.O. Box 4314

Richmond, VA 23220

Newsletter of the Virginia Conservation Association

Volume 16 Number 2 October 2005

## Furniture Conservation Class Wilton House Museum

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*The VCA News is published five times a year and is distributed free to members of the Virginia Conservation Association. The next newsletter will be published in late December 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](mailto:tbryan@vahistorical.org) by December 15.*

Preservation of artifacts is one of any museum institution's most important objectives. On August 22, Rick Vogt, a Richmond conservator and VCA member, led a furniture conservation class at Wilton House where he presented information to help museum professionals care for their collections. During the morning hours, Vogt lectured on the problems with preservation in the house museum setting and showed examples of work completed under his direction.

Several factors affect the durability of an artifact in any setting. Those include use, temperature and humidity, pollutants, UV light, and insects, among other environmental factors. The handling and storage conditions of pieces, as well as weather related disasters, also factor into the equation. House museums that have a regular tour schedule create more difficulties. When the doors are opened and closed repeatedly, heat, cold and humidity are let in. Insects and other creatures may enter with the visitors. A wondering hand may also cause the process of deterioration to quicken.

Vogt discussed three projects his team completed recently, including a Louis XV clock, a nineteenth-century writing table, and a pair of British card tables. The Boulle clock had a wood substrate overlaid with tortoise shell and brass. Each of these three materials has a different reaction to the environment, and thus few such pieces have remained intact. The first questions Vogt asks of any piece are: What is the problem, and why is it happening? These questions should always be asked to determine how to prevent the same problem from reoccurring after spending any amount of money on restoration. Almost all the brass on the clock had been partially lifted, often a result of improper cleaning. Some shell was also missing from the clock, and the mechanism itself was broken. After approximately 300 hours of work, the clock appeared new. In order to preserve a wood artifact with brass or other metal inlay, it is important to only dust with a feather duster or a small blower. A cloth should never be used on such a piece because it will cause lifting. Likewise, brass polish will seep under the metal and cause it to lift.

Brass should be polished with water and a cotton swab. A solvent or mild soap may also be used. For shell, Vogt recommends a Ph balanced detergent. The surface can also be covered with paste wax to help keep out dirt.

The writing table, belonging once to the James Monroe family, also contained a brass inlay that was lifting, or lost. The rosewood top had shrunk and split. All of the wood and most of the brass had to be replaced. After Vogt's team was finished with the restoration, the piece was again covered in paste wax to prevent more destruction. The pair of British card tables presented another problem—that of fixing an earlier improper attempt at repair. This is the hardest part of the process, according to Vogt.

The goal of preservation is to extend the life of a piece. It is not possible to stop deterioration completely, but there are many ways to slow the process. Public events are often a vital source of income for house museums. However, if the protection of a particular piece is a concern, it might be best to put the original away and present a replica instead. Other suggestions offered at the workshop for extending the life of a piece include closing shutters and curtains to keep out light and heat, fitting windows with UV filters (and replacing them every 3-5 years), sealing doors and windows to keep out mold, and providing visitors with an example of how touching artifacts affects them negatively. Candle burning and smoke may cause serious problems, as well, and should be avoided. If a piece is placed in the same spot after restoration, without adjusting harmful conditions, the problem will occur again.

During the second half of the workshop, Vogt showed participants the correct way to wax furniture using paste wax, natural bristle brushes to apply the wax, and soft clothes to buff the piece. Participants waxed chairs under supervision, gaining valuable knowledge concerning the proper way to care for pieces in their own collections, at work or at home.

~submitted by Kathryn Campbell, Virginia House

## Membership Meeting Thursday, November 17 Maymont

### Maymont Belowstairs: Post Restoration

Thursday, November 17, 2005

Maymont Garden Hall & Maymont House Museum

You saw the basement level of Maymont House before the 2004-05 restoration, now come back and see the restored exhibit areas. Join Museum Director Dale Wheary, Restoration Coordinator Dotty Robinson, and Conservator Mary Scott Andrews for a brief overview of the restoration project. Tour the basement with the restoration team and then venture upstairs to see recent projects by our own VCA members:



Restoration Artist and VCA Member Nancy Beck at work on the Swan Room ceiling.

- Sandy Jensen will speak about regilding the Pink Drawing Room Mantel
- Amy Fernandez and Nancy Beck will be in the Swan Room to discuss the restoration of the Swan Room Ceiling
- Brief overviews of other VCA-related projects

You will also have a chance to see Maymont House decked out for the holidays!

