

From the President

For our first Members Meeting of 2012, which will take place on January 19th, the VCA will return to the Bruton Heights School in Williamsburg. It will be our pleasure to receive a presentation by Susan L. Buck, Ph.D., who will speak about her involvement in conservation projects in China for the World Monuments Fund and Tsinghua University. Mark your calendars accordingly and plan to be in attendance for this exciting program.

One of the important projects that the VCA Board has been working on for quite some time is the online Conservation Services Online Directory. Once operational, this online directory will be a resource open to all VCA website visitors, providing access to a list of VCA member conservators who are available for consultation and treatment. Development of the online directory was spurred by inquiries over recent years from museum professionals, private collectors, etc., for an easy way to contact conservators in Virginia to discuss possible conservation projects. Over the past few years, the VCA membership application form has included a question about member preference for or against inclusion in this directory. Now that initial formulation of the website directory prototype has occurred, we have found a problem with the question and responses regarding online directory inclusion. When first conceived and discussed, the Conservation Services Directory was intended to include data only for practicing conservators; those who actively engage in conservation consultation and treatment activities, and who are open to providing these services to various clientele. However, the purpose of the Conservation Services Directory has been interpreted by many to be a list including any member involved or interested in conservation, even at the student level, or as a museum professional working at collections care, but not an experienced specialist in direct treatment. If everyone who gave a preference for inclusion were listed, it would blur the intent of the directory, and lessen its effectiveness at serving the needs that

VCA Members' Meeting Thursday, January 19th, 5:30 p.m.



Above: Qianlong's private retreat. Photo: Courtesy of the Palace Museum and the World Monuments Fund

BRUTON HEIGHTS SCHOOL

301 FIRST ST. ~ WILLIAMSBURG, VA



RECEPTION & BUSINESS MEETING - ROOM 117
PROGRAM - LANE AUDITORIUM, SUSAN L. BUCK, PH.D

FOR MORE INFORMATION SEE PAGE 3

prompted its creation. The resulting database would not be a directory for conservation services. Early next year The Board will deliberate on how to resolve this issue so that development of the online directory can continue towards completion. Once a recommendation has been reached you will be informed and asked to comment. However, you need not wait until then – please contact the Board at your convenience if you have a comment at this juncture.

The members of the VCA Board, in whom you have entrusted the responsibility of directing the operation

and activities of the organization, are but a minor percentage of the membership. In order to do the best possible job in service to all of our members, we need your input about the programs and opportunities you would like the VCA to offer.

So let this be another reminder and request for you to let the Board know your opinions, ideas, and suggestions. You strongly are encouraged to feel free in contacting Board members as a group or individually, by way of email, telephone, or direct conversation at a meeting or other encounter, formal or informal. The VCA will not maximize its potential without help from the entire membership.

The VCA strives to be the most useful resource in the region about art and artifact conservation, meeting the needs and nourishing the interests of both professionals and non-professionals who may be caretakers of cultural material. One of the distinctive characteristics and great strengths of the VCA is the diversity of the membership. All of us should advocate on behalf of the organization and speak out to anyone who might possibly enjoy and benefit from becoming a member. The larger our membership roster, the greater the opportunities for exciting, enlightening and valuable experiences. So please spread the word much as you can, and help the VCA as we work towards the goal of cultural preservation.

To all of you who have renewed membership or have joined for the first time, be assured that your support is appreciated with true sincerity. The new 2012 VCA Directory is scheduled to be available at the January Members' Meeting. Do not forget to take a copy before the meeting has concluded. If you unfortunately will not be able to attend this event, you may obtain a copy of the Directory from the Publications Committee. To do so you should contact Tracy Bernabo or Charles Phillips, Publications Committee Co-Chairs, at (804) 798-6599 or (336) 918-3668, respectively, or via the VCA website email contact link

info@virginiaconservationassociation.org).

May your holiday season be full of cheer and the New Year bring you much joy and success. Thank you very much.

