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From the Desk of the President

WCG has been having a busy and exciting year. Be sure to read about the meetings highlighted in this newsletter. In December, WCG hosted the annual Holiday Party and Tech-talk at the National Trust for Historic Preservation. Ernie Robertson, of Museum Glazing Services, donated the wine for the reception. The food was organized by Linda Edquist, WCG Food Chair. An enthusiastic Jerry Shiner, President of Keepsafe Systems, gave a presentation on the ins and outs of micro-environmental systems for museum storage and display. Mr. Shiner brought samples to share and demonstrated several new microclimate products including those for oxygen-free storage.

Attendance at the January 3-Ring Circus was at an all time high with over 120 attendees including 12 new members. For the second year in a row several vendors were present during the social hour. Exhibitors this year included Museum Glazing Services, Archivart, Testfabrics, Inc., and University Products, Inc. The vendors contributed toward the refreshments so a big thank you goes to each of them as well as to reception organizer and Past-President Emily Jacobson. I'd also like to thank the staff at the Freer Gallery of Art who helped to coordinate the meeting and assisted in providing space and funding the AV needs.

Nancy Pollak, WCG Outreach Booth Coordinator, set up the booth at the January meeting. In addition to selling the 2nd Edition of WCG's Conservation Resources for Art and Antiques, Heritage Preservation donated their new brochures to hand out. This included their new publication, The Heritage Health Index Report on the State of America's Collections, which has just been given a positive review in the February issue of Reader's Digest. If anyone picked up a copy of this publication, Heritage Preservation staff asks that you provide feedback by going on their website and filling in their survey form. The form can be accessed at http://www.formdesk.com/heritagepreservation/HHI. It is only six questions so please take time to voice your thoughts on this new project.

The February meeting was also packed to capacity with 55 people attending. The Folger Shakespeare Library hosted the

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meeting and a fascinating talk was given by Anne Murray, a Mellon fellow at the National Museum of the American Indian.

You may have noticed that an RSVP has been required to attend several of our meetings this year. This is due mostly to the limited space that is available in some of the meeting rooms, but at other times was required due to increased security access at some of our venues. Please take the time to RSVP so that everyone who would like to attend these meetings is able to. RSVP for the upcoming April meeting at our email address listed below. You will receive a confirmation to your email if there is space available for the meeting. And if for some reason if you cannot attend the meeting, please send an email to remove your name from the list.

The Board has been discussing the redesign of the WCG logo. There are several reasons for this, the most compelling of which is the fact that the WCG does not appear to have the original artwork, or digital artwork, of the current logo. We need to have this artwork In order to redevelop the website in the near future and reproduce all the letterhead and other WCG outreach materials. We are currently reviewing three companies who have given us a budget and proposal to do the work. It is our intention to choose a company at the March board meeting and work with them to develop several logo choices for the membership to vote on at the May business meeting. We would like to hear from the membership about this endeavor. If anyone has an opinion or suggestions for a logo design, or if anyone has comments regarding the current logo please feel free to contact me via email. One suggestion under consideration is to simply keep the current logo and redo the artwork and colors for the website. We look forward to showing the WCG members the final logo choices in May.

After the logo development is underway we are going to interview companies to redesign the new WCG website. We would like to make the website more user friendly and updated. We anticipate a new front page which will allow members and the public to browse the site more easily and find what they are looking for. We'd love to be able to highlight current WCG Angels projects on the front page, add photographs of our Outreach events and link to other regional conservation groups. Once the website firm is named, we will be asking corporate sponsors, conservation organizations and the members for donations toward this project. You will probably receive a phone call in the upcoming months regarding this. We hope to fully fund the project through donations and hope to be able to list sponsors of the project on the website itself. If everyone comes through with this project, we hope to work all this summer with the firm to redo the website in time to launch it for the beginning of the upcoming 2006-07 season next October.

As the 2005-06 year draws to a close, I would like to thank E.D. Tully Rambo, Membership Secretary, for all her hard work these past two years. Her term is up in May of this year, and E.D. will be leaving us at that time. We will be nominating a new Membership Secretary this May. The biographies and names of all the nominees can be found in this newsletter. We will miss E.D. and wish her well. As she leaves us she is embarking on the much more important job of becoming a first time mommy, and we look forward to seeing her and her new baby sometime

after June.

The new membership year for WCG begins in May 2006. The board decided in September to raise the WCG membership dues, for the first time in a decade, to $30.00 for individual members (new and renewals), $35.00 for International members and to keep the membership fee for interns at $15.00 a year. We hope that the membership will continue to support the WCG through their membership fees, as this money enables the WCG to provide the membership with special tours, a quarterly newsletter, eight monthly presentations at a variety of venues and a social hour at each meeting. This also allows the WCG to support our very active intern program by providing area interns with a welcome reception at the beginning of each year, an active social program throughout the year and helps us keep their membership dues at a reduced rate.