### DIRECTIONS TO MAYMONT, 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 Avenue and go one block toward 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.

*(Continued on page 5)*

## Don't lose your benefits—Renew NOW!

Benefits of VCA membership include: listing in VCA directory, invitations to meetings, functions and field trips, subscription to VCA newsletter, and access to a network of conservation professionals throughout Virginia. VCA dues for the 2005-2006 membership year were due October 1. In order for a member to be included in the membership directory, dues must be received by November 17, 2005.

**Be sure to bring your completed application and payment to the Members Meeting on November 17 or 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.**

## *AIC CALL FOR POSTERS*

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The AIC poster session welcomes abstracts of posters to be presented at the 35th annual meeting in Providence, R.I., June 16–19, 2006. The poster session provides an open forum for sharing information among colleagues. We encourage presentations from students, new members, and professionals from allied fields. This is an ideal opportunity to present preliminary findings, tips, and any projects that could not be included in the specialty group sessions.

A one-page preliminary abstract should be received by January 23, 2006, via e-mail, fax, or post (e-mail is preferred). Acceptance will be confirmed by February 3 and final abstracts will be due from presenters by February 17. The conference language is English, but

assistance is available for presenters for whom English is a second language. If you require assistance with translation, please contact the poster session co-chairs prior to January 23.

How to contact the poster session co-chairs:

Valinda Carroll  
Harvey Library  
Hampton University  
Hampton, Va. 23668  
(757) 727-5553  
Fax: (757) 727-5952

Cary Beattie Maguire  
(401) 297-9024  
E-mail: AICposter@craquelure.net

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### **The Conservation of Archaeological Materials: Current Trends and Future Directions Colonial Williamsburg Foundation November 13-17, 2005**

The Archaeological Discussion Group of the American Institute of Conservation and the Department of Conservation at the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation are pleased to announce a conference on archaeological conservation. The conference will address the following six topics:

1. **Defining archaeological conservation**
2. **Site management**
3. **On site conservation**
4. **Conservators and the intellectual record**
5. **The creation and long term management of archaeological archives/repositories**
6. **Community involvement and conservation**

For details and registration information, visit [www.cwf.org/history/institute/institute\\_about.cfm](http://www.cwf.org/history/institute/institute_about.cfm)

**Virginia Conservation Association**  
**2005-2006 Board**  
[www.virginiaconservationassociation.org](http://www.virginiaconservationassociation.org)

**Officers**

President	Carol Givens	ggraphic@erols.com	804.364.2096
Vice President	Traci Horne-Flores	LaArtsa@hotmail.com	804.358.2006
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**Chairs**

Bylaws	Jayne Harding	jayneharding@yahoo.com	804.746.1348
Disaster Response	Mary Scott Andrews	andrewsmmm@earthlink.net	804.741.8970
Education	Patricia Selinger	patricia.selinger@vcu.edu	804.828.1096
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Webmaster	Lorraine Brevig	HISSTAH@aol.com	804.358.2006

## Grant Deadlines

### National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) at [www.neh.gov](http://www.neh.gov)

Challenge grants: November 1, May 2

Collaborative research grants: November 1

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

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

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](http://www.archives.gov/grants/index.html)

Grant Proposals: June 1, October 1

### Preserve America at [www.preserveamerica.gov](http://www.preserveamerica.gov)

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

## Membership Meeting

### November 17 (continued)

*(Continued from page 2)*

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 Avenue and go one block toward the parking lot ahead.

AFTER PARKING, please walk down the service road past the Gate House, Stone Barn, and Fountain and take a left immediately before the Carriage House (there is a flag in front of the Carriage House). Follow the path around the Carriage House, past the Water Tower and to the Garden Hall, the initial location of the VCA meeting (and food!).



Maymont Kitchen Post Restoration  
Credit: Dennis McWaters

# VCA Board Meeting Minutes

## August 25, 2005—Wilton House Museum

Board Members Present: Carol Givens, Karri Richardson, Jayne Hardin, Patricia Selinger, Kathy Gillis, Melba Myers, Stuart Bailey Austin, Tracy Bryan, Michelle McClintick

Meeting came to order at 12:13 p.m.

### Officer/Committee Reports

President's Report, Carol Givens: Carol welcomed everyone to the meeting, and provided a handout of meeting dates.

Vice President's Report, Traci Horne-Flores (absent): No report.

