

VIRGINIA CONSERVATION ASSOCIATION



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The Virginia Conservation Association (VCA) promotes the care and preservation of cultural materials. The VCA offers education and training for those involved in conservation and provides a forum for discussion of pertinent issues and new developments in the field.

The VCA is open to anyone with an interest in the care and preservation of art and historic artifacts.

virginiaconservationassociation.org

Next Virtual Member's Meetings

Thursday, January 20th

Thursday, January 27th

6:00 pm

Submission Deadline for the March
Newsletter

February 16, 2022

Letter from the President

Welcome to 2022, VCA!

I hope everyone had restful holidays, and that you are ready to dive into whatever challenges and adventures 2022 will bring. For the VCA, this will take the form of meetings regarding the future of the VCA, further development of content for the SHARP grant with VAM, and great programming. Highlights of all of the above are included in the Newsletter.



Paige Schmidt, VCA President

You will find the details for upcoming VCA reorganization meetings within this newsletter. Please join us for these discussions, as input from membership is crucial and we can't do this work without you. Kate Ridgway will be spearheading these discussions, and I'm grateful to her for continuing this important conversation so that the VCA can continue to evolve into its best version.

If you are interested in participating in the production of video content for the SHARP grant, please reach out to me at president.vaconservation@gmail.com. As a reminder, this grant is funding the creation of 6-8 short informational videos highlighting various aspects of collections care. They may be short tutorials to visually supplement available literature, or may take a deeper dive into a specific aspect of collections care that is generally glossed over by other resources. VAM is currently surveying their membership to better define the types of topics that would be most useful, but we welcome any new ideas and enthusiasm members of the VCA may bring to the table.

I look forward to seeing many of you during our upcoming programmatic year and in the important discussions about VCA sustainability.

Here's to a bright 2022,

Paige

VCA Meeting Summary November 18, 2021

The speaker for October's meeting was textile conservator Howard Sutcliffe, principal conservator of River Region Costume and Textile Conservation. Howard shared two recent treatment projects, both from the VCA region, that focused on the ever-present challenge of shattered silk.

The first project centered on the stabilization of Supreme Court Justice John Marshall's robe, in the collection of the John Marshall House and Preservation Virginia. The robe had seen more than five previous campaigns of intervention, ranging from densely packed darning stitches in human hair to stitched silk crepeline patches. Howard's treatment aimed to stabilize the fragile silk so the robe could be displayed in a custom-made case upon its return to Virginia. The robe underwent overall humidification before receiving a stitched support lining of black silk organza and a custom interior support. The project also included the creation of three replica robes that will enrich interpretation at the site. The robe is currently on display at the [John Marshall House](#) in Richmond.



Reinstallation of the robe received local media attention. Image credit: nbc12.com

The second shattered silk object dates to the 1920's and is in the collection of the Hillwood Estate, Museum & Gardens located in Washington, DC. The house is the former residence of Marjorie Merriweather Post, heiress to the Post Cereal Company fortune. Howard shared the treatment of a cape designed by Natalia Goncharova, artist and designer, that had belonged to Post and was slated for exhibition. The silk of the cape is likely heavily weighted, making it fragile and susceptible to embrittlement and shattering. Howard's treatment included light surface cleaning, overall humidification to reintroduce some flexibility, selective stain reduction, and loss compensation with custom-dyed materials. The silk was then structurally supported with a combination of stitching and adhesive techniques, using custom-dyed nylon bobbinet to support the fragile silk. This labor-intensive treatment rendered the cape stable enough to be displayed on a mannequin with its matching dress. It can be seen in the exhibition [Roaring Twenties: The Life and Style of Marjorie Merriweather Post](#) at Hillwood until January 2022.

Following Howard's presentation, a brief business meeting was held. Paige shared that VAM has created a survey to share with its membership to gauge interest in topics for video content for the SHARP grant, and that Kate Ridgway will be formulating plans to continue discussions about a sustainable future for VCA. Virtual meetings will be planned for early 2022 to continue these discussions and involve the membership.



VCA also hosted a virtual holiday trivia night on December 14 in lieu of a holiday party. Thank you to everyone who joined us, we had a wonderful time! Our winners were Lesley Haines in 1st place, and Kate Ridgway and Emilie Duncan tied for 2nd place. Happy Holidays VCA!

Upcoming VCA Meeting

VCA will host two member meetings in January, both focused on the sustainability of the association and options for reorganization. These options are meant to be the starting points of a conversation with the eventual goal being the VCA membership voting on an option for implementation. These options will be discussed more fully during the meeting. The meeting will be held on Zoom on January 20th and January 27th at 6pm.

