

VCA News

Newsletter of the Virginia Conservation Association

P.O. Box 4314, Richmond, Virginia 23220

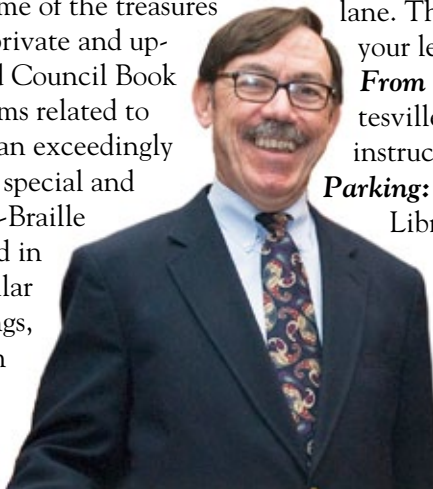
www.VirginiaConservationAssociation.org

Volume 19 No. 3 – January, 2009

VCA JANUARY MEETING AT THE LIBRARY OF VIRGINIA 5:30 PM. January 26, 2009

An Evening With The Stars: A Sampling of Treasures From The Library of Virginia's Special Collections with Department Director Tom Camden, 5:30 PM, January 26, 2009. The Library of Virginia, 800 W. Broad Street, Richmond.

The Library of the Commonwealth of Virginia, established in 1823, is extraordinarily rich in its holdings. Some of its most dazzling items are housed in the Library's Special Collections Department. Tom Camden, Director of that department, will talk about "what's so special about Special Collections" sharing his own passionate interest in special materials while also sharing some of the treasures of the Commonwealth. On hand for private and up-close viewing will be a colonial-period Council Book originally housed in Williamsburg; items related to Thomas Jefferson and Patrick Henry; an exceedingly rare atlas with a startling provenance, special and unusual format materials such as a pre-Braille story book for blind children published in Staunton, Virginia; and the ever-popular miniature books and fore-edge paintings, to name a few. By special request, Tom has also agreed to address a question that arose at the recent VCA Winter Party: What defines Virginia as a "Commonwealth" rather than a "State"? □



Driving Directions

From Interstate 95 (from the North or from the South) Take Exit 74C. A highway sign will say Library of Virginia. Proceed west on Broad Street until you reach 9th Street. Turn right and immediately get into the far left lane. Proceed down the block and prepare to turn left into the parking deck.


From Interstate 64 West (e.g. coming from Williamsburg) Take the exit for Fifth Street and the Coliseum. Turn left on Marshall Street a few blocks (past the Coliseum on your left) after you exit Interstate 64. Stay in the middle lane and proceed to Eighth Street, and turn right from that lane. The parking lot entrance will be immediately on your left.

From Interstate 64 East (e.g. coming from Charlottesville) Take Interstate 95 South to Exit 74C. See instructions above for I-95.


Parking: There is parking for VCA members at the Library of Virginia in the underground deck on the evening of January 26. The vehicle entrances to the parking deck are located on 8th and 9th Streets just south of Marshall Street in the block between Marshall and Broad Streets. Both of these streets are one-way, so plan accordingly.

After you park, go to the elevator at the south end of the deck (Broad Street side) to reach the Library's lobby. □

UPCOMING VCA MEETINGS

 **March 19, 2009**
Garden Hall, Maymont

Andrew Baxter on the conservation of metal sculpture and objects in the Oval Office, the Presidential Study, the Lincoln Bedroom, and most notably, the Monroe Plateau in the State Dining Room at the White House. A follow-up field trip to the White House will be scheduled for April.

 **May 28, 2009**
Mariner's Museum, Newport News

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

Position announcement...

MUSEUM DISASTER RECOVERY COORDINATOR

The Town of Pulaski seeks a full-time Museum Disaster Recovery Coordinator for a period of at least 90 days in the aftermath of a tragic fire that struck the Historic Depot and significantly damaged the contents of the Town's Raymond F. Radcliffe Memorial Museum. The Coordinator must evidence excellent computer skills, database development and management, have abilities in digital photography, image management, and problem-solving.

The Coordinator must be familiar with museum best practices, preventive conservation, and object handling. The person must have strong communication skills serving as a liaison among the Department of Historic Resources, Town personnel, and the private sector.

Ideally, the Coordinator will have familiarity with area history, geography, and resources. The candidate must show discretion, and a good sense of humor and a lot of energy will be valuable assets.