I am still amazed at how much the WCG accomplishes each season, and it is all due to the members like you and all of the WCG volunteers, including the board of directors and officers. There are several reports within this newsletter highlighting all the activities that WCG has been involved with over the winter months. I look forward to seeing everyone at the last few meetings of the year. We have some exciting talks to look forward to and have enjoyed many wonderful venues thanks to hard work of Claire Peachey, Vice President. We look forward to returning to beautiful Hillwood Museum and Gardens in May for the annual WCG raffle and Business Meeting. The April meeting requires an RSVP so please make sure you contact the WCG at the email address below to get your name on the list. Claire is beginning to put together the venues and speakers for the 2006-07 season, so if anyone has any suggestions or speaker topics please email her at the WCG email address.

Lisa Young, WCG President
conserveit@earthlink.net OR wcg@washingtonconservationguild.org

Upcoming WCG Meetings 2005/2006

Monthly meetings for the 2005/2006 season begin October 2005 and run through May 2006. The meetings are usually held on the first Thursday of each month. Most meetings begin at 5 p.m. with a reception, followed by the guest speaker's presentation. Please check individual meeting announcements for exact times and locations.

April 6
Julia Brennan speaking about recent textile conservation projects. Held at the Textile Museum, 2320 S Street, NW, Washington, DC. NOTE: The talk will begin at 6:00 pm. RSVP is required.

May 4
Elections, Raffle and Tour of Hillwood. Held at Hillwood Museum and Gardens, 4155 Linnean Ave., NW, Washington, DC.

"Microclimate Environmental Control" by Jerry Shiner, Director of Sales and Marketing, Microclimate Technologies International Inc./Keepsafe Systems

Jerry Shiner, of Microclimate Technologies International and Keepsafe Systems, presented a talk regarding the use of microclimates and related products. The talk began with a brief review of microclimates and their history. A microclimate is the climate within a small and specific area. Conservators are concerned with the environments created by isolating objects in gallery spaces and within exhibit cases. The modern concept of a stable microclimate is an isolated enclosure dependent on modern materials, many of them developed more than a century ago. They include large glass panels, buffering agents, and electrical components.

For artifacts, relative humidity (RH) is the leading environmental condition to control although temperature, light, and pollution levels are also of concern. According to Mr. Shiner, the three main challenges faced in establishing an effective microclimate for museum objects are people (especially visitors), the display systems, and the building environment. People are sources of heat and moisture, as well as air borne pollution including dust. To complicate matters, people require comfortable conditions to both work and enjoy the collection. The display system provides other variables- open or closed casework, effectiveness of seal or lack of seal, etc. The building itself creates challenges; for instance in room with well controlled moisture levels, problems due to differences in temperature and RH at exterior walls may lead to condensation and water damage. This is in addition to the challenge and costs of using a very large climate control system to provide a stable microclimate.

The talk continued with an overview of passive and active microclimates and various products available. A passive microclimate can be maintained within a well sealed enclosure through the use of buffering agents, such as silica gel. In order to make a passive microclimate effective the following need to be considered: proper quantity and correct grade of buffer, accurate monitoring, and regular change/reconditioning. In contrast, an active microclimate automatically controls and monitors the environmental conditions of exhibit cases by humidifying, dehumidifying, and controlling pollution. Very little intervention is needed and the units automatically notify staff (through lights or alarms) if there are problems. Microclimate systems vary in size and can be used to protect a single case or provide humidity control for the exhibit cases in an entire gallery.

The following products were mentioned by Mr. Shiner:

LightCheck: A new product similar in use to the Blue Wool Sensor, but more sensitive and calibrated to show light absorption by color change. LightCheck is composed of a light sensitive coating applied to a plastic substrate. The coating changes color under exposure to light and the lux hours are determined by comparing the results to a color chart.

Oxygen absorbers:
Ageless: Produced by Mitsubishi, Ageless absorbs atmospheric oxygen in a well sealed

environment. Ageless is sold in pre-measured packets and works best in an environment around 50-60% RH.
RP Systems: Also produced by Mitsubishi, there are two types of RP- Type A and Type K. Type A is composed of an oxygen absorber and a desiccant and can be used with metallic materials. Type K does not contain a desiccant and will not affect the RH of the package.

Escal Ceramic Barrier Film: A clear barrier film composed of three layers- the outer layer is polypropylene, the middle layer is a PVA substrate with a layer of vacuum-deposited ceramic, and the inner layer is polyethylene.