~ *Frederick Wallace*

ANNOUNCEMENTS

AID FOR LOUISA COUNTY HISTORIC HOME DAMAGED IN EARTHQUAKE

If anyone has information on grants or other sources of funding for restoration of historic brick home severely damaged by earthquake in Louisa County please contact Christi Barranger at

cawblaw7@aol.com or 804 741-3688.

This home has been in same family for seven generations. It was uninsured and FEMA only provides money for primary residence.

SAVE THE DATE! VCA MARCH MEMBERS' MEETING MARCH 22, 2012



The March 2012 VCA Meeting will be held on March 22nd (4th Thursday instead of 3rd Thursday) at the Science Museum in Richmond. Conservators will discuss three very different conservation treatments: a moon rock, a railroad manifest, and the exterior of a train engine. Look for news of this meeting in the next Newsletter

DOLLEY MADISON'S LIFE THROUGH FASHION: DRESSING THE PART

June 15, 2011- March 31, 2012

James Madison's Montpelier

To learn more about this remarkable exhibition visit www.montpelier.org



NEXT VCA MEMBERS' MEETING

THURSDAY, JANUARY 19TH AT 5:30 P.M.

PROGRAM BY SUSAN L. BUCK, PH.D.

Conservation Versus Replication of Traditional
Decorative Architectural Finishes:
Conservation Experiences and Adventures in China

BRUTON HEIGHTS SCHOOL

301 FIRST ST, WILLIAMSBURG, VA



Please join us for the next Members' Meeting at Bruton Heights School on January 19, 2012. The program will feature Susan L. Buck, Ph.D., conservator specializing in the analysis and conservation of painted surfaces on wooden objects and architectural materials. Susan will talk about her ongoing participation in several conservation projects in China. Her work began in 2005 as a consultant to the World Monuments Fund (WMF) for their project in Emperor Qianlong's Garden in the Forbidden City in Beijing. For the first phase of the project she was responsible for analyzing and helping to work out treatment approaches for the painted, gilded and lacquered finishes on the interior of the 1771-76 "Emperor's Studio of Exhaustion from Diligent Service", which contains a remarkably intact private theatre. This work was a collaboration between American conservators, and conservators and scientists at The Palace Museum (the museum of The Forbidden City). She continues to be part of the WMF team studying and planning for the conservation of the balance of 28 unrestored buildings in the intimate Qianlong Garden quarter. She will also discuss a 2010 collaborative project between the Tsinghua University Historic Architecture Department and the Winterthur/University of Delaware Program in Art Conservation (WUDPAC). This project involved documenting the condition of the 12th-century murals

in the Fengguo Temple in northeast China. The students used Metigo Maps software, which proved to be a powerful and efficient recording tool. All of this work has resulted in important discoveries about the composition and use of traditional Chinese decorative materials. It has also generated a continuing and lively discussion with Chinese colleagues about conserving and displaying aged, degraded coatings versus reproduction of these coatings following traditional Chinese craft practices.

Directions to Bruton Heights School

From Richmond and points West:

- I64 east to exit 238 for VA-143 toward US-60
- Slight right at VA-143
- Continue onto Capitol Landing Road
- Slight left at Page Street
- Take first right toward Capitol Landing Road
- Take third right onto First Street
- Park on left opposite the Rockefeller Library
- The School is at 301 First Street

From Norfolk and points East:

- I64 West to exit 242A, merge onto Rt. 199 West
- Take US-60 West, Williamsburg/Busch Gardens
- Turn left at US-60 West/Pocahontas Trail
- Continue onto Lafayette Street
- Turn right onto Capitol Landing Road
- Turn right onto 1st Street
- Park on left opposite the Rockefeller Library
- The School is at 301 First Street



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Attention Proposal for VCA Bylaws Amendment



At this time a number of points are on the docket to be considered for inclusion in the Bylaws or for revision. These are described below. The following revisions will be discussed and put to a vote by the membership at next Members' Meeting on January 19th, 2011.