Secretary's Report, Karri Richardson: Board member contact sheet was circulated for review and corrections. Karri reported that there were no minutes taken at the May 2005 Members Meeting at the Science Museum of Virginia.

Treasurer's Report, Dianne Ball (absent): Report submitted.

Bylaws, Jayne Harding: No report.

Disaster Response Committee, Mary Scott Andrews (absent): In Mary's absence, board members inquired as to how the Disaster Response Committee works when a disaster occurs. It was confirmed that there was a phone tree in past years. This issue was tabled until the next board meeting when Mary will be present.

Education Committee, Patricia Selinger & Kathy Gillis: After reviewing responses from the Digital Workshop evaluations, the Education Committee has come up with the following ideas for this year's workshop (s):

- Advance Photoshop (local expert to teach)
- Disaster Planning
- Grant Writing

All board members agreed that these three workshop ideas would be good topics for the VCA, and it was suggested that the VCA might want to consider doing more than one workshop this year. Kathy suggested we consider getting an AIC grant(s). Grant deadlines for workshops are September 15 and sometime in February. It was also suggested that we consider partnering

with SOLINET and/or Connect Richmond (a former partnership with VAM was not successful).

Patricia also reported that the VCA lost money on the Digital Photography workshop last May. The amount lost was minimal and was due in part to the instructor's fee and the production of the color course materials. However, the feedback on the workshop was very positive.

Membership Committee, Melba Myers: Membership dues are due October 1. Dues are \$25 for regular members and \$20 for students. A membership form will be included in this month's newsletter.

Program Committee, Stuart Bailey Austin: The next program is September 15, 2005 at 5:30 p.m. (refreshments) with the lecture starting at 6:00 p.m. The location is VCU Cabell Library, second floor (refreshments) and basement room B-35 (lecture). The speaker is Walter J. Personius, Sr., PhD., a physical therapist who specializes in repetitive motion/posture treatments. He will tailor his interactive lecture to repetitive motion pains/injuries that may affect conservators. He was suggested by VCA member Scott Taylor.

The November membership meeting will be held at Maymont and will feature the restoration of Maymont House Museum's service areas and other major conservation projects undertaken recently by VCA members (November 17, 2005, Maymont Garden Hall).

Stuart reported that she is trying to engage members and former members from Colonial Williamsburg. She spoke with CW's Chris Swan last May who agreed that they would like to have a stronger presence in the VCA. Stuart is working with Chris to schedule a Members Meeting at CW for next spring.

Other program ideas:

- Fiber optic lighting at Wilton and Agecroft
- Tour of restored Kenmore
- Follow-up trip to Hancock-Wirt-Caskie House (06-'07)
- New topic at the Science Museum of

Virginia

Field trip ideas:

- Flowerdew Hundred has been postponed as the windmill conservator will be out of town for the next few months.
- Pratt House and Port Royal – Stuart is working on this for the spring.

Publications, Tracy Bryan and Michelle McClintick: The newsletter is going out in the next day or so. Tracy reported that the newsletter will be printed locally by Kinkos or Office Max. This will enable her to have better control over the deadlines, mailing, etc.

All members will be receiving a hard copy of the first newsletter with a membership form included. The membership form has an option for e-mail newsletters, so in the future hard copies will be limited to those who do not request the e-mail version. The next newsletter deadlines are submittals - September 27 and publication - October 27 (a listing of future deadlines will be distributed at the next meeting).

### New Business

Members of last year's nominating committee have expressed concern over the proper rotation of Vice President and President. Some ideas were discussed but it was decided to table this discussion for the next board meeting. It was also pointed out that both Refreshments Committee members will be rotated off the board at the end of this year. It was suggested that the Refreshments Committee positions be "advertised" at the next Members Meeting, in the newsletter and on the website.

Some board members and general members feel that we need to do a better job of getting to know old members, new members and prospective members and increasing their involvement in the VCA. Carol Givens suggested that we take a group picture of the board for the newsletter. Kathy Gillis suggested we have nametags at Members Meetings. It was also suggested we make a strict habit of introducing new and prospective members at every board meeting. The member spotlight

*(Continued on page 8)*

## VCA MEMBERS MEETING MINUTES

### September 20, 2005

### VCU Cabell Library

Following an educational program on "Postural Pain Syndromes for Conservators and Curators" by Walter J. Personius PT, PhD, the business meeting of the Virginia Conservation Association was called to order at 7:55 p.m., President Carol Boyers Givens presiding.

The Minutes from the August 25, 2005 Board Meeting were adopted.

The Treasurer's Report was adopted.