Mr. Shiner also described the use of piezoelectric crystals, which, when coated with an appropriate coating, can be used to measure pollution levels within a microclimate. Pollutants in the environment cause the coating to undergo physical and chemical changes which, in turn, change the vibration speed of the crystal. Changes in speed can be electronically measured, either in real time, or by sending the exposed crystal back to the supplier in order to receive a full report. This product is currently under development by a team of conservation professionals in Europe, and is known as MIMIC.

More information on the products mentioned above and other microclimate systems can be obtained from Keepsafe Systems at www.keepsafe.ca or Microclimate Technologies International at www.microclimate.ca

Megan Emery, Andrew W. Mellon Fellow in Objects Conservation,
National Museum of the American Indian

January Meeting 3-Ring Circus

PAPER SESSION

"Out of the Ashes: a Holocaust Diary Revealed" by Emily Klayman Jacobson, Paper and Photographic Materials Conservator, US Holocaust Memorial Museum

Right at the outset, Emily Jacobson told her audience that this would not be a standard treatment presentation. By the end of the presentation, we all knew that it had been a lot more interesting than that!

The presentation concerned 20 fragments of diary pages, written by a Polish woman who died during the Polish uprising in August 1944. The pages were little more than scraps of yellowed, lined paper, written on with black ink, which had been folded and singed early in its 60 year history. The purpose of Emily's work was to enable the fragments to be translated by one of the survivor volunteers at the Holocaust Museum who knew the Polish language.

Her first step was to photograph all 20 fragments so that copies could be handled, rather than the fragments themselves. Using the copies and digital images, a minimum of words was able to be read but not enough to make complete sentences or decipher the story they were trying to tell.

The next step was to use Microsoft Photo Editor, to manipulate the contrast, color and other variables in the digital image on the computer. Some areas of the fragments were too darkened to read due to having been singed, but the paper and ink were still there. By lightening these darkened areas, additional words were now legible, to add to the original few words.

Emily was able to see that additional lines of writing were now visible if the scraps were aligned along fold lines. By matching up the horizontal folds in the copies of the originals, she was able to re-create additional sentences which were still there to be read.

The last step in the realignment process was to arrange the photocopies in a front-to-back, page-to-page format, so that sentences which began on one page and continued to the back of the page could be deciphered.

At this point, a free, on-line translator was used to help piece together the sentences being deciphered. By the end of this phase of the conservation of these fragments, a very sad story about a young girl living in an unidentified Ghetto had emerged.

As Emily said in closing, this was a case where ordinary, easily available software was used to lend a vital assistance in the translation of this piece of Holocaust history without endangering the artifact itself.

"Creation and Function of the National Park Service (NPS) National Capital Region (NCR) Museum Emergency Response Team (MERT)" by Theresa Voellinger Shockey, NPS Paper Conservator, Harpers Ferry Center, WV

Theresa Shockey traveled to Washington from Harpers Ferry, WV, to give WCG members an overview of MERT and how it responds to emergencies. The team emerged as a result of the recovery efforts following Hurricane Isabel in 2003 when over one million NPS objects were damaged. The NPS museum professionals who responded to this disaster encountered a huge learning experience and recognized the need for a more organized response in the future.

MERT was designed to serve NPS sites in 3 ways:
1. Pre-planning for disaster (assistance in preparing collection areas or moving collections)
2. Salvage and recovery during disasters
3. Final disposition of objects after disasters

The MERT team started small with a Core Planning Team lead by Pam West, Director of the NPS Museum Resource Center in Landover MD. Their job was to design emergency response training activities for a select group of NPS museum professionals in the NCR that would eventually fill out the team. Part of their training involved learning to work under the Incident Command System (ICS). ICS is an organizational tool used by federal, state and local agencies that allows for efficient and effective management of emergencies. They also participated in

numerous tabletop and team building exercises and learned skills essential to assessment of collections following a disaster.

Through various other training activities and requirements MERT became the first organized team in the country with a focus on the salvage of cultural resources during a disaster. Each team member now has a "Go Pack" or supply kit that is packed with essential supplies and is ready for use at a moments notice.

The MERT team now consists of 25 people, who tested their skills in 2004, after Hurricane Ivan, and again in 2005, after Hurricane Katrina hit the Gulf Coast of Mississippi and Louisiana. Working 12 hour days the team members came together to assess, triage and pack numerous NPS collections and established the role of cultural resource professionals under the umbrella of ICS.

Future plans are to train other MERT teams in various regions to better serve the NPS collections nationwide.

