

VCA News

Newsletter of the Virginia Conservation Association

P.O. Box 1314, Richmond, Virginia 23220

www.VirginiaConservationAssociation.org

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Upcoming Members' Meeting Thursday, May 15, 2008

Tuckahoe Plantation

The final VCA meeting for the 2007-8 season will be held on May 15 at Tuckahoe Plantation, overlooking the James River on the west side of Richmond. Refreshments will begin outdoors at 5:30 PM, weather permitting, giving members the opportunity to enjoy the outstanding gardens at Tuckahoe. A short business meeting, including the annual election of officers, will begin at 6:30 followed by a tour and discussion of recent restoration and conservation work at the main house.

The house at Tuckahoe Plantation was built by the family of Thomas Randolph around 1730. They were

cousins of Thomas Jefferson, who also lived there as a child. Tuckahoe is the most complete plantation from the early eighteenth century due to the many outbuildings that survive. These include the brick kitchen, plantation office and schoolhouse. Features which make the house unusual include its H-shape plan and outstanding decorative carving in the north stair hall. In 2003, during hurricane Isabel, a 100 year old tulip poplar fell, damaging the north facade of the house. Carey Thompson Viego will discuss the restoration including reconstruction and conservation. □



Directions

From Richmond drive west on Interstate 64. Take the Gaskins Road exit heading south. Follow Gaskins to the intersection with River Road and turn right onto River Road. Continue west on River Road over Tuckahoe

Creek, past St. Mary's Episcopal Church on the left, and past The Edible Garden Restaurant on the right. After passing Blair Road on the right, take a left at the historic marker onto a dirt lane marked by two white posts. Toward the end of the lane parking will be on the right hand side. □

VCA Board Minutes - April 8, 2008

Attendees: Andrew Baxter, Carey Howlett, Nancy Beck, Dotty Robinson, Mary Scott Andrews, Diane Frederick Roland, Stacy Rusch, Kathy Garrett-Cox

Dotty Robinson brought to the boards attention that we have recently received some new memberships and she wondered whether they should be counted towards this year or next year since we only have one meeting left. It was decided that since we are going to the fiscal year of August 1 – July 31 then we will count any late memberships for this year, and encourage people to join again in the fall.

Diane Frederick Roland reported that the nominating committee is working on the ballot. They would like to get one more nomination for the refreshment committee. Diane also brought up that Mary Scott Andrews term as the Disaster Response coordinator is over and they will need to nominate someone for that position. Mary asked if she could continue with her role with the MEST (Museum Emergency Support Team) group that she is on with area museums. It was agreed that Mary should continue her role with MEST as that will help with continuity. Diane reported that they know that the nominating form needs to be distributed one month before the meeting. They will ask Bienvenida to send out an email with the form attached and also put it on the website and in the next newsletter.

Mary Scott Andrews reported that the Museum Emergency Support Team (MEST) has a 1-800 number that will be distributed soon and is operated by VAM. This number will be for museums to call in and activate the support team who can go and assist area museums in an emergency. Mary will then activate conservators who have agreed to assist in an emergency. The VMFA will host a CERT training course sometime this summer or next fall. This training is free and open to the public. The training provides first aid and other training for people to assist in an emergency. The training is required for anyone who wants to be among first responders in the event of an emergency. More information will be provided on the training when the dates have been decided.

The field trip to Ashlawn-Highland is postponed. The field trip was originally scheduled for May 3rd and will now be Saturday, June 7th. Details will follow in the newsletter. Since it is in June and that is between boards, should the current refreshment committee coordinate this or the new refreshment committee? It was determined that boxed lunches will be ordered for attendees and that Andrew will coordinate the lunches. He will also bring beer and wine.

It was proposed that the board have a July meeting. This will serve two purposes: all current board members and new board members will be invited to meet and go over their duties and it will give the board a jump start on the newsletter that goes out in August. They will then be able to plan for the September meeting with more time.

