

VCA News

Newsletter of the Virginia Conservation Association

P.O. Box 4314, Richmond, Virginia 23220

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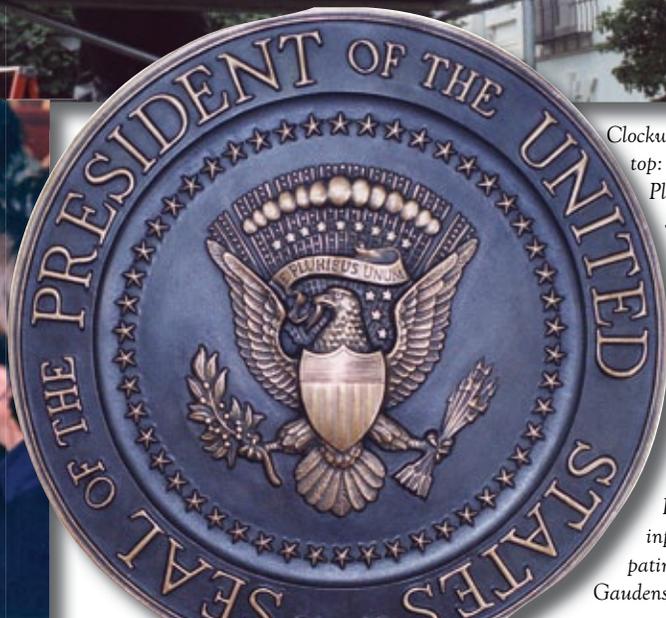
VCA MARCH MEETING AT GARDEN HALL, MAYMONT

5:30 PM. March 19, 2009



by President Monroe in Paris in 1817. It is comprised of seven sections and is 14.5 feet in length when fully extended. Andrew has taken apart and structurally reinforced many parts of the plateau. This has involved delicate and exacting drilling, tapping, and other mechanical modifications. Intricate soldered repairs have also been required on the plateau, and on a figurative basket associated with the plateau. Most of the objects described above will be talked about, as well as objects from the Oval Office and other notable locations. Some of the included objects will be on view during the VCA White House Curator's Tour in April. □

Andrew Baxter will present a slide talk about conservation projects he has completed at The White House over the past ten years. His work began with the Clinton Administration in 1998 with sculpture in the Jacqueline Kennedy Garden. This sculpture was included in a show titled *Exhibition VII: Inspired by Rodin*. The show was part of a series called *Twentieth Century American Sculpture at The White House*. Andrew treated sculptures by Rodin, Bourgeois, de Kooning, Noguchi, and Hoffman before they were returned to the lending institutions. Following this, he has continued to treat a variety of objects on a fairly regular basis. Included are works such as: *Coming through the Rye* by Remington, a bust of Benjamin Franklin by Houdon, and a large scale bust of Abraham Lincoln by Borglum. The longest running and most comprehensive treatment has been work on the Monroe Plateau, often exhibited in The State Dining Room. The gilded copper alloy table service was purchased



Clockwise from top: The Monroe Plateau in The State Dining Room; waxing Rodin's *The Thinker*; The Presidential Seal from the West Wing Portico; and inpainting patina loss on St. Gaudens' Lincoln.

UPCOMING VCA MEETINGS



May 28, 2009

Mariner's Museum, Newport News

Tour and presentations on the ongoing conservation and exhibition of the USS Monitor. □

Directions to Maymont for the March Meeting

Come to the entrance at 1700 Hampton Street, Richmond.

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 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. 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 the parking lot ahead

From the Downtown Expressway (I-195) South (Heading south from the West End)

- Take the Cary Street/Grove Avenue exit ramp and bear left
- At the first stoplight, turn left at Cary Street (Route 147)
- Continue on Cary Street east for 1-1/2 miles
- Turn right at Meadow Street and go one mile
- Turn right at Pennsylvania Avenue and go one block the parking lot ahead

From the Boulevard Bridge (North from Forest Hill, Westover Hills)

- Once through the Boulevard Bridge toll plaza, get in the right lane
- Take the first right at Shirley Lane and go one block (past the Children's Farm entrance)
- Bear left (not the hard left onto Westover Road) and go one block into Byrd Park
- Turn right at Shields Lake Drive and continue around the lake (past the Nature & Visitor Center on the right)
- Turn right at Amelia Street and go one block
- Turn right at Hampton Street and proceed to the parking lot entrance on the right

From Downtown Richmond (Heading west from Ninth and Main Streets)

- Take Main Street west about two miles
- Turn left at Meadow Street and go one mile
- Turn right at Pennsylvania Avenue and go one block to the parking lot ahead

The editor thanks the Maymont website for these directions.