Proposed amendment #1:

VCA Bylaws Article III, Section D, Annual Dues, #5

New or returning members who join the VCA between June 1 and September 1 will be given membership that will expire November 15th of the following year.

This grace period / proration will result in unification of the membership period and expiration date with that for persons joining during the annual September – November membership renewal drive.

Proposed amendment #2:

VCA Bylaws Article V, Section B, Board of Directors-Term of Office and Duties

For each of the 9 board committees:

Supplementary members, including an elected Co-Chair, may be added to this committee.

Currently, the Bylaws allow for the election of one Chair per each committee. The addition of other members in select committees is currently permitted. However, over the years the VCA has elected additions / co-chairs to committees not so authorized in the Bylaws. The Board recommends that the VCA stay with what has become traditional practice, and thus amend the Bylaws.

Proposed amendment #3:

VCA Bylaws Article V, Section B, Board of Directors-Term of Office and Duties

Committees with Co-Chairs shall stagger the election of the Chair and Co-Chair positions, so that the completion of terms will not both occur in the same year. If either of these positions needs to be filled prior to completion of a full term, the elected replacement would only serve through conclusion of the original unfinished term, to maintain the staggered election cycle.

For those committees having Co-Chairs, the Board deems it best to stagger their elections. Certain committees have lost the staggered term pattern, requiring the need to fill both Chair and Co-chair positions during a single election (thus starting two “rookies” at the same time). The Bylaws should be changed to promote smooth turnover of the Board roster and help in efficient continuity of Board activities.

~ Mark Lewis, Bylaws Chair

● PHOTOS WANTED ● CONSERVATION IN ACTION



SEND US YOUR IMAGES!

We need your help in building a collection of photographs for use in the website, new publications, etc., showing VCA members engaged in conservation or collections care activities. If you have any such digital images, please send them to the Web Management Committee via the contact tab on the VCA homepage. Your contributions are greatly appreciated.

VCA MEMBERS' MEETING

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 17TH, 2011

BRUTON HEIGHTS SCHOOL



Mark Lewis (By-Laws Chair) discussed some proposed by-laws. Membership will have the opportunity to vote and/or offer suggests for the proposed amendments. The first proposed by-law states that new or returning members who join the VCA between June 1 and September 1 will be given membership that expires in November of the following year. The second proposed amendment is that the position of Vice President automatically advances to the position of President after a two-year term. The third proposed amendment is that supplementary members including an elected co-chair may be added to a committee. Additionally, committees with co-chairs shall stagger the elections of co-chairs.

Valinda Carroll and Fred Wallace commented that Christina Newton, the Virginia Association of Museums coordinator for the Virginia Collections Initiative (VCI), could not make the meeting to discuss the VCI but may be able to attend the January meeting.

~ *Chris Wilkins, VCA Secretary*
~ *Nancy Beck, VCA Treasurer*

● BUSINESS MEETING PROCEEDINGS ●

Fred Wallace, VCA President, welcomed everyone to the meeting. Fred thanked Mary Andrews and Sandy Jenson, Refreshments Co-Chairs, for providing the refreshments. Also thanked were Pam Young (Colonial Williamsburg) for providing a meeting venue and Program Co-Chairs, Colleen Callahan and Suzanne Collins, for setting-up.

Fred reminded the membership that the November meeting represents the conclusion of the membership renewal period for 2011-2012.

Fred stated that the next membership meeting will occur on January 19 at the Bruton Heights School complex in Williamsburg. Susan Buck will present.

Fred reminded the membership that the VCA Annual Holiday Party will be held on Saturday, December 3rd at Virginia House in Richmond from 5:00 PM to 7:30 PM. Mary Andrews notified the membership that everyone should have received an email providing information about the party, reminding all that parking for the event should be restricted to the side of the road closest to the Virginia House. The party is potluck so everyone is expected to bring something to the party. Mary asked that a response be given whether or not you expect to attend. Guests are welcome.