"The Mold Was as High as an Elephant's Eye: NARA Conservators Oversee Record Retrieval for Salvage in New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina" by Hilary Kaplan and Kathy Ludwig, NARA, College Park, MD

On October 6, 2005, NARA was contacted by FEMA, and asked to assist with the disaster response to Hurricane Katrina which had devastated the New Orleans area in late August. Specifically, they were asked to assist at the NO Coroner's Office, and also with records salvage at the Clerk of the Court and the Office of the Deputy Attorney General. This request came a month after the storm had hit and consequent exposure to excessive heat and humidity had already caused mold and mildew growth to proliferate on every sort of object in the area.

In planning for the response to this emergency, it was known that the working conditions there included total lack of power, limited access, and concerns for the security of the records themselves. The goals that were devised, in light of these limiting factors, were to first retrieve all forms of documentation (mainly paper-based), freeze/transport these materials, and then have them sterilized. Next a scope of work was to be written up as a road map for further conservation planning. Finally, a contracting process was set up to accomplish this work.

Not until October 26th was permission received to respond to the request for assistance. During the following week, activities were characterized by a process best described as "get ready … set … wait". On November 6th, the response work finally commenced.

A contractor by the name of "Document Reprocessors" had the contract to transport and freeze the records at their facilities in Middlesex, New York. The work encompassed the retrieval of records, including computer hard drives, first from the Coroner's Office, and subsequently the Clerk of Courts office. Members of the National Guard proved to be an unexpectedly helpful resource in the dirty, often heavy work of sorting through and emptying 700 file cabinets so they could be repacked and loaded onto trucks for transport to Middlesex.

Just the chore of hauling the empty file cabinets off-site was a major problem to be solved, which the Guard resolved for the conservators.

At this point, the records are all in Middlesex, where evaluations will be made, box by box, as to what the specific course of treatment will be.

Michele Pagan
Textile Conservator in Private Practice

PAINTINGS SESSION

"Guidelines for the Care of East Asian Paintings: Display and Storage" by Andrew Hare, Supervising Conservator of East Asian Painting, Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution

This talk discussed the unique care of East Asian paintings; unvarnished pictures that are painted with organic and mineral pigments and often made of fragile materials. Because of the nature of these paintings, damage is often irreparable and caution must be taken so as to avoid both physical and chemical damage. Methods of display and storage are thus crucial to protecting these paintings.

Displays should allow the object to be seen while at the same time ensuring that it does not become damaged. All Asian paintings are susceptible to light damage, thus a 6 month per 5 year rotation is suggested which would allow an object to be displayed about twice a year for three weeks at a time. Light levels of 5 foot candles or less are ideal. Environmental control of temperature and relative humidity is also important; 60-70° F at 50-60 RH is appropriate. Displays should adequately support the object while still allowing it to be viewed. Scrolls should have multiple points for hanging at the top so as to spread out the force of gravity and prevent bowing. Likewise, "J" hooks can be mounted to the wall to support the base of the scroll. Handscrolls are of a horizontal format and should be thus viewed at an angle of no more than 35°. To prevent bowing, Mylar clips can be used to support the scroll along the length, and the ends can also be supported with a Mylar support and a linen strip used as an anchor. Folding screens should be displayed on a solid base with the hinges at an ideal angle of 90°. For wall mounting, the screen should still be on a supporting ledge and the hinges at no more than a 160° angle in order to prevent them from becoming overstressed and tearing. Albums and books should be displayed flat. Album leaves should never be folded back on themselves as this will weaken the fold, possibly causing it to split. Most Asian books are folded accordion-style and need to be supported when displayed.

Care should be taken with storage as well. Registration numbers should only be placed on areas of solid, stable support where they will not cause damage to the object. Wrapping cloths of unbleached muslin can be used, and can serve as a first line of defense against potential damage. Traditional wrappings were made of silk and colored with dyes often having insecticidal properties. These are not always used today, however, because the dyes may bleed onto the

objects. When tying cords are used, slipping a piece of paper beneath the cord can help prevent it from being tied too tightly. For scrolls, roller clamps can be attached to the base of the scroll and rolled up with it to prevent the scroll from being rolled too tightly and to give support to a looser rolling. Boxes add another defense layer and are a buffer against dust, insects, light, temperature, and humidity changes. Modern boxes should be made of acid free materials and can be designed so as to be folded shut without use of adhesive. Fans should be stored open because the action of opening and closing causes wear on the painted design. Finally, storage cabinets for the wrapped and boxed objects can provide a "microclimate within a microclimate" for the objects in the collection.

