



NEWSLETTER OF THE VIRGINIA CONSERVATION ASSOCIATION

P.O. Box 4314, Richmond, VA 23220

January 2014 ~ Volume 23, No. 3

From the President

Dear Fellow Members,

Our Association has closed out a busy and successful year. We have had informative and interesting meetings, unique and relevant educational opportunities, shared memorable fellowship time and ended the year with a very enjoyable holiday party. As successful as 2013 was for us, I'm expecting that 2014 will be as good or better!

Our January meeting will be at Maymont with an informative group of lectures on "Conservation Conundrums." Various members will discuss challenging situations that we have had, or will have, to deal with at times.

This topic is one that I believe, as a longtime member of the VCA, reflects one of the strong points of our organization. Over the years, I have appreciated and respected the openness and willingness of our membership to empathize with and help one another deal with the ethical, practical, financial and tactical obstacles we often face. Our professional camaraderie always has made me feel at ease with calling someone in the VCA that I think might have a better idea or insight into a difficult situation I am facing as a conservator – and genuinely give me the best of their advice or knowledge. To me, this type of shared and selfless concern for the highest standards of

VCA Members' Meeting
Thursday, January 16th
5:30 p.m.



Photo credit: Maymont

MAYMONT

1700 Hampton Street, Richmond



"Conservation Conundrums"

Featuring:

❖ ***Bob Self***

Robert H. Smith Director of Restoration, Monticello

❖ ***Kate Ridgway***

Conservator, VA Department of Historic Resources

❖ ***Lauren Fly***

Paintings Conservator, private practice

See Information on Page 3

Refreshments: Contact Kathy Garrett-Cox
kgarrett@maymont.org, 358-7166 x303 or
Karri Richardson kjrichardson@mac.com

successful conservation outcomes speaks highly of our maturity and dedication to the field of conservation.

Not all of our plans for 2014 are fleshed out yet. With the dedication and professional commitment of our members, the coming year will be one of growth, learning and success for each of us. I look forward to sharing it with you. If each of us will contribute something in some way to the VCA in the coming year we will continue to expand on a legacy of mutual commitment to the highest standards of conservation practice and methodology.

Here's to a great year ahead!

Rick Vogt

Visit us online at

www.virginiaconservationassociation.org



Or on Facebook:
Virginia-Conservation-Association

!!! URGENT !!!

**ONGOING MOLD OUTBREAK AT
NEWPORT NEWS PUBLIC LIBRARY**

PLEASE HELP

Kathy Garrett-Cox is organizing assistance.

Contact her at 804.358.7166 ext.303

kgarrett@maymont.org



**2013-2014
VCA BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

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**RESOLVE
TO GET
INVOLVED
IN VCA**



VCA Members' Meeting Thursday, January 16, 2013

“Conservation Conundrums” Maymont Carriage House Richmond, Virginia



Lauren Fly

Lauren Fly

Working with a New and Very Different Kind of Client

Over the last several years, Qatar has cemented its role as a dominant player in the international market. With their impressive collecting activities and even more impressive financial resources, the country offers new and intriguing opportunities for conservators. This talk summarizes Lauren Fly's experience as a paintings conservator in private practice in the Netherlands working on multi-year projects for the Qatar Museums Authority and highlights some of the significant, idiosyncratic, and sometimes challenging cultural and economic realities that come from working with and in Qatar.

Katherine Ridgway

All That Remains

Coastal archaeological sites are threatened by erosion every day. The circa 1900s cemetery in the Uppards area of Tangier Island is an example of how erosion can effect archaeology and the challenges it can create for a conservator. Salt water, wave action, high tide and

thoughts about reburial combine to create a long-term conservation project with the ethical considerations that always accompany human burials.



Robert L. Self

A Collection Manager's Worst Nightmare



Come find out what it is!

Directions and Parking:

Traveling I-64 /I-95:

- Exit I-64 at I-195 S toward Downtown Expressway
- Exit I-195 South at Maplewood (last exit before toll)
- Turn right on S. Sheppard, then left on Grant.
- Turn right on Westover Road, keep right as it becomes Swan Lake Drive.
- At the roundabout, take Amelia Street
- Turn right on Hampton. Park in parking area and walk path to Carriage House.

A map and complete directions are on the website, maymont.org.

Maymont is a unique American Estate. James Henry and Sallie May Dooley purchased the 100-acre parcel of land in 1886 and transformed it into a magnificent showplace of gardens, landscapes, and architectural elements. The Maymont Foundation formed in 1975 to maintain the property. The Foundation actively seeks public support, grants, private donations, and corporate contributions. Please support Maymont!