Please send a letter of interest addressing the above skills, knowledge, and abilities along with a resume to jwhite@pulaskitown.org. Review of applicants begins immediately. □

STUDIO SPACE FOR LEASE

Rick Vogt has a small studio available for lease. It is on W. Broad Street in Richmond. It has about 800 square feet with a small mezzanine and a private bathroom. The space is currently being remodeled and is now ready. Contact Rick at 804-358-1651. □

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Page 1: Photos provided by Tom Camden.

Page 2: Photos provided by Catherine Dean.

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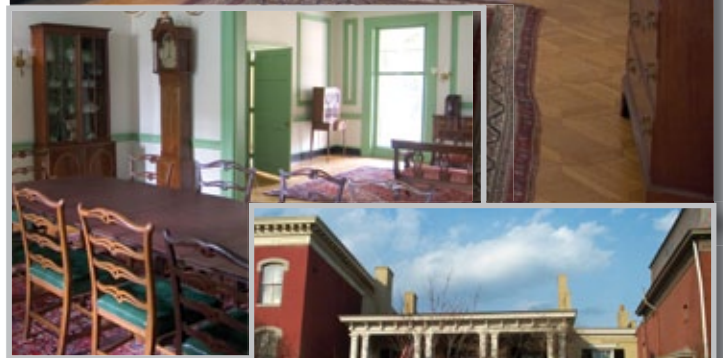
Page 4 top: Photo provided by Andrew Baxter.

WHITE HOUSE FIELD TRIP UPDATE

The Office of the Curator at The White House has approved access for the first tour group of 30. A letter has been sent requesting approval for the second group of 20. A list will be E-mailed to the members in each group in February (hopeful with a date for the tour). Please E-mail any questions to Andrew Baxter at bronzeetal@comcast.net. □

THE 2008 HOLIDAY PARTY

A fine time was had by all at the VCA Holiday Party at the Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities Headquarters in Richmond. The Cole Diggs House was a perfect setting with its splendid interior and holiday



décor. The bubbly was flowing and a wide variety of dishes provided an enjoyable dining experience. Many thanks to Catherine Dean and the APVA for providing the outstanding location for this festive gathering. □

The Cole Diggs House hosted this year's gathering.



NOVEMBER MEETING REPORT

The November 2008 VCA meeting featured two speakers addressing two fascinating but very different conservation projects.

Caitlin O'Grady, recently hired as conservator for the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, came to Virginia from Arizona where she worked in the Preservation Division of the Arizona State Museum. She spoke on the technical analysis of hundreds of objects selected for the museum's upcoming exhibition "Journeys of Our Ancestors: Migrations in the American Southwest". Working with Nancy Odegaard, conservator and head of the Preservation Division, and E. Charles Adams, archaeologist and curator at the museum, Caitlin studied items ranging from Paleo Indian artifacts dating as early as 13,000 B.C. to



(top of page) The November VCA gathering at the Virginia Historical Society.
(above) Caitlin O'Grady.

more recent historic objects documenting such trends as the westward migration of Mormons and the presence of Chinese railroad laborers in the Southwest.

Among other things, the project provided important information confirming earlier hypotheses by archaeologists regarding the ceramic-glazing technologies used by several Southwestern

Indian cultures. Caitlin gained experience using portable X-ray fluorescence analyzers by two manufacturers, Niton and Brüker, to identify copper glazes on ceramics produced by the Mogollon Culture (1100-1400 A.D.) found at Point of Pines, Arizona. The study also confirmed the introduction of lead glazes from Western Mexico into the American southwest, as identified on Gila Carretas polychrome

ceramics from Casas Grandes (1200-1450 A.D.).

The study included the analysis of numerous brass and bronze Chinese coins. Discovered in the Tucson area, these coins were associated with nineteenth-century Chinese railroad workers. Surprisingly, some coins dated as early as the seventeenth century and were probably kept as talismans by the workers as well as used for exchange.

Some of the more interesting organic artifacts examined were a group of woven-hair sashes dating from 325-500 A.D. that were discovered in northern Arizona caves. Long assumed to consist of dog hair, samples from the sashes were sent to researchers at the University of Copenhagen to conduct DNA studies. The DNA proved too deteriorated to confirm the species associated with the hair, so further work has been undertaken to identify amino acids present to provide clues about the diet of the animal in question.