Mrs. Givens made an appeal for people interested in serving on the Refreshments Committee. Both current committee members will be rotating off the committee at the end of this year. It would be helpful if anyone interested in working on this committee would please volunteer now. Anyone interested should contact Carol Givens or any board member.

#### **Committee Reports**

##### Bylaws, Jayne Harding

No report.

##### Disaster Response, Mary Scott Andrews

No report.

##### Education, Patricia Selinger

No report. However, Patricia did address the members with information regarding recovery efforts in Mississippi and Louisiana following Hurricane Katrina. Patricia

announced that the main organizations seeking help and assistance for these devastated areas are the following: Southeastern Museums Conference (SEMC), American Association of Museums (AAM), American Institute of Conservators (AIC) and the National Trust for Historic Preservation. Those interested should consult the websites for these organizations. Additionally, SOLINET has been conducting conference calls trying to marshal resources and manpower for the areas hardest hit in Mississippi. Patricia reported that FEMA is concentrating on recovery efforts in New Orleans and offering temporary National Guard assignments for professionals interested in helping with the recovery effort. Heritage Preservation ([heritagepreservation.org](http://heritagepreservation.org)) is organizing workshops and manpower for recovery efforts. Those interested should e-mail: [taskforce@heritagepreservation.org](mailto:taskforce@heritagepreservation.org).

##### Membership, Melba Myers

Membership applications went out in the August newsletter. All membership dues are due by October 1 if you want to be included in the directory. A late fee will be assessed after October 1.

##### Programs, Stuart Austin

The next Members Meeting will be held at Maymont House Museum on November 17 and will include a talk on the restoration of the servants' quarters at Maymont as well as brief on site talks on several con-

servation projects undertaken at Maymont House by VCA members.

##### Publications, Tracy Bryan

Submittals for the next newsletter are due September 30. An option for e-mail only newsletters was included on this year's membership form.

##### New Business

Melba Myers reported that the AIC is interested in holding their 2007 annual conference in Richmond. A representative from AIC asked Melba what role VCA could play if the conference was scheduled for Richmond – it was suggested that VCA should consider serving as the Local Arrangements Committee. This topic will be discussed at the next Board Meeting.

The next Board Meeting will be held on October 20, 2007 at Stuart Austin's house.

The Business Meeting adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

*Do you have news of a recent conservation project you would like to share with the Virginia Conservation Association? If so, please forward information and available images to Tracy Bryan at [tbryan@vahistorical.org](mailto:tbryan@vahistorical.org) for inclusion in the VCA News. We want to share more about our members and their current projects.*



## VCA Board Meeting Minutes— (continued)

*(Continued from page 6)*  
feature in the newsletter will be pursued, however, it was suggested that more general and/or personalized questions be asked (like those in the RTD Business Section Spotlight column). It was also suggested that small blurbs (1-2 paragraphs) on new conservation projects, new members, etc. be included in the newsletter.

Karri Richardson volunteered to take pictures at Members Meetings for inclusion in newsletters and the VCA archives.

### Old Business

The website is finished and looks great (thank you Lorraine!).

[www.virginiaconservationassociation.com](http://www.virginiaconservationassociation.com)

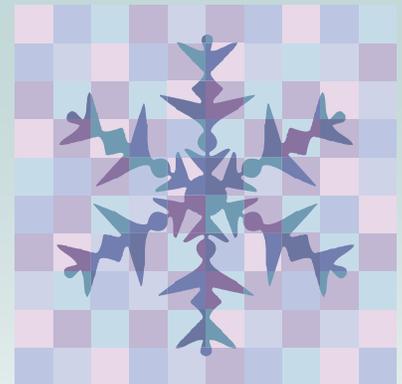
Board members inquired as to the status of a VCA logo. Previous boards have tried to come up with a logo and apparently John Fralin has submitted some ideas.

This issue was tabled until the next board meeting.

Board members also inquired as to the status of a VCA brochure for use as an outreach tool. Scott Nolley worked on this a few years ago; Kathy Gillis will ask him about the status of his findings.

The board meeting concluded at 1:20 p.m.

**The next board meeting will be held October 20, 2005 at 6:00 p.m. at Stuart Bailey Austin's house (address TBA).**



### SAVE THE DATE!

The VCA's Annual Winter Party will be held on Saturday, December 3 from 5—8 p.m. at Virginia House. Invitations will be mailed to members mid-November.



VCA

P.O. Box 4314

Richmond, VA 23220