VCA BOARD

will meet in February 2014
at the
James City County Library

Treasurer's Update

VCA has invested in two Certificates of Deposit with our bank, Wells Fargo. One 7-month CD was opened with \$3,000 and one 19-month CD was opened with \$5,000.

The balance in the VCA checking account, as of December 11, 2013 is \$4526.11

Refreshments Update

Board members have taken on the additional responsibility of keeping our members refreshed during the social hour of our members' meetings and put together the Holiday Party without a committee. Our organization, modest as it is, requires more hands to effectively provide the level of service our members have come to expect. Karri Richardson (kjrichardson@mac.com) and Kathy Garrett-Cox (kgarrett@maymont.org) are planning the refreshments for the January meeting. Please volunteer your time and foodie skills to make VCA Social Hours even more delightful.

Publications Update

I regret the delay in publishing the winter newsletter. Over the holidays a beloved family member suddenly became ill and died. Directories will be mailed soon. My situation highlights the need for a publications co-chair. It is too much for one person.

Programs Update

Mary Andrews and Karri Richardson welcome all leads and ideas for future programs.

Disaster Response Update

Contact Kathy Garrett-Cox if you can help the Newport News Public Library recover from mold outbreak.
kgarrett@maymont.org 804.358.7166 ext.303

2014 Calendar

January 20

Deadline for application: *Willman Spawm Internship in Paper Conservation* – American Philosophical Society Library

January 24-28

Philadelphia, PA
ALA Midwinter Meeting
Pennsylvania Convention Center

February 8

Washington, DC
GBW Movie Night: "Between the Folds"
[chronicles the story of 10 master paper folders]
Folger Shakespeare Library Tea Room

February 10

Deadline for application: *Andrew W. Mellon Postgraduate Fellowship in Paper Conservation* – Philadelphia Museum of Art

February 20-21

Washington, DC
The Non-Invasive Analysis of Painted Surfaces: Scientific Impact and Conservation Practice
Smithsonian American Art Museum & National Portrait Gallery

March 15-18

Alexandria, VA
VAM Annual Meeting
Alexandria Hilton Mark Center

March 27-28

Williamsburg, VA
MuseumPests 2014: Integrated Pest Management for Museums, Libraries, Archives and Historic Sites
Colonial Williamsburg

April 20

Silver Spring, MD
Shanna Leino: Bone Tool Making
Pyramid Atlantic Arts Center

May 28-31

San Francisco, CA
42nd AIC Annual Meeting
Hyatt Regency Embarcadero
Angels Project: rseyler@conservation-us.org

Conference Report: Guild of Bookworkers Standards of Excellence in Hand Bookbinding, October 24-26, 2013

Hand bookbinders from all over the world came to the Liaison Hotel in Washington, D.C. for three days of immersion in books and the book arts. Tours the first day took people to public and private book collections all over the DC area. I had the pleasure of touring the Walters Art Gallery conservation labs and the soon to open exhibit Book Bindings from the Gilded Age (open through May 18). After lunch, we enjoyed the artists book collection and design bindings housed at the private home of Betty and Edgar Sweren. Several book artists and design binders spoke about their work.



Betty Sweren shows her collection of artist books

Everyone attends sessions, which are held in a ballroom with the presenter on stage. Cameras show hand work closely while the presenter performs, describing what is going on. Those attending are encouraged to ask questions and tell pertinent jokes.

The day was divided between a morning session and an afternoon session. Breaks allowed for networking with others and visiting the vendors. It's good to keep an eye on items in the silent auction and decide how much to spend at the auction following the banquet held the last evening.

Presentations started with Eric Alstrom showing a slightly updated traditional Japanese binding and a wrap-around box with bone clasps. He showed how the binding style can be applied to artists books and how the box can be adapted to any type of book. James Reid-Cunningham demonstrated leather rebacking techniques for both tight and hollow back books. He also showed ways of consolidating leather. The final day, Don Glaister covered

a book in full leather from beginning to end in the morning. Karen Hanmer showed modern binding styles that lay flat and have structures that can be dressed up or down with a variety of spine treatments. Karen's artists' books are very playful in structure and content, and are collected internationally.



Karen Hanmer presented Variations on Sewn Boards & Drum Leaf Bindings



Hanmer's sewn boards binding is a modern adaptation of an ancient binding. They can be constructed quickly with few tools and are perfect for edition work.



Miniature books, paper made from corn, tools, and marbled papers

Vendors offered unique papers, leathers, tools, equipment and supplies. They are very knowledgeable about their products, often using them as well. I quickly realized how much time and money I could spend with vendors so limited myself early – besides, I wanted to have enough money to get those luscious Japanese papers in the auction. They were black and gold and glittery – VCU's colors – and I already had a vision. I indulged in printed miniature books and a few decorative papers and a couple of tools.