"The Uncertain Attribution of a Small Oil Sketch in the Phillips Collection" by Patricia Favero, Conservation Fellow, Phillips Collection

The Phillips Collection houses a small oil sketch that was previously attributed to John Constable. Recently examined for treatment, the question of attribution is also being reexamined. The sketch is executed on a 9" x 12" board on a panel that is cradled. There is a split in the board about an inch from the top, and the surface shows heat and pressure damage as well as solvent abrasion. Discolored varnish covers the surface and strip frame. The provenance of the piece is vague, however it is known to have been in the Phillips Collection as early as 1920 where it was shown in an exhibition in New York. It is very similar in composition to a painting known to be by Constable at the National Gallery of Victoria in Melbourne, Australia. It was also compared to a work by David Lucas, who worked with Constable to create a print of the Melbourne painting. The style of the Phillips painting is similar in many ways to Constable's sketching technique. It was noticed that the proportions were similar to the Melbourne painting if the top inch were removed. This led to further examination of the painting, which revealed that the top inch where the board appears to be split was actually an addition. This addition, unlike the rest of the painting did not have a lead white ground and it is thought to be contemporary with the cradle. There is also no damage to the paint surface seen in the addition, unlike in the rest of the painting, and some areas of paint in this area extend over the frame.

Constable used traditional materials for the most part, and this is concurrent with the pigments found in the painting. There is much overpaint, however, and some of the overpaint is not easily identifiable from the original due to the discolored varnish. Stylistically, the technique and handling are consistent with Constable's with the exception of a tree in the foreground. This tree seems awkwardly depicted with uneven lighting, though this may be partially due to the discolored varnish as well. The dilemma is that treatment of the piece might aid an attribution, but would also be very involved and time consuming, with a radical change in the appearance of the painting. If it could be shown that the painting is at least likely to be by Constable, such a treatment may be warranted. At present, it has been decided that further technical study is needed before proceeding with treatment. Constable was known to experiment particularly with yellow pigments, so investigation of the yellow pigments present in the picture may be worthwhile, as would further consideration of the style and technique of paint application compared with Constable's approach, with special attention given to the tree in the foreground.

Kristen J. Loudermilk
Painting Conservation Intern
National Gallery of Art

OBJECTS SESSION

"Nomads' Land: Archaeological Conservation in Northern Mongolia" by Rae Beaubien, Senior Objects Conservator, Smithsonian Center for Materials Research and Education

In 2005, a small team from the Smithsonian Center for Materials Research and Education (SCMRE) joined the Joint Mongolian-Smithsonian Deer Stone Project, which has been conducting research in the Hovsgol region of northern Mongolia since 2001. Among the project's research interests are the deer stones, thought to be about 3000 years old (Late Bronze/Early Iron Age). Over five hundred deer stones have been reported in Mongolia and they are almost always associated with mortuary sites, the only material remains of nomadic peoples from that time period. The towering, four-sided stones are inscribed with images of deer with flowing antlers, rings, belts, and what may be representations of the human figure. Little else is known about them. The stones are suffering a great deal of damage due to environmental exposure and increasing vandalism. As a complement to the Joint Mongolian-Smithsonian Deer Stone Project's investigation of these important artifacts, SCMRE'S role was to document them through photographs, drawings, analysis, and 3-D records.

The primary goal for the summer 2005 season was to test a hand-held laser scanner as a field technique for creating accurate 3-D records. The team, made up of Beaubien, Vicky Karas, conservator, and Carolyn Thome, a modelmaker from the Smithsonian's Office of Exhibits Central (OEC), faced many logistical difficulties, including sensitivity of the scanner to bright light and any metal items nearly, and the lack of electricity and other amenities. Once these obstacles had been overcome (including improvised temporary sunshades and use of a small generator), the team was able to complete the scans of ten deer stones, with each stone taking approximately 2-3 hours to scan. The post-processing of the data and model making stages are currently underway at SCMRE and OEC.

During the 2005 season the conservators also worked in Mongolia's Khanuy Valley with a second archaeological project to aid in the recovery of artifacts from an Xiongnu period (300 BC –200 AD) mortuary site. The fragile finds excavated include wooden coffin remains with intact decorative iron strapwork, iron horse trappings, and several copper alloy objects with textile wrappings. After stabilizing these artifacts in the field, two of the copper alloy objects were temporarily transferred to SCMRE where they are currently being analyzed and conserved. Eventually the objects will return to the Institute of History in Ulaanbaatar.

"Bronze Conservation at the National Museum of Cambodia" by Paul Jett, Head of Conservation and Scientific Research, Freer-Sackler Gallery of Art

The National Museum of Cambodia is located in Phnom Penh and features a world-renown collection of Khmer artifacts from the 9th – 15th c. AD. Among these collections are approximately 6,800 bronze objects, with over 600 on permanent display. Recently, Paul Jett of the Freer-Sackler Gallery of Art, headed up a project to conserve these significant cultural artifacts.

