

# Celebrating 40 Years!



## WASHINGTON CONSERVATION GUILD NEWSLETTER

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### From the Desk of the President

We are well on our way into 2008, and still celebrating WCG's 40th anniversary year. The first WCG membership meeting was in November 1967 and, then as now, the WCG season ran from autumn through spring. This March newsletter is the third in our anniversary series; it focuses on the people and events in the 1987 to 1997 decade, especially the growth and regional character of WCG. We have been commemorating a decade of WCG history in each of the quarterly newsletters this year. The final newsletter in the series will cover the 1997 to 2007 decade, with a focus on WCG's outreach activities.

We had a fun 40th anniversary party at our December meeting, and our panel of founders and former officers took a look at both the past and future of WCG. It was a great reminder that WCG is all about its members – we make WCG whatever we want it to be. We are an all-volunteer professional organization, and the more fully our members are involved, the more vibrant and responsive we can be.

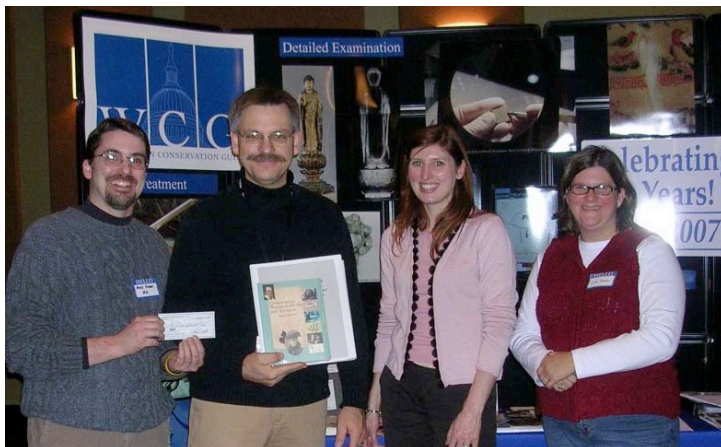
We have many opportunities for members to be active in steering WCG, as elected board members and as committee chairs and members. Right now, we are accepting nominations for three open positions on the board: two Directors and the Membership Secretary. The preliminary slate of candidates is posted in this newsletter and we will accept other nominations up to March 31. The membership will vote on the final slate at the May meeting at Hillwood Museum and Gardens. If you cannot attend the meeting, be sure to send in the absentee ballot that you will receive in the mail in mid- to late April.

But you won't want to miss the May meeting: there is a lot to look forward. Not only will we elect our new board members, but also with great fanfare we will unveil our new WCG website. Features to look forward to are a more modern and uniform look incorporating our new logo, greater visibility of our outreach activities, a photo gallery, and, perhaps most exciting, online membership renewal and payment. At the May meeting we also will announce the winner of WCG's Kendra Lovette Fund grant. We are pleased to be able to make our first award from this special memorial fund. Information on how to apply (by April 1, 2008) is in this newsletter. Also at the May meeting we will ask for your help in identifying people from some of the WCG Archives photos. Please mark your calendar for the May 1 meeting—We need you there!

I am pleased to report that WCG received a lovely letter from the executive director of the District of Columbia Public Library (DCPL) Foundation to thank us for the \$1900 donation we presented to the library at the January meeting. The donation will be used exclusively for conservation and restoration efforts related to the Georgetown branch's Peabody Collection. Congratulations on being such a generous crowd!

### Inside This Issue

- 1 From the Desk of the President
- 2 December Meeting
- 3 January Meeting: 3-Ring Circus
- 8 February Meeting
- 9 Grant Announcement
- 10 WCG 1987-1997
- 11 Ann Boulton
- 12 Scott Odell
- 14 Stanley Robertson
- 15 Shelley Sturman
- 16 WCG's Membership
- 17 Upcoming Deadlines
- 18 Slate of Candidates
- 19 People
- 19 Jobs
- 19 Conference



Mark Greek and Jerry McCoy of the DC Public Library, WCG Angels Coordinator Joanna Dunn, and WCG Past President Lisa Young.

See you at the meetings,

Claire Peachey  
President

# Upcoming WCG Meetings 2007/2008

Monthly meetings for the 2007/2008 season began in October 2007 and run through May 2008. 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 3**  
Lilli Steele of The Phillips Collection will speak on her treatment of a Degas painting. Held at the Phillips Collection, 1699 21st Street, NW, Washington, DC (Metro stop: Dupont Circle, Red line).

**May 1**  
Business Meeting, Elections and Raffle. Held at the Hillwood Museum and Gardens, 4155 Linnean Avenue, NW, Washington, DC (Metro stop: Red line, Van Ness/UDC).