WHITE HOUSE FIELD TRIP UPDATE

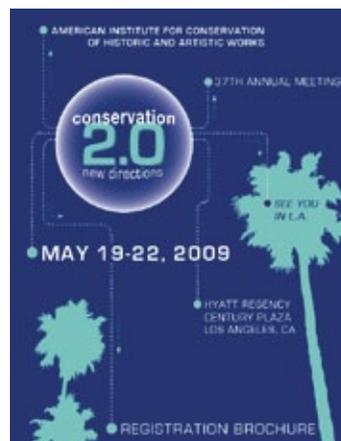
The Office of the Curator at The White House has approved Group 2 for the tour! We're still working on arranging the tours for the same day. Further details will be sent along by membership as the picture becomes clear. The Guest Services program has just been established under the new administration. Please E-mail any questions to Andrew Baxter at bronzeetal@comcast.net □



AIC 37TH ANNUAL MEETING

May 19–22, 2009

Los Angeles, CA



The theme for AIC's 2009 Annual Meeting is Conservation 2.0—New Directions. This theme will highlight the ways in which emerging technologies will affect the conservation field. The general session and specialty groups will explore this theme.

For more information, see: <http://aic.stanford.edu/meetings/>

Photo Credits This Issue

Page 1: Photos provided by Andrew Baxter

Pages 3-4: John Watson

PHOTOS FROM THE JANUARY MEETING



See story page 4.



REPORT ON THE JANUARY MEETING

At the January 26 meeting of the VCA, Tom Camden, Director of Special Collections at the Library of Virginia, provided our members with a rare opportunity to view and learn about some of the most significant historic books and documents at the Library. Tom's enthusiasm for these "primary sources" was evident throughout the evening: he brought to the program colorful anecdotes, historic references, and the technical insight of a true bibliophile to demonstrate the power of books and documents as tangible links to history.

Etherington Conservation of Greensboro, North Carolina conserved most of the featured books and documents and housed them in custom-fabricated archival storage boxes. The Conservation Center for Art and Historic Artifacts treated the 1818 copy of the Declaration of Independence and housed it in a specially-designed microclimate package.

Documents associated with the founding of the nation and the Commonwealth of Virginia are, of course, a particular strength of the Library's special collections. Tom showed two of the seminal documents of Virginia (and American) government, both original handwritten drafts by George Mason: his Virginia Declaration of Rights, dated June 1, 1774, and The Virginia Constitution or Form of Government, dated June 29, 1776.

An item from a few years later, a small, relatively nondescript handwritten note on a single sheet of paper, did nothing less than embody the successful conclusion of the American Revolution. Dated October 28, 1781, Lord Cornwallis' parole document outlined the terms of his surrender to the Americans at Yorktown.

VCA members examined two copies of the Declaration of Independence owned by the Library of Virginia. The earliest, dated 1818, is a copper plate engraving by Benjamin Owen Tyler printed on skin. This engraving was undertaken privately by Tyler by means of subscriptions, and, while not an exact copy of the original Declaration, the signature panel is precisely rendered. The Tyler engraving was acquired six years ago from a Charlottesville dealer, and it is in remarkably good condition. The Library also preserves an 1823 facsimile of the Declaration, one of thirteen commissioned by President John Quincy Adams for each of the original colonies.

The Library of Virginia holdings include books originally owned by some of Virginia's most prominent figures. VCA members viewed an eighteenth-century volume of British

law, entitled *Declarations and Pleadings*, that was owned and used by Patrick Henry. There is no doubt of the book's ownership: Henry prominently inscribed his name several times within the first few pages. This contrasts greatly with the discreet method Thomas Jefferson used to mark his own books. Eschewing ostentatious armorial bookplates or notable autographs, Jefferson chose to identify books in his personal library by placing a small letter "J" next to the printed "T" placed by the printer at the bottom of the "T" signature of each book. Tom Camden described the delight he experienced to discover these markings in three of Jefferson's books recently transferred to the Library of Virginia from the Richmond City Library.

Special Collections are not limited to materials associated with Virginia. A small book entitled *Annotations*

Upon the Book of Psalms, by Henry Ainsworth (1617, Amsterdam) is known as the "Mayflower Bible". It was given to Giles Heale in 1620 by Isaac Allerton, who both appear on the Mayflower passenger list. Evidence indicates that the book traveled to America with Heale on the Mayflower, then made the return voyage to England in 1621.

One of the earliest published works in the Library is a 1535 edition of Ptolemy's *Atlas*. The book was edited by Michel Servetus, who was branded a heretic by John Calvin. Calvin was so angered by the Servetus edition of the *Atlas* (apparently because of the inclusion of a map of Palestine), that he later used it as grounds for burning Servetus

at the stake, along with as many copies of the *Atlas* that could be confiscated.