The goals of the project include completing a thorough survey of the bronze collection to determine its overall condition and needs, and establishing a laboratory facility for bronze conservation. The project will also include performing conservation treatments on selected bronzes from the collection, training members of the museum staff in the care and treatment of bronze, and finally, improving storage for the collection.

To carry out the project, a consulting conservator, Sean Charette, was hired to work on site at the National Museum for an eighteen month period. In addition, staff members from the Freer conservation lab have been traveling to Cambodia for stays of two to three weeks in order to work with Charette on the various aspects of the project. After Charette concludes his period of stay at the museum in the fall of 2006, follow-up visits are planned in order to provide further training and support for the project and to assist museum officials in planning for the future of the bronze conservation program.

Materials shipped from the United States were used to establish a basic conservation laboratory at the National Museum. A core group, made up of four of the museum staff, were then trained to complete condition surveys of the entire bronze collection. This was quite a task due not only to the large number of artifacts, but also to the objects' condition. A number of the bronzes had been sealed in bags by the museum staff over thirty years ago when the museum was closed before the Khmer Rouge took control of Phnom Penh and many of these objects have yet to be unsealed.

The improvement of the storage condition of the artifacts was another important goal of this project. The environmental conditions in Phnom Penh are not exactly ideal, since the area is subject to seasonal rains. Although some parts of the museum do flood during the rainy season, this was overcome by using storage systems that keep everything well off the ground.

The last step was to provide additional training in basic conservation to a small group of the museum staff. In addition to being taught to perform conservation treatments, the staff is also learning about bronze casting techniques and other topics that will further their understanding of the objects. It is hoped that the project will ultimately not only address the goals listed above, but will also create a self-sufficient laboratory that eventually serves as a center for bronze conservation in Cambodia.

"Recent Discoveries in Xi'an, China" by Yang Junchang, Forbes Research fellow at Freer-Sackler Gallery of Art

The objects session concluded with a fascinating talk given by Yang Junchang about two recent projects in Xi'an: the excavation and conservation of a Tang royal headdress and the removal and conservation of wall paintings from the Shaanxi province.

In 2001, during an archaeological survey at a construction site at the University of Science and Technology Xi'an in 2001, groups of Tang dynasty (618 – 907 AD) tombs were discovered. Many

impressive objects were recovered from the site, including bronze mirrors, terracotta animals, ornamented silver boxes and inscribed stone tablets. The most important find, however, was a headdress belonging to the Princess Li Chui.

This magnificent gilt headdress is composed of amber, turquoise, glass, pearl, shell, and other precious materials. The framework is made up of gold, silver, copper, iron, crystals and glass. Inlay and granulation are two of the construction techniques highlighted on this object. The headdress represents the highest levels of manufacturing technology of its time. The time required for conservation of this piece was one and a half years. X-radiography was an important element to the work, as were detailed drawings made during the cleaning. A total of over 370 individual pieces were treated

The second project Yang Junchang discussed was the conservation of tomb murals in the Shaanxi province. There are approximately two thousand extant tombs from the Qin and Han dynasties; of these only eight have murals (all from the Han dynasties). Likewise, although close to five thousand five hundred Shui and Tang tombs exist, only about one hundred have murals. Many of these tombs are threatened due to construction and the only way to preserve them is through removal. Only about thirty to forty of these murals are capable of being removed. These tomb paintings are of high cultural complexity and they reflect political, economic, artistic, technical, and religious elements of the period.

Yang presented several examples of tomb paintings that haven been successfully removed and conserved. The first was located in Haotan and was from the Eastern Han dynasty. The mural depicted scenes from everyday life, such as hunting and farming, as well as processions and representations of entering heaven.

The conservation involved tracing the original paintings, pre-treating (including filling voids and consolidating flaking paint layers), spraying with B-72, and then attaching both a paper and then porous cloth to the surface before detaching from the wall.

Several similar case studies from both the Han and Tang dynasties were briefly discussed and included a slide show of the restoration processes. This included cleaning the back of excess plaster, consolidation with B-72, and finally attaching the painting to a cloth backing. The final example was featured at the World's Trade Fair in Japan in the year 2004.

Amy Creech
Archaeological Conservation Technician
VA Department of Historic Resources

How to reach WCG

Web site: www.washingtonconservationguild.org
Email: wcg@washingtonconservationguild.org
Address: PO Box 23364, Washington, DC 20026.