## December Meeting

### The WCG's 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Holiday Party and Panel Discussion Celebrates More Than a Birthday

The December 2007 meeting, held at the National Trust for Historical Preservation, was a celebration of 40 years that the Washington Conservation Guild has been a professional, social, and charitable resource for our area. With delicious food and drinks overflowing the tables, it was definitely a celebration, but more importantly a chance to recognize the people responsible for making the WCG such a central and long-standing institution.

The main event was a panel discussion with past presidents and officers that included Nikki Goodman (who began her career as a conservator at the Smithsonian Conservation Analytical Laboratory, now Smithsonian Museum Conservation Institute), Ed McManus (former Head of Conservation at Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum), Eleanor McMillan (former manager in the Conservation Analytical Laboratory), Arthur Page (president of Page Conservation, Inc.), and the host of the panel, Tom Chase (president of Chase Art Conservation). The panel exchanged anecdotes and recalled some of the landmarks in WCG history.

The panel started the evening by recounting the beginnings of the WCG when support from the Smithsonian and other institutions played a crucial role in its development. Tom Chase recalled how Robert Feller, who was his boss in the conservation lab at the Smithsonian Freer Gallery at the time, suggested that he start an 'informal discussion group' with some of his other colleagues. The first official meeting in November 1967 featured Rutherford Gettens, Robert Organ, Elizabeth Packard, and Robert Feller presenting a summary of the London Conference on Museum Climatology, from which they had recently returned. Before long the meetings were declared "official museum business" and museum facilities, such as meeting rooms and the vital 'addressograph' machine, became more accessible to the organization. With help from Dillon Ripley, then Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution, bylaws were written and the 'informal discussion group' soon grew into the WCG.



Members of the Guild pose for a group photo at the December meeting held at the National Trust for Historic Preservation

As the WCG matured, its role in the Washington conservation community solidified and the panel discussed some of the WCG landmarks. The newsletter was started by Nikki Goodman in 1976, “with prompting by Martha Goodway” as she recalled. In 1982, the decision to closely assist in organizing of the IIC Washington Congress resulted in an unexpected financial influx for the WCG. These funds allowed the WCG to start new programs in the years following. The display booth was created in 1992 to promote public awareness of the conservation field and the WCG. It continues to serve the WCG and the community, most recently at NOAA’s *Shipwrecks* exhibition. In 1999, *Conservation Resources for Art and Antiques* was published and the WCG archives were established. The WCG archives are currently being kept by Sarah Stauderman, in the Smithsonian Institution Archives, and she is actively seeking donations from members that have pictures or documents to submit.

The evening, which may have focused on the past, was certainly an affirmation of the present role the WCG fills both as a social and a professional network. As the night came to a close and the cookie trays emptied, everyone crowded together for a group picture. That photograph will surely make its way into the archives and will remind us of the people who make the WCG possible today, just as the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Party was a night to be reminded of the people who got us here. Perhaps it was the Christmas spirit, the colorful array of holiday treats, or Eleanor’s ice cream punch (a perennial favorite), but at forty years old the WCG has never looked better.

Chris Watters  
Objects Conservation intern, National Gallery of Art

## January 3-Ring Circus

*WCG’s 3-Ring Circus meeting was held at the Smithsonian S. Dillon Ripley Center, hosted by the Freer Gallery of Art. The three sessions this year were Objects, Paintings and Paper & Textiles*

### OBJECTS

**“Skin-Covered Masks from the Cross River Region of Nigeria and Cameroon” by Nina Owczarek, National Museum of African Art.**

Nina Owczarek, a Smithsonian Postgraduate Fellow in Conservation, presented the results of her technical study of 19 skin-covered masks in the collection of the National Museum of African Art. The masks, from the Cross River region of West Africa, are produced by several inter-related cultural groups and are used for the purposes of warfare, funerary occasions, and initiation. Anthropological research has been conducted on this mask type, but has fallen short of specifically identifying the materials used in construction. Nina intended to identify the construction materials and describe the manufacturing techniques used to produce them, adding to the limited corpus of available data on these masks.

Cross River region masks consist of a wooden form covered with animal skin and are typically carved from wood into human-head or animal-head shapes that are then painted and otherwise decorated. There are two major categories of mask – cap masks and helmet masks – and both are usually carved from a single piece of wood. In addition, arms, legs, horns, and coiffures are sometimes carved separately and attached with dowels, nails and mortise and tenon joints.

The identification of the wood in the masks in the study began with information from a previous study from the Horniman Museum in London that identified *Ricinodendron heudelotii* as the wood typically used for this type of mask. Four of six samples in the study showed similar anatomical features and organization as *R. heudelotii*, supporting previous findings. However, the divergent samples indicated that this was not the only type of wood used.