The auction was a whirlwind of excitement, led by the amusing Dominic Riley. Over 70 items, many of them handmade, were auctioned to provide money for scholarships. Alas, bidding on those gorgeous papers exceeded my total budget for the auction and in despair, I let them go. Next time I'll save more money and not be so timid in bidding.

Photos and text by Patricia Selinger

VCA Members' Meeting

November 21, 2013

“A COLONIAL WILLIAMSBURG SAMPLER”

Featuring

**John Watson, Christopher Swan,
Shelley Svoboda, Pam Young**

DeWitt-Wallace Museum
Williamsburg, Virginia

Four VCA members who are senior conservators at Colonial Williamsburg hosted a delightful and informative meeting with formal lecture and informal discussion while browsing exhibits.

John Watson started the program with a tour of the exhibit “*Changing Keys: Keyboard Instruments for America*” in the first floor gallery. He restored most of the items in the exhibit which explores the evolution of spinets, harpsichords and pianos in the 18th century. He built two reproduction instruments from scratch, researching every detail of construction.



Photo by Patricia Selinger
The 1766 Zumpf Square Piano has the original cloth keys

Watson described the extensive research and detail involved in restoration and reproduction. He explained how musical instrument conservation is evolving at CW to mean preservation and retirement of the piece while restoration has come to mean treatment that allows an instrument to remain functional/playable parts even if those parts are original to the piece. The latter often

includes the replacement of for use. His work over the years has resulted in numerous lectures (several for the VCA) along with articles and three major books on the subject. *Changing Keys: Keyboard Instruments for America 1700-1830*, was published in March 2013.

Chris Swan then led us to the Masterworks Gallery to the exhibit “*A Rich and Varied Culture: The Material World of the Early American South.*” Having been with CW since 1999, Chris has extensively researched early furniture forms. Chris showed us chairs and a desk that challenge the notions of furniture in the south and reinforce the theme of collaboration with private collectors and institutions. He talked about the history of these pieces, how deviations in traditional design reflected new river transportation routes, and technical paint analysis that allows better interpretation and color matching.



Photo by Patricia Selinger
Three pieces of furniture from Kentucky

Then we went to the Hennage Auditorium for two lectures. Shelley Svoboda, paintings conservator at CW since 2003, described her work on paintings by Robert Feke and William Dering, whose work are in the exhibit “*Painters and Paintings in the Early American South.*” Feke (ca.1705-1752) was an American portrait painter whose work had an impact on the development of Colonial painting. He was known especially for his rich colors and boldness, but also his sober, noble renditions of the upper class in Boston, Newport, and Philadelphia. William Dering was a Feke contemporary based in Williamsburg, Virginia. He was a portrait painter of the Virginia gentry whose work helped establish Virginia in painting. The exhibit features more than 80 paintings made in the early American South or imported to the region between 1740 and 1790.

Pam Young completed the program with a description of the treatment performed on a rare watercolor painting of an African-American woman. Major treatment included removal of an acidic paper lining which revealed an inscription that led to the identification of the artist and an association with an iconic image in the folk art collection titled “*The Old Plantation.*” The watercolors are also in the exhibit *Painters and Paintings in the Early American South.*

VCA HOLIDAY PARTY



It was a cold and rainy night driving to Bacon's Castle for the Holiday Party but once inside, it was so worth it! Todd Ballance, Site Coordinator, and his assistant, Carol, were the perfect hosts. They welcomed everyone they could at the door and helped orient them to the food arrangements that allowed movement through most of the rooms on the lower floor. Savory foods and dips, delightful desserts, and a variety of drinks fed our lively crowd. Laughter and conversation filled the house. Todd gave a delightful tour of the house and teased with a few stories of the supernatural. After several of us begged for more, he relented and brought those with sturdy minds to special places and recounted eerie stories and paranormal activity. He also talked about the tension between respect for an historic property and attracting new supporters through such programs. By the time the party was ending, the rain had stopped and it was an easy drive home.

Bacon's Castle will reopen Friday, February 28, 2014 for the new season. Plan a visit soon! Like them on Facebook to follow events!



Lively discussions around the drinks table



17th Century kitchen at Bacon's Castle



**AIC EMERGENCY COMMITTEE
SEEKS NEW MEMBERS**

- ❖ Term of service for Associates, Professional Associates, or Fellows is 3 years.
- ❖ Term of service for students (1-2 positions) is 2 years, with the possibility to renew for an additional year.
- ❖ Monthly meetings online are required.

Send a statement describing your interest along with your resume to claire.e.walker@gmail.com.

Virginia Conservation Association
P.O. Box 4314
Richmond, VA 23220

www.VirginiaConservationAssociation.org



Next VCA Members' Meeting
January 16, 2014, 5:30 p.m.
Maymont Carriage House