Perhaps the most touching document presented by Tom Camden was the one of least important historic significance: a legislative petition from a Revolutionary War veteran requesting an increase in his pension. The 1818 petition was from Edward Houchins of Louisa County, who had lost his arm in battle forty years earlier. After submitting earlier unsuccessful petitions for a pension increase, this time Houchins included a fragment of the bullet that caused his injury. He was granted an increase from \$40 to \$80 per year.

Tom Camden's eloquent recounting of the story behind this simple petition exemplified the theme woven through his entire presentation: the Special Collections at the Library of Virginia are vibrant, colorful, powerful links to our past. - Carey Howlett with Valinda Carroll □



VCA BOARD MINUTES FROM THE JANUARY 17, 2009 MEETING

The Board of the Virginia Conservation Association met at 5:30 p.m. at the home of President Andrew Baxter. Those present: Andrew Baxter, Bienvenida Ochs, Carey Howlett, Stacy Rusch, Rick Vogt, John Watson, and Doty Robinson.

The Board discussed updating and increasing the content of the VCA web site. Additional content given to Lorraine would improve the site and make it more interesting. This may be helpful to the Outreach Chair and can be coordinated with Lorraine.

Andrew noted that the vote on the outreach position was advertised to be taken in March and we will vote again at the March membership meeting. The January vote to add this position was unanimous in favor of the motion.

The White House trip is still in the hands of Guest Services and Andrew expects to hear from them any day. Final details about the cost and size of the bus cannot be determined until we have additional information about the size of the group, time of the tour, and whether or not we would want to stop for a meal, etc.

Andrew will be presenting a PowerPoint program on the Monroe Plateau in March and the Board authorized a \$125 reimbursement for him to have this prepared by a local firm.

Doty gave the Treasurer's report. She asked for Board input on the 2009-2010 budget at the April Board meeting so it can be finalized and voted on at the May members'

meeting. She will also research Certificates of Deposit for funds in excess of those needed for operating costs.

Rick suggested that the newsletter have a space for individuals to report on interesting projects. This would be no more than one page including photos. Rick will submit a project for the next newsletter. It was noted that sending the newsletter out electronically allows us to use more articles and photos than was possible when it was mailed.

Dianne Roland, Education Chair, could not attend but asked for any suggestions for educational programs. Members are also encouraged to submit program ideas for next year to the program committee.

Next newsletter deadlines:

- Information/articles to Rich by 2-27 with cc to John
- Rick edits and submits to John on March 4
- Labels from Bienvenida to John on March 7th
- John sends out draft for proofreading
- Any changes sent to John by 9th
- Newsletter goes out electronically on 10th
- Paper copies to those without e-mail on 11th

Carey announced that the May meeting will be later than the third Thursday in May as that time conflicts with AIC convention.

Next members meeting on March 19th at Maymont.
Next Board meeting on April 14th at Bienvenida Ochs'



2008 – 2009 VCA OFFICERS

President: Andrew Baxter
Vice President: Stacy Rusch
Secretary : Kathy Garrett-Cox
Treasurer : Doty Robinson

Refreshments: Patricia Selinger
Mary Studt
Education: Dianne Roland
Membership: Bienvenida Ochs
Melba Myers

2008 – 2009 Committee Chairs

Disaster Response: Beth Fulton
Programs: Valinda Carroll
Carey Howlett

Publications: Rick Vogt
John Watson
Bylaws: Traci Flores
Webmaster: Lorraine Brevig

PROPOSAL FOR THE CREATION OF AN OUTREACH CHAIR POSITION ON THE VIRGINIA CONSERVATION ASSOCIATION BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President's note: The January newsletter indicated that the vote on this proposal would take place during the March meeting, so our vote at the January member's meeting was premature. Although the vote to create the position passed unanimously, another verbal vote will be taken from the floor at the March 19th meeting.

Editor's note: The following proposal was presented to the VCA board at their December 2008 meeting by Tracy Horne Flores. The board decided to put the proposal up for a vote at the March 19, 2009 general VCA meeting. Members not able to attend the March 19 meeting are asked to submit the absentee ballot at the bottom of this page.

Summary

In order to successfully develop and implement VCA outreach programs, it is proposed that an Outreach Chair be added to the current roster of VCA board of directors positions.

Justification/Statement of Need

The Virginia Conservation Association currently has no dedicated Board Member charged with developing and implementing outreach programs. It informally falls to the chairpersons of Education and Programs, as well as interested general members, to engage in outreach activities. In order to successfully implement outreach activities an Outreach Chair position should be created. The Outreach chairperson would have the delegated authority to research potential outreach programs and develop formal relationships with current and potential organizational partners, as well as the ability to use VCA funds to implement outreach programs and activities, with the approval of the VCA board.