"'Goats, Dogs, and Blankets: History and Analysis of Coast Salish Fibers" by Anne Murray, Andrew W. Mellon Fellow, National Museum of the American Indian, Smithsonian Institution

This lively and informative talk showcased Anne Murray's ongoing research to identify the fibers used by the Coast Salish people to weave blankets (dating from the early 19th century), which now reside in the collection of the National Museum of the American Indian, (NMAI). This research employed a useful and economical fiber sectioning technique used in forensic microscopy, as well as microscopy (scanning electron, SEM and polarized light, PLM) and mitochondrial DNA Analysis.

The investigation of these fibers transpired as a result of consultation with representatives of the Coast Salish community for the museum's current exhibition, "Listening to the Our Ancestors: The Art of Native Life along the North Pacific Coast". Community Curator Marilyn Jones requested that this research be undertaken to corroborate the Coast Salish oral tradition, which tells of the use of dog hair in the production of these blankets.

Background to the research was provided through an account of the Coast Salish weaving tradition, featuring blankets from the museum's collection. Previous information pertaining to the existence and use of the wool dog was highlighted including written accounts by European explorers at the turn of the 19th century, analytical research including osteometry (measuring of bones) and stable carbon isotope analysis of an archaeological blanket, which established that the diet of the fiber provider was 50-70% marine in origin ruling out goat as a source.

The National Museum of Natural History (NMNH) provided hairs from specimens in its collection of Mountain Goat, and the pelt of an unfortunate dog called Mutton said to be a 'wool dog'. These were then sampled along with the blankets in the collection. Anne, advised by Dan Naedel, employed a very economical sectioning technique, which created a scale impression, as well as cross-section and longitudinal samples from one hair. The technique requires the fiber to be taped to a sheet of plastic and coated in Polaroid film coater. The film coater takes the scale cast and also holds the fiber in place so that it doesn't curl back on itself when the cross and longitudinal sections are cut. A double-sided razor blade is used under a microscope, to cut the cross sections and slice along the fiber to obtain a longitudinal cross section. Microscopy carried out with the assistance of Ron Cunningham and Dr. Harry Alden, revealed the distinctly different medulla structures of the goat and dog fibers taken from NMNH, as well as finding probable matches for both in the samples taken from the blankets.

The results of microscopy were supported by the preliminary results of mitochondrial DNA analysis carried out by Dr Tom Gluick. The mitochondrial DNA sequences of the fiber samples from the Coast Salish blankets corresponded to that of modern dog and mountain goat, suggesting that dog and goat fibers were used to weave the blankets. This research is ongoing and further analysis will be undertaken to provide more definitive results.

"Listening to the Our Ancestors: The Art of Native Life along the North Pacific Coast", is currently on display at the NMAI on the Mall, Washington DC and runs through to Jan 2, 2007.

Anna Hodson
Andrew W. Mellon Fellow in Textile Conservation, NMAI

WCG: Preliminary Slate for New Board

The WCG Nominating Committee presents the preliminary slate of candidates for open positions for the 2006/2007 membership year:

Membership Chair: Patricia Favero
Patti Favero graduated from the Art Conservation Program at Buffalo State College in 2002 and has held fellowships in paintings conservation at the Cincinnati Art Museum and at the Tate Gallery in London. She is currently a Conservation Fellow in the Sherman Fairchild Foundation Conservation Studio at The Phillips Collection.

Director: Scott Brouard (incumbent) for 2nd term of one year
After receiving a BFA and MFA from the American University in Washington, DC, Scott Brouard apprenticed in paintings and frames conservation at the Washington Studio with Marion Mecklenburg and with Wimsatt and Associates in Kensington, MD. Currently he holds the position of Preservation Manager at the Hillwood Museum & Gardens.

Additional nominations from the membership will be accepted until March 24, 2006. Nominations should be made in writing and should be sponsored by not less than three members, who have confirmed a candidate's willingness to serve if elected. Send nominations to wcg@washingtonconservationguild.org or mail to:

Nominating Committee
Washington Conservation Guild
PO Box 23364
Washington, DC 20026

Elections will take place at the WCG business meeting at Hillwood Museum & Gardens on May 4, 2006.

New E-Mail List!

Did your source for developing treatment slides suddenly go out of business? Do you need just a few sheets of blueboard and wish you knew someone who could go in on a carton with you? Got a big contract coming up and want to find some reliable sub-contractors?

dcartconservation@yahoo.com is a new email discussion list for area conservators. The purpose is to enable us to communicate more easily and effectively with other conservators in this area on issues of interest to us or to just exchange views on local conservation news. This will be a moderated email only list.