VCA Member's Meetings

Dates: **Thursday, January 20th**

Thursday, January 27th

Time: **6:00 pm**

Look for an email with a
Zoom link to attend!



Option 1

Keep VCA as is, but pay board members for their service. As many board positions currently require a great deal of time and effort by volunteers, the positions would now be paid a set stipend to help incentivize participation and compensate board members for their efforts.

Option 2

Join Virginia Association of Museums (VAM). In an effort to reduce some of the general administration work that currently falls on members of the VCA board, VCA could join with VAM. The details would be discussed with both the VCA members and VAM staff. VCA would become essentially the conservation division of VAM and would have a seat on the VAM Board. VCA monies would be kept separate from the rest of the VAM budget and would be used for conservation initiatives and programing.

Option 3

VCA Annual Conference. Instead of VCA meeting as frequently as we do now, we will create an annual conference allowing members to gather, give papers, and network similar to AIC (American Institute for Conservation) or MRCG (Midwest Regional Conservation Guild). Between conferences, members could participate in a VCA Group Discussion List.

Option 4

Reduce board members and activities. The option would just be a general reduction of activities for VCA. This would reduce the workload on the VCA Board that volunteers its time. This would mean only two meetings a year, a workshop, and a social event. There would be a minimum attendance requirement for the workshop to move forward.

Join us for one or both meetings to talk about these options and bring ideas of your own, we look forward to these discussions!

Sustainability in Conservation

There are a wide range of tools and tips to help cultural heritage professionals make sustainable choices and lower the environmental impact of their work, some of which are highlighted here.



<https://www.kiculture.org/>

Ki Culture

Ki Culture is an international organization committed to creating a sustainable future through the cultural heritage sector. Their work focuses on encouraging the field to unite and act collectively to inspire global change through cultural heritage. The organization works to meet these goals by creating actionable steps to empower institutions and individuals.

Resources include free downloadable books that are step-by-step guides for implementing immediate and sustainable changes. The current offerings include books on waste and materials, social sustainability, and energy. Virtual trainings on a variety of topics are also accessible, with recordings of past trainings available to Ki Futures participants. Information about these resources and upcoming initiatives can be found on the organization's website, <https://www.kiculture.org/>.

ECPN Regional Liaison Update

Perrine LeSaux

The Williamsburg Regional ECPN group met on Saturday December 11th at Colonial Williamsburg. It was an abnormally warm day with some rain: a great day to tour a museum and get outside and see the town. A small group consisting of a pre-programmer, post-graduate fellows, and another emerging professional toured the art museums and talked about the conservation of some pieces on display. A few in attendance have worked at Colonial Williamsburg and could talk specifically about their projects. The group was shown the new expansion to the art museum and then walked around the historic area briefly. The town was extraordinarily busy with shoppers and guests and those gathering for the Grand Illumination fireworks later in the day. The group visited the joiner, tailor, and palace grounds before everyone went their own ways.

If you would like to be added to the Williamsburg Regional ECPN mailing list please email Perrine LeSaux at Williamsburg.ecpn.liaison@gmail.com.



*Decorated tree at The Art Museums of Colonial Williamsburg.
Image credit: The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation
<https://www.facebook.com/ArtMuseumsOfCWF/>*

VCA/VAM SHARP Grant

The Virginia Association of Museums and the Virginia Conservation Association have been jointly awarded a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), through a program called Sustaining the Humanities through the American Rescue Plan (SHARP), a part of the American Rescue Plan Act. This initiative aims to support cultural organizations who have been impacted by the pandemic.

Between now and November 2022, VAM and VCA will be working together to create a series of 6-8 video collection care tutorials that will be accessible to any museum staff or volunteer on the websites of both organizations. The videos will range in length and topic and will be accompanied by downloadable reference sheets.

We're seeking input from members of both organizations on content for the video series, and looking for VCA members to present! Presenters will be responsible for providing a location for filming and any necessary materials, and presenters will receive an honorarium of \$600.

If you are interested in contributing to this project, please reach out to Paige at president.vaconservation@gmail.com, and join our next member's meeting to hear more!

Conservation Outreach

*Colonial
Williamsburg*



The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation has recently launched a virtual outreach program designed to provide insight into the conservation and collections care work that visitors are often unaware of. Titled *Consider the Sources*, this virtual programming takes place monthly and is free and accessible via the [Foundation's website](#), [Facebook live](#), and on the [Foundation's YouTube channel](#). Each event focuses on a different topic and features a live question and answer session with conservators, curators, and tradespeople interspersed with pre-recorded footage and information. This format has provided the opportunity for collections care staff to answer questions from the public and reach an audience that extends well beyond in-person visitors.