Having analyzed the wood, Nina moved on to the decorations. The wooden form of Cross River masks is covered with de-fleshed and de-haired skin applied wet to the wood without tanning. The skin is secured to the wood during the drying process with the application of pegs or nails or by the wrapping of cordage. Once dry, the surface is decorated with dye and paint. According to the anthropological literature, these colorants are of plant origin; however, no scientific identifications have been made and further botanical information is necessary for positive identifications. FTIR was used in an attempt to characterize some of the surface applications, but results did not provide sufficient



information to characterize them beyond the identification of general organic matter and protein. DNA analysis was used to identify the skin, with three conclusive results. One sample was 88-89% similar to duiker, a type of antelope. The second sample from the same mask was identified as a sheep and the third sample as a bovid.

Basketry is commonly attached to the bottom of a cap mask to aid in holding the mask in place on the wearer's head. The construction of the basketry, present in 10 of the cap masks studied, fell into the sub-class of coiled basketry and utilized close coiling. Mask eyes are often covered with metal sheet. Of the masks in the study with covered eyes, eight were covered with lead sheet and three with iron sheet. An open mouth with teeth is a characteristic of skin-covered mask. For most of the masks in the study group, the teeth were made of small pieces of wood. However, three were found to use bone or actual teeth.

The present findings begin to describe the materials and construction of skin-covered masks from the Cross River region. Further anthropological and analytical research, however, is needed to fully understand the construction of the masks and the materials from which they are created.

#### **“Lichen or Not: Conservation of a Privately Owned Sarcophagus Destined for Outdoor Display” by Diane Fullick, Fullick Conservation, LLC and Connie Stromberg, Stromberg Conservation LLC**

The sarcophagus, made of Proconnesian marble in a strigillated style, is nine feet long and three feet wide with four-inch-thick walls. The piece displays lions on both ends with heads that were attached separately and a panel in the center with a low relief carving. The lid is missing, but lead anchors and iron hinges are still present on the back edge of the object at the top.

Dating back to the third century A.D., the sarcophagus had been displayed outdoors at a private residence in France for many years. In addition to moss growth on the interior, the exterior showed a wide variety of lichen growth – orange-yellow patches, thick black spots, hard white spots, and a thin light grey coating over much of the affected area. Lichen damages stone by penetrating pores and expanding as it grows, expanding and contracting during wet/dry cycles, excreting organic acids (some of which can act as chelating agents), and absorbing calcium as a food source. The sarcophagus initially seemed to be acid-cleaned or over-cleaned; however, Diane and Connie believed that deterioration of the surface was actually caused by the lichen growth.

The treatment primarily focused on decorated areas of the sarcophagus. Treatment began with vacuuming and brushing and removal of gross lichen and progressed to cleaning of undecorated areas, further removal/reduction of lichen on decorated areas, and structural repairs. There are many methods for removing lichen growth, including biocides, ammonia hydroxide, Mora gel/AB-57, steam, bleach, and enzymes. Often, these methods are used in combination, as was the case with this sarcophagus treatment. Initial tests were done using cotton poultices in distilled water buffered with calcium carbonate, 3% ammonia in distilled water poultices, steam cleaning, and D/2 biocide. Gross lichen was softened with 3% ammonia in distilled water and most gross lichen was removed in the front.

Twenty-three different gel recipes were tested, with some being rejected due to issues such as lumps or inadequate gel formation, orange staining, and limited effectiveness. To eliminate the lumps, hydroxyethyl-cellulose (Cellosize) was substituted for methyl-cellulose (Methocel). To stop the orange staining, the biocide was removed from the gel mixture used on the decorated areas and Triton was added as a substitute surfactant. The application of the modified AB-57 gel was followed by steaming and rinsing. To reduce black spots, enzymes and ammonia poultices were tested, but failed to show significantly different results from those of the other treatments, and the enzymes, which were relatively expensive, were excluded from the treatment process.

Toilet paper poultices with buffered distilled water were then applied, left until almost dry and then removed, followed by the steaming of the sarcophagus. Though some lichen remained, treatment was stopped to minimize damage to the object. A pigmented lime mortar was used to secure the lion head and repair cracks. The sarcophagus was moved to the installation site in an open crate, lifted with a crane, and set in place in the garden. A shelter has been designed and will be built. Currently, the sarcophagus is protected by plastic sheeting and shows no sign of further biological growth after six months.

#### **“Early Detection of Cellulose Acetate Objects Degradation” by Jia-sun Tsang, Museum Conservation Institute**

The field of plastic conservation needs guidelines for humidity and temperature control. The goal of this project, conducted from June to August 2007 using a variety of analytical tests, was to understand the degradation process as part of the gradual formulation of such guidelines. Over time cellulose acetate, which is used in many plastic products,

becomes brittle, cracks, delaminates and discolors, leaching plasticizer that is observable as white bloom on the surface. Those working with plastic objects are advised to handle the objects with care, wear gloves, and wash hands often so as to avoid coming into contact with plasticizer that is leaching to the surface.