"Journeys of Our Ancestors" will open at the Arizona State Museum in November 2011 in conjunction with the centennial of Arizona statehood. The technical study of such a large body of material has provided a much deeper understanding of the migration of peoples and the transmission of technologies in the American Southwest, greatly enhancing interpretive possibilities for the exhibition.

Andrew Baxter spoke on the conservation and impending installation of a large eighteenth-century South Asian Mogul Empire marble pavilion at the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts. Working with Scott McKee and James Robertson at McKee's large studio in Fredericksburg, Andrew has consulted closely with VMFA conservator Kathy Gillis and South Asian curator Joseph Dye on the painstaking conservation project. The pavilion, of white marble with colored stone inlay, stood outdoors for most of its existence and has undergone previous campaigns of repair and restoration. Chief issues being addressed in the project include the need to ensure the structural stability of such a large assembly of historic architectural stone components, the necessity to determine acceptable levels of compensation

(November Meeting Report, continued)

for an object that has experienced considerable weathering, wear, loss and previous repair, and the need to devise techniques to better integrate some of the previous repairs and replacements with the extant weathered, worn original surfaces.

The structural stability of the pavilion is a paramount concern, calling for creative assembly techniques that depart from the traditional means used to hold the elements together. The pavilion is an extremely heavy assembly of rather delicate materials. It must support its own weight as much as possible with no visible auxiliary support, it must be stable enough to ensure the safety of those working around it, and parts must be joined together such that they can be taken apart and re-assembled in the future with minimal disruption. A specially-designed steel substructure supports the weight of the pavilion and permits the leveling of its marble floor. Heavy stone structural components will be joined using a system of stainless steel rods. Matching holes will be drilled in adjacent surfaces, then stainless steel rods will be secured with epoxy in one component and carefully fit loosely within the adjacent component to permit future



Treatment of this eighteenth-century South Asian Mogul Empire marble pavilion is being undertaken by Andrew Baxter with Scott McKee and James Robertson for the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts.

disassembly. Ultimately, the entire assembly will probably be safely secured together from above using a hidden system of stainless steel aircraft cable and turnbuckles, much like the post-tensioning systems used in contemporary architecture.

Compensation for losses and damaged areas of the pavilion is being kept to a minimum. VMFA curator Joe Dye and conservator Kathy Gillis are committed to preserving the pavilion as an artifact fully reflecting its centuries-old history. Andrew and his colleagues confer regularly with them on details of the treatment, opting for a very conservative approach to maintain the time-altered appearance of the pavilion's surfaces.

As a final step in the process, Andrew and his colleagues will tone down some of the distracting resurfaced and replaced materials to integrate them with the older surfaces. This work will take place using reversible materials after the pavilion is installed with appropriate lighting at the Virginia Museum.

Installation of the pavilion will take place from May through July of 2009, and the pavilion will be one of the featured artworks in the newly expanded museum. □

CONSERVATION OF OUTDOOR SCULPTURE IN RICHMOND

The November VCA meeting included a visit from representatives of the Historic Monument Avenue and Fan District Foundation (HMAFDF) who are sponsoring a survey of at least 20 outdoor sculptures in the Richmond area. HMAFDF President Laura Cameron, architectural historian Sarah Driggs, and trustee Heyn Kjerulf described the process they are using to try to convince the city to collaborate on the care of the statues. To begin, the HMAFDF-sponsored survey is being conducted by Ronald Harvey of Tuckerbrook Conservation Services (TCS), Maine. Following the model used to conserve Philadelphia's outdoor statuary, the HMAFDF decided to expand the scope from just the sculptures on Monument Avenue to include all significant sculptures throughout the city. A citywide survey draws interest and support from a wider group of residents and the city council. After the survey, conservators other than TCS will be invited by the city to bid on full conservation treatment of the various statues. As in Philadelphia,



HMAFDF representatives (left to right) President Laura Cameron, Architectural historian Sarah Driggs, and trustee Heyn Kjerulf.

if the city commits to the project, the city will choose and pay for the conservator(s) conducting full treatments. The hope is that one to three pieces a year will be conserved. Once full treatment is complete, the HMAFDF will take on the responsibility of contracting maintenance of the conserved statues in perpetuity. Therefore, the investment in treatment will be protected.