Programming has included a segment on mounting costume for exhibitions, an exploration of archaeological iron, a discussion of paint analysis techniques and how they inform the understanding and appearance of the historic area, and an in-depth look at the work carried out by the Historic Interiors Collections Care team as they care for the many historic structures and their contents. The live programs were recorded, and the recordings can be accessed anytime on any of the social media platforms listed above!



<https://www.colonialwilliamsburg.org/learn/livestreams/consider-the-sources/>

Revisit this programming and explore the schedule of upcoming programs at <https://www.colonialwilliamsburg.org/learn/livestreams/consider-the-sources/> and tune in for the next *Consider the Sources* on January 28th!

Opportunities and Resources

Museum Learning Hub Webinars

The Museum Learning Hub is a nationwide initiative organized by six U.S. regional museum associations. The organization is dedicated to providing free training resources for small museums. These resources are organized into learning modules, each of which contains four training sessions that range in level of expertise. Current offerings include accessibility and inclusion for museums, outreach activities like live streaming and podcasting, and other technology-based topics like virtual exhibitions and managing website projects. The learning modules can be found for free online here: <https://museum-hub.org/view-by-modules/> and all the additional resources that Museum Learning Hub offers can be explored online here: <https://museum-hub.org/>.

AIC Wiki Contributions

The AIC Wiki is sponsored by the American Institute for Conservation with content created by the Specialty Groups, Networks and Committees.

Each specialty group has its own approach for adding new material, but new content is always welcome! Content can range from creating new pages to adding bibliographic references or summarizing previously published research. Visit [this website](#) to learn more about how to contribute!

Materials Selection and Specification Working Group (MWG)

The Materials Working Group (MWG) is a community of collection care, conservation, natural and applied science professionals that formed in 2018 to develop guidelines and best practices for selecting, evaluating, and sharing materials used in collections care. The group has specified shared goals and is actively working to develop new materials and expand resources. Detailed information about the group and their resources can be found on AIC's Wiki page here: https://www.conservation-wiki.com/wiki/Materials_Working_Group

The VCA Student Scholarship

The VCA offers a scholarship to our student members to assist with costs associated with furthering education in the field. Two annual scholarships of \$250 each are available to be used towards fees for classes, conferences, or other professional development opportunities. Applications are accepted throughout the year and will be evaluated by the VCA Board during the December and April meetings. Successful applicants will be notified within one week of the Board meeting, and presented with a check within the following 30 days. Recipients will be required write a VCA newsletter article summarizing their experience. Applications must include a one-page proposal for use of funds that specifies how the scholarship will assist in the pursuit of a career in conservation or a directly related field. To apply, email our Education Committee Chair.



2021 – 2022 Board Members

Paige Schmidt president.vaconservation@gmail.com	President
Tina Gessler vp.vaconservation@gmail.com	Vice President
Sutton Hastman secretary.vaconservation@gmail.com	Secretary
Keri Ragland Spangler treasurer.vaconservation@gmail.com	Treasurer
Debbie Linn education.vaconservation@gmail.com	Education Chair
Elizabeth Robson membership@virginiaconservationassociation.org	Membership Chair
Ann Cuss outreach.vaconservation@gmail.com	Outreach Chair
Laurie King programs.vaconservation@gmail.com	Programs Co-Chair
Jennifer Myers programs.vaconservation@gmail.com	Programs Co-Chair
Jackie Peterson-Grace publications.vaconservation@gmail.com	Publications Chair
Lorraine Brevig webmanager.vaconservation@gmail.com	Web Management
Vacant	Refreshments Co-Chair
Vacant	Refreshments Co-Chair

VCA Student Scholarship

VCA offers two annual scholarships of \$250 each to be used for furthering education in the field. Use of funds may include conference or class fees or other professional-development expenses. Applicants must be VCA student members to apply. Applications are accepted throughout the year and will be evaluated during the April and December Board meetings.

To apply, submit a one-page proposal for use of funds that specifies how the scholarship will assist in the pursuit of a career in conservation or a directly related field. To apply, email our Education Committee Co-Chairs or mail paper applications to the VCA, P.O. Box 7023, Richmond, VA 23221

Contact Us

Virginia Conservation Association

P.O. Box 7032
Richmond, VA 23221

www.virginiaconservationassociation.org
www.facebook.com/VaConservation/

Contribute to the Newsletter!

Are you working on an interesting or challenging treatment? Have you made exciting research discoveries, come across valuable resources, or attended an inspiring professional development event? We want to hear from you!

Our all-volunteer publishing team regularly calls for content and any VCA member is welcome to contribute. If you are interested in writing for the newsletter but would like some advice and guidance, please get in touch with our Publications Chair to discuss your ideas.

The deadline for the March Newsletter is February 16