To subscribe, send an email to girodj@gmail.com

WCG Interns at NOAA

The WCG intern group toured the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration exhibition in February. The exhibition included reproductions of spaces inside submarines, fishing boats and at survey sites. Each installation was manned by NOAA staff who provided further information. The most impressive instrument on exhibit was a man-made tidal wave predicting machine that was the size of a small room. The exhibit was well worth the trip, and the interns were happy to find a good, well-loved rotisserie chicken restaurant close by. A future tour of the Freer/Sackler galleries is in the works for March. Happy hours have also been quite a success. We hope to get more interns involved, as we finally found a good restaurant with cheap happy hour specials. So, we look forward to the next few months of activities and hope all will come.

Amber Smith, WCG Intern Coordinator

PEOPLE

Jane Norman has retired from the Smithsonian Institution as of Jan. 2006. She was the Exhibitions Conservator at the Freer and Sackler Galleries for the past 20 years and worked in the Department of Anthropology's Conservation Laboratory, National Museum of Natural History for 12 years before that. She now plans to work as a contract conservator, travel and work in her garden.

JOBS

Exhibit Conservator Position at the Freer Gallery of Art

Exhibition Conservator
Announcement Number: 06MR-6066
Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery
GS-1001-11/12; Salary: $54,272 - $84,559 per year
OPENING DATE: March 16, 2006
CLOSING DATE: April 27, 2006

DUTIES: This position is located in the Department of Conservation and Scientific Research, Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution. The Galleries are devoted to the research, acquisition, exhibition, care, and management of the collections of Asian art in each museum and American art in the Freer Gallery. The incumbent functions as the exhibitions conservator for the galleries, working with various departments on conservation matters relevant to gallery exhibitions and loaned works of art, including exhibition planning for long-term projects and the preparation of exhibition budget proposals.

You may apply using a resume, the Optional Application for Federal Employment, or any other written application form you choose, including an SF-171, Application for Federal Employment. Current Federal employees should submit a copy of their most recent annual performance appraisal and a copy of most recent complete SF-50.

For more information, to request vacancy announcements, an Optional Application for Federal Employment (OF-612), or an SF-171, go on-line at www.si.edu/ohr or www.usajobs.opm.gov, or call our automated Jobline on (202) 287-3102 (accessible 24 hours, 7 days a week), (202) 275-1102 (voice), or (202) 275-1110 (TTY).

Applications must be received by the closing date and may be submitted in the following ways:

Mail: Smithsonian Institution, Office of Human Resources, P. O. Box 50638, Washington, DC 20091.
Fax: 202-275-1114
Hand Deliver or FEDEX: 750 Ninth Street, N.W. Suite 6100, Washington, DC 20560.

MEMBERSHIP

WCG dues are $30 per year, $15 for students and interns, payable to the Washington Conservation Guild or WCG.

The membership year runs from May 1st through April 30th. Membership forms can be requested by mail from the Membership Secretary at P.O. Box 23364, Washington D.C. 20026 or can be downloaded from our web site. Changes of address or telephone numbers, corrections to the directory, and dues payments should be sent to the Membership Secretary at the address listed above or to wcg@washingtonconservationguild.org

The membership schedule is as follows:
- Early March: membership renewal notice mailed
- Mid-April: 2nd and last renewal notice mailed
- May 1st: New membership year begins (verify your status)
- July 1st: Deadline for membership renewals**
- Aug/Sept: Publication of membership directory

*Members who join after July 1st will not be included in the membership directory, but in an addendum to be mailed out in December.

Disclaimer: The Washington Conservation Guild (WCG) does not recommend particular individuals, businesses, products, services or conservation treatments. WCG's Newsletter and Web site are simply vehicles for presenting information from various sources. The publication of such information in either medium should not be construed as an endorsement of it by WCG. All opinions expressed are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of WCG, its Board of Directors or membership.

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Attention:

To WCG members who have opted not to receive e-mail meeting announcements:

WCG occasionally sends additional e-mails about special WCG events, upcoming conferences, job openings and other conservation news of interest. If you have opted not to receive meeting announcements by e-mail, you will not receive these additional e-mails. We recommend that you to check our website (www.washingtonconservationguild.org) frequently to remain abreast of all WCG news.

If you would like to change your e-mail status please contact Membership Chair E.D. Tully Rambo at wcg@washingtonconservationguild.org.

News from the Editor

WCG Newsletter is printed quarterly (September, December, March, June). Items for inclusion in the WCG Newsletter should be directed to:

Jayne Girod Holt
21 Grant Avenue
Takoma Park, MD 20912
Tel: (301) 891-2957
E-mail: girodj@gmail.com

Email submissions are preferred. Please note that articles should be sent at least two weeks before publication. The editor reserves the right to edit copy to fit available space. Special thanks to proofreaders Brett Holt and Emily Jacobson.

Next issue: June 2006
Deadline for submissions: May 15, 2006

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