The conservation of the city's outdoor sculptures would be one of the largest conservation projects to go forward in the Richmond community in years. We were very glad to have a first hand description from the Historic Monument Avenue and Fan District Foundation. As the project progresses, there will be occasional updates in the VCA newsletter and at meetings. We are glad to make a connection with this valuable community resource. Thank you Laura, Sarah and Heyn for graciously answering our questions and offering a short history of the project! □

VCA BOARD MINUTES FROM THE DECEMBER 2, 2008 MEETING

Attendees: Andrew Baxter, Dotty Robinson, Bienvenida Ochs, Rick Vogt, Dianne Frederick Roland, John Watson, Beth Fulton, Tracy Horne Flores, Kathy Garrett-Cox, Patricia Selinger.

Thank you to Rick Vogt for hosting the meeting!

Outreach Position: Discussion began with the proposal of a new Outreach board position. Tracy Horne Flores brought a draft proposal and explained why she feels this would be a good addition to the board. It was decided that this position may be able to be over the Disaster Response position and they could either combine or be shared. The disaster response chair already does some outreach by attending the Richmond chapter of the Museum Emergency Support Team put together by the Virginia Association of Museums. This position will be put to a vote at the March meeting. If it is agreed upon then there would be time to nominate someone for the May elections and create a budget for this position. The full description of the duties of this position will be put in the next newsletter with the amended "by laws."

Nominating: Andrew approached Stuart Bailey Austin and Dee LaRoche to form the Nominating Committee. They will find a third person to help them.

White House Field Trip: Andrew reported that he has filled the field trip with a total of 50 people attending. He hopes that he will have a date in February for the trip in April. Dotty wondered if we want to rent a bus since we have extra money in the bank and it will be difficult for people to park. Dotty will look into a bus and report at the next meeting cost etc.

HMAFDF: Representatives came from the last meeting at the VHS from the Historic Monument Avenue and Fan District Foundation. Sarah Driggs, Laura Cameron and Heyn Kjerulf were the representatives from this organization. The scope of the project is that the survey will lead to the City of Richmond funding the initial conservation of these pieces and the foundation will then maintain their care from then on. There was much discussion over the fact that this organization had a conservator Ron Harvey, from Maine, do the survey for a project that would be to conserve the monuments on Monument Avenue. Some of the concerns with the survey are that the surveying conservator would be specifying treatment methods, materials and costs for the project. Another concern was that a conservator from out of state was asked to do the survey. The foundation explained that the person who does the survey can not bid on the project so they felt they were giving the conservators locally a better chance to have that opportunity. It was discussed that possibly a formal letter needed to be sent to the founda-

tion from VCA explaining our concerns regarding this project. It was decided that the VCA will wait until the survey is available for reading and then discussion will be reopened as to whether there are concerns with the proposal.

Membership

We have 108 members in the new directory that will be available at the Holiday party. That is an increase from last years 80 members. Kudos to Andrew who has been calling and reminding people to send in their dues!

Treasurer

Dotty reported that we have a healthy balance. We currently have \$7,332.90. Most of this is attributed to not mailing out the newsletter and a successful workshop. Dotty brought up that if we continue to have such a healthy balance we may want to move some of it to a CD or savings account. She will research these options and get back to us.

Dotty asked what files should be archived with VHS from the treasury. She has most of the fiscal records but was not sure if we want bank statements etc. as these files are public. It was agreed that budgets and receipts should go but anything with a bank account number should not go to the historical society.

Education

Diane asked Lorraine if she wants to do an inpainting workshop. She has also approached the McCrone Institute regarding the Chemistry for Conservators class that she and Rick took recently. This may be expensive so this would be something for next year but she is going ahead and checking on their requirements.

Disaster Response

Beth contacted people about the Pulaski fire and contacted Textile conservators to help them.

She suggested that names of people who are on the disaster response team could be put on the website so that people can contact directly who they need if it is an emergency.

Submissions for the newsletter need to be in to Rick Vogt (fcvco@verizon.net) by January 5, 2009.

The March 19th meeting will be at Maymont in the Garden Hall. Go to www.maymount.org for directions and a map. □

2008 – 2009 VCA OFFICERS

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

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 partner organizations and institutions
- Identify institutions and individuals that need the assistance and/or guidance of VCA members, in coordi-

nation 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.

VCA

P.O. Box 4314

Richmond, VA 23220

Upcoming Meeting

**AN EVENING WITH THE STARS:
A SAMPLING OF TREASURES
FROM THE LIBRARY OF
VIRGINIA'S SPECIAL
COLLECTIONS**

5:30 PM. Monday, January 26, 2009

The Library of Virginia