Fred commented on the Fort Lee History Day. Patricia Selinger and Wendy Cowan represented the VCA at the event. Patricia recounted some of the events of the day. Fred commented that these type of events help to introduce the VCA to the public. He asked that any members who know of up-coming events that can help to promote the VCA to notify the VCA board.

● PROGRAM REPORT ●

Lynn Grant, Head Conservator at the University of Pennsylvania Museum' Conservation Laboratory, gave VCA members a rare look at archeological finds at Mayan sites in Honduras and Guatemala at the November 17th member's meeting. Seeing these unusual artifacts was all the more special when we heard about the challenges of excavating them and performing conservation stabilization on them under difficult field conditions. Ms. Grant stated that 95% of the conservation had to take place in the tunnels where the objects were found and only 5% in the laboratory. Despite the "less than ideal" circumstances, the results of the conservation work shown in the presentation were quite stunning.

An amusing aside to her talk, Lynn assured us the widely held belief that the Mayan calendar predicts the end of the world at the 2012 winter solstice is a misinterpretation of the Mayan texts. Apparently, 2012 is just the end of an era and the calendar cycle will begin again.

We thank Emily Williams for helping to arrange for Ms Grant to speak and David Blanchfield for helping to arrange for the VCA to use a room in Colonial Williamsburg Foundation's Bruton Heights School for this meeting.

~ *Colleen Callahan, Programs Co-Chair*

**PLAYING TO THE GALLERIES AND ENGAGING NEW AUDIENCES:
THE PUBLIC FACE OF CONSERVATION**

❧ COLONIAL WILLIAMSBURG, NOVEMBER 14-16, 2011 ❧

This past November Colonial Williamsburg hosted a conference entitled 'Playing to the Galleries and Engaging New Audiences: The Public Face of Conservation.' The event was well attended with nearly 100 Conservators and allied professionals gathering to discuss the many challenges and opportunities presented by the growing trend towards raising the profile of conservation to the public. Thirty-Two papers and seven poster presentations were given in the auditorium of Colonial Williamsburg's Abbey Aldrich Rockefeller Folk Art Museum over three days, with visits to CW's conservation laboratories included in the program. Throughout the event, attendees had the opportunity to visit the Rockefeller Museum's galleries, including the exhibit '*Conservation, Where Art and Science Meet*' which explores many of the conference themes.

The opening session *The Public Face of Conservation* explored how the field and its practitioners are perceived. The opening keynote address by Dr. Mary Brooks of the York Museums Trust provided a thoughtful exploration of the importance of culture (and material culture) in society as viewed from 19th and 21st Century perspectives, and the reality that more effort may be needed to keep cultural contributions made by conservation on the public's radar screen. Following papers examined how conservation has been presented to the public at the Winterthur Museum Garden and Library, The Liverpool Conservation Center, the Library of Congress, and many other institutions and organizations.

Through sessions on *Technical Studies, Technology, Engagement, Education and Outreach, Exhibiting Conservation*, and *Conservation, Outreach, and Community Involvement*, a wide range of conservation outreach needs, strategies, programs, and case studies were presented. Among the subjects covered in depth were the use of replicas, technology, imaging, and social media, the conservation process 'on display' through windows into labs, in-gallery conservation work and interaction with the public, and innovative exhibitions, educational programming, and media productions. The experience and contributions of volunteers on conservation projects, and public opinion of the aims and practice of conservation were also considered.

Engaging discussions during the question and answer sessions tackled the questions of the goals and metrics of conservation outreach efforts. The forthcoming conference publication including discussion transcripts is sure to be a valuable source of information on this important aspect of conservation practice.

~ Eric Nordgren

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www.VirginiaConservationAssociation.org



Next VCA Members Meeting

January 19th, 2012, 5:30 p.m.

Bruton Heights School

301 First Street, Williamsburg, VA 23185