Description of Responsibilities

The following is a list of proposed Outreach Chair responsibilities:

- Act as liaison to current partner organizations
- Identify and develop relationships with potential part-

- ner organizations and institutions
- Identify institutions and individuals that need the assistance and/or guidance of VCA members, in coordination with Disaster Response
- Develop programs and solutions to address the needs of these institutions and individuals, in coordination with the Program chairs
- Assemble a directory of practicing conservators for public/institutional distribution
- Work with the Publications chair/Webmaster/Education chair to create and distribute appropriate conservation information and resources to interested institutions
- Work with the Education chair to develop, implement and publicize lectures and workshops that have outreach potential
- Work with the Programs Chair to develop, implement and publicize programs that have outreach potential
- Research and implement potential outreach opportunities

Procedure for Creating VCA Board Positions

To create a new board position, the VCA must amend the bylaws. Article VII, Section A of the bylaws states:

These bylaws may be amended or repealed by a majority vote of the members (including absentee postal ballots) at a designated meeting, providing the notice of such changes has been furnished in writing three weeks in advance to the VCA members.

Proposed New Bylaws Language

Chairperson, Outreach Committee- two years, subsequent terms two years. The chairperson will be responsible for developing and implementing outreach activities to current or potential partner organizations and institutions, as well as fostering relationships with current and potential partner organizations and institutions. Additional members to this committee can be taken on as required. □

Are you in favor of amending the bylaws as per Section A of Article VII to add a new Outreach Chair position to the Virginia Conservation Association Board of Directors?

Place your vote at the March 2009 meeting.

If you not attending that meeting,
please send your up or down vote via email to
Traci Horne Flores — laartsa@hotmail.com
by March 19, 2009 in order to be counted.

Editors Note: The following abstract was selected by the program committee for the annual meeting of the American Institute for Conservation to be held in Los Angeles in May. Three of the presenters are VCA members

THE LASER CLEANING OF ANNA HYATT HUNTINGTON'S ALUMINUM SCULPTURE "THE TORCH BEARERS"

Michael Barrett¹, Andrew Baxter², Mark Lewis³ and Scott Nolley⁴

¹ Applications Engineer, Quantel USA, Bozeman Montana

² President, Bronze et al, Richmond Virginia

³ Conservator, Chrysler Museum of Art, Norfolk, Virginia

⁴ Chief Conservator, Fine Art Conservation of Virginia, Richmond

A prolific and innovative American sculptor, Anna Hyatt Huntington (1876-1973) was noted for her large equestrian statues. With her husband, Archer Huntington, the artist helped found 20 museums and wildlife preserves as well as America's first sculpture garden, Brookgreen Gardens in South Carolina.

The second cast of Anna Hyatt Huntington's *The Torch Bearers*, the artist's sculptural symbol of Enlightenment ideals and the effort required for their preservation, was gifted to the city of Norfolk Virginia in 1956. In the letter offering the large multi-figure work to Norfolk, Huntington cited her late husband's long affiliation with Hampton Roads and that his father Collis P. Huntington had founded the Newport News Shipbuilding and Drydock Company.

Fabricated from an aluminum alloy, located outdoors in close proximity to coal yards, industrial facilities, and shipyards and located a few hundred feet from the brackish tidal inlets of the city, the sculpture, cast in this highly

reactive metal, had succumbed to continuous exposure in this aggressive environment. The once luminous, "lunar" luster of the sculpture's burnished surface had overtime acquired a substantial accumulation of chemically complex corrosion products that obscured delicate surface detail and tool marks typical to this artist's work. It was considered necessary to reduce these accumulations - layers of substantial thickness that threatened the long-term stability of the form and that remained largely unaffected by reasonable and traditional techniques for surface treatment of the soft aluminum casting.

A Quantel™ Nd:YAG Q-switched laser (Laserblast 60) was employed in the effective and controlled reduction of the layers of corrosion products with considerable success. This presentation will provide a brief historical overview of the artist's aluminum castings and laser technology as it has been employed in the treatment of metal sculpture, a short explanation of the unique reactivity and complex corrosion chemistry of aluminum when employed as an outdoor sculpture material and the specific methods development and treatment procedures carried out on this particular work. □

VCA

P.O. Box 4314

Richmond, VA 23220

Upcoming Meeting

**ANDREW BAXTER ON THE
CONSERVATION OF METAL
SCULPTURE AND OBJECTS IN
THE WHITE HOUSE**

March 19, 2009

Garden Hall, Maymont