Treasurer Report

Dotty reported that we have \$5,300 in the bank. She presented our current budget:

	Budgeted 2008	Spent	Proposed for 2009
Publications	\$750	\$300	\$500
Directories	\$150	\$105	\$150
Refreshments	\$600	\$150	\$600
Website	\$100	\$100	\$100
P.O. Box	\$40	\$40	\$40
Classes	\$0		
Speaker	\$250	\$0	\$500
Office supplies	\$50	\$50	\$50
Va. Corp.	\$25	\$25	\$25
TOTAL:	\$1965		
Membership:	\$2000		

The proposed changes are to cut back on the publications budget because we will now primarily be emailing the newsletter. It was also proposed to add more money to the speaker's fee for a possible class from AIC. The rest of the budget will remain the same.

Patination Workshop

Andrew has seven signed up for his workshop on Friday, April 11. Kathy Gillis is taking the reservations.

Promote Membership

Andrew asked that everyone who is on the board talk to people about the VCA. Personally talking to people seems to be a great way to get members. Dotty also suggested that we send out an email to museums with information about the VCA and encourage them to join.

VAM Conference

Rick Vogt talked to Andrew about a yearly presentation at VAM. He suggested that each year three VCA members submit a special project for that year. Then either VAM or the VCA will select one to be presented. The VCA will pay for one night lodging for the presenter. This would be a way to highlight the work being done and promote membership in the VCA. We would suggest that this be done every year for continuity and name recognition. Mary Scott Andrews will follow up with Margo Carlock at VAM.

Programs for Next Year

It was proposed that we take a trip to Norfolk to the Chrysler Museum, Moses Myers House and Mariners Museum. These will be discussed as to whether this should be a Saturday trip or if we should hold a meeting in Norfolk. Other suggestions for meetings or trips were the Quartermasters Museum and the U.S. Army Women's Museum at Ft. Lee, Branch house, and installation of the 18th century Indian Pavilion at the VMFA. □

Let us know if you have suggestion of projects or exhibits that you would like to see next year!

Proposed Budget 2008-2009

Income	
Dues - Regular	\$2,000.00
Dues - Student	
Directory Sales	
Gifts	
Field Trips	
Misc. Late Fees	
Classes	
Reimbursements	
Total	\$2,000.00

Expenses

Publications	\$500.00
Directory	\$150.00
Refreshments	\$600.00
Website	\$100.00
P. O. Box	\$40.00
Classes	
Speaker Expenses	\$500.00
Misc. (Office)	\$50.00
Va SCC	\$25.00
Total	\$1,965.00

VCA Members' Meeting March 20 - The Capitol Project

The exceptionally large attendance at the March 20 meeting of the VCA was evidence of the widespread interest in the Capitol renovation project. Attendees were rewarded with a very full program and intriguing insights.



David Voelkel, Curator of the State Art Collection of the Commonwealth of Virginia—in conjunction with The Library of Virginia—hosted the program, leading the

group through the newly renovated Capitol and

offering tales of the history of the building and its art, as well as anecdotes of the glitches and solutions that accompanied the monumental task of renovating the building and its priceless collections. Throughout the tour, VCA conservators presented stories of their contributions to various aspects of the project.

The tour began outside the Capitol at the equestrian monument of George Washington where Andrew Baxter ex-

plained the process of returning the sculptures from a green and black corroded state to the rich, brown patina intended by the sculptor Thomas Crawford. He continued the story by describing the measures taken to protect the patina and to guard the sculptures themselves from damage during the extensive disruption surrounding them during the renovations. Once inside the Capitol, Andrew pointed out the numerous bronze plaques that



had required a delicate treatment to restore the deep brown background and brilliant lettering that contribute to the traditional dignity of the Capitol rooms. He is continuing his work at the Capitol through the cleaning of hundreds of metal nameplates on the period picture frames.

Lorraine Brevig presented two paintings treated by the Richmond Conservation Studio and offering particular challenges. The large *Storming of the Redoubt* by Lami required a creative solution to an early lead white lining as well as exceptional measures to protect the fragile painting from vibration—not only from ongoing construction, but also from an inconveniently placed elevator shaft directly behind the painting. Lorraine also explained the iconic portrait by George Catlin of Thomas Jefferson and the studio's solutions to the large and unsympathetic patches applied by an early restorer as a quick fix for torn canvas.

Bill Ivey led the members through the Chamber and Senate meeting rooms and presented images to illustrate the magnitude of the project to conserve the historic desks and chairs in these rooms—a project made more



challenging by careless early restoration and by construction teams focused more on deadlines than on historic preservation. A behind-the-scenes look at what it took to move this volume of furniture from the Capitol for treatment and protection from construction was particularly enlightening.

Scott Nolley focused on the extraordinary measure, provided by Artex of Landover, MD, to remove and protect the priceless Capitol sculptures and paintings during the renovation. These measures ranged from removing a second-story window and “flying” the large portrait of Thomas Jefferson to safety, to building the equivalent of small climate-controlled houses to protect the large format painting Storming the Redoubt and



the Houdon sculpture of George Washington—both judged too fragile to be moved. Creative solutions to crating and moving other historic sculpture were equally intriguing.

Susan Adler spoke about the large (21’ x 12’) state flag that was flying over the Capitol when it fell to the Northern Armies at the end of the

Civil War. The flag will be displayed in the exhibition center at the new entrance to the Capitol. Susan spoke about the challenges of treating such a large object and of preparing both a mount and case that could be disassembled—to be reassembled and installed quickly under the eye of the public in the exhibition center.

As with most things that are well done, the beautiful presentation of the newly renovated Capitol shows no sign of the extraordinary efforts supplied by a great many people working together to bring it into being. We are grateful to all who participated in the March VCA members meeting for giving us insight into what will be a lasting gift to the people of Virginia and all who visit the Capitol. □





Patination Workshop

The patination workshop presented April 11 by Andrew Baxter at his studio in Richmond was a successful session involving eight participants. Colonial Williamsburg, Chrysler Museum, Virginia Museum of Fine Arts were represented as well as conservators in private practice. □



Nominees for New Board Members

We will be voting on new members of the Board of Directors for the 2008 – 2010 term at our May 15 meeting at Tuckahoe Plantation. For those unable to attend who wish to vote, a proxy form is included below.

The nominees:

Vice President

Stacy Rusch

Treasurer

Dotty Robinson

Refreshment Committee Co-chairs

Leigh Acosta

Patricia Selinger

Mary Studt

Programs Co-chair

Valinda Carroll

Disaster Response

Beth Fulton

Education

Dianne Roland

Membership Co-chair

Melba Myers

Bylaws

Traci Flores



ABSENTEE BALLOT

To vote, please place an X on the line to the left of the nominee.

Choose one name for each office, except Refreshment Co-chairs, where you should vote for three.

Vice President (2008-2010 Term)

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Treasurer (2008-2010 Term)

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Membership Co-chair

Melba Myers

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Traci Flores

Please mail this ballot to

Lorraine Brevig
4302 Smithdeal Ave.
Richmond, VA 23225

Proxy Form must be postmarked by May 10th.

June Field Trip

The V.C.A. will be taking a field trip on June 7 to Ash Lawn Highland, the home of President James Monroe. Ash Lawn Highland is commemorating the 250th anniversary of Monroe's birth this year. There is a special exhibit of late 18th and early 19th century clothing and textiles currently on view, "Dressed for the Occasion."

Noted private collector and researcher Mary Doering, together with Colleen Callahan, a Richmond-based textile and clothing conservator and her team collaborated on the exhibit. Please join us for a fun and interesting social outing at Ash Lawn Highland, to enjoy the beautiful

gardens, the house, the exhibit, and a glass of wine with your colleagues.

When: June 7, 11:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m., or stay longer if you wish – open until 6:00.

Cost: \$10 for lunch, which will be delivered by a local eatery, other libations will be provided.

Directions: from I-64, take exit 121 onto rt. 20 South. Turn left onto Rt. 53 at the light. Go about 4 ½ miles to Ash Lawn Highland (follow signs and keep to the right).

The driveway is on the right. The address is 1000 James Monroe Parkway. Their website is www.ashlawnhighland.org.



From the Membership Chair

Please contact Bienvenida Ochs if your contact information changes or if it is incorrect in the VCA directory. Her e-mail address is bochs@vcu.org and her phone number is (804) 644-5311. □

Photo Credits

Tuckahoe photo courtesy Tuckahoe Plantation

Capitol meeting photos by John Watson

Patination workshop photos by Talitha Daddona (upper), and Andrew Baxter (lower).

VCA

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