A salesman's Lumarith sample of 49 color coupons was used to research the causes of cellulose acetate degradation which had released acid that was corroding the metal chain holding the coupons together. FT-Raman spectroscopy was used to show the presence of tri-phenyl-phosphate, which indicates the deterioration of cellulose acetate. XRD confirmed the presence of triphenyl phosphate and its role in the corrosion of the metal chain. Tri-phenyl phosphates were found to be present in 14 of the coupons.

Rose Daly  
Smithsonian Pre-Program Intern, National Museum of the American Indian

## PAINTINGS

### **"Saving Face: Ravishankar Raval and the Conservation of the Portrait of Ramdas Mehta" by Katherine Moog, Associate Conservator, Page Conservation, Inc**

Katherine Moog, from Page Conservation, Inc. was the first speaker of the evening. Her presentation was on the conservation treatment of *Portrait of Ramdas Mehta*, by an accomplished artist from India named Ravishankar Raval. Raval was a highly prominent artist, teacher, and journalist who founded the Chitra Kala Sangh art school in 1935 and was a dedicated follower of Mahatma Gandhi. Though Raval was trained in the Western style, he modeled his school after an ashram, a spiritual or instructional community, in which art students were encouraged to develop a nationalist expression through their art. In the late 1930's, Raval was commissioned to paint the portrait of Ramdas Mehta, a local Gujarati businessman and prominent steel magnate.

The portrait was brought to Page Conservation by the great-grandson of Mehta who had acquired it from his relatives in India, where it had been stored on a terrace exposed to the elements. The painting had large tears and losses, a heavy grime layer, extensive flaking and overall planar distortions. Katherine reviewed the conservation treatment which included consolidation of the flaking paint, mending of tears, and the removal of the heavy grime layer with tri-ammonium citrate and a dilute 4% ammonia solution. Linen inserts were adhered in areas of canvas loss using a polyamide textile mending powder. The painting was adhered to a G-10 interleaf, and then lined to an auxiliary support fabric and attached to an expansion-bolt stretcher. Old photographs of the portrait were used to aid in the reconstruction of the facial features, which had suffered tremendous losses due to the poor storage conditions. The final conservation of this portrait resurrected the painting from obscurity and reestablished it as a treasured heirloom for Ramdas Mehta's descendants.

### **"Public Murals: Materials, Advocacy and Conservation" by Amber Kerr-Allison, Paintings Conservation Fellow, Winterthur/University of Delaware Program in Art Conservation.**

The second speaker of the evening was Amber Kerr-Allison, a third-year paintings conservation fellow from the Winterthur/University of Delaware Program in Art Conservation and current intern at the Smithsonian American Art Museum's Lunder Conservation Center. This presentation focused on outdoor public murals, materials used in their construction, conservation challenges associated with their care, and advocacy for their preservation. Her presentation outlined the collaborative work to date among artists, students, and conservators in the Delaware Valley and explored the greater scope of challenges with outdoor public murals, their significance, and their future documentation, preservation, and conservation through organizations such as the new Rescue Public Murals program of Heritage Preservation. She discussed how public murals are subject to deterioration by sunlight, climate change, pollution, mechanical damage or disfigurement, and problems with the materials and methods used by the artists or recommended by arts administrators. Students and faculty of the Winterthur/University of Delaware Program in Art Conservation are collaborating with mural artists in the Philadelphia Mural Art Program to identify the stability of available paints and to explore the use of protective surface coatings for outdoor use.

During her presentation, Amber reviewed a research project she participated in with Richard Wolbers for developing an aqueous based ultraviolet protective coating for use on outdoor murals. One of the significant attributes of the coating is that it is reversible with a slightly alkaline, aqueous, chelating solution rather than organic solvents. Though the effectiveness of the coating in protecting against fading was inconclusive, its potential as a protective coating is still being explored. She emphasized that identifying methods for preserving and protecting outdoor murals is a challenge due not only to the physical size of the artworks, but also to the political, social, and aesthetic challenges that are

## **PAPER/TEXTILES**

### **“7000 Uniforms, \$600,000, 5 Contractors, 4 Years, 3 Grants, 2 Divisions, and a large Military Uniform Rehousing Project” by Richard Barden, Preservation Services, National Museum of American History, Smithsonian**

Richard Barden summarized the progress of a four year inventory control and collection maintenance project to rehouse the museum's Armed Forces History (AFH) military uniform collection. His talk focused on the rehousing effort.

The AFH uniform collection is one of the world's premier military uniform collections, and contains uniforms dating from the French and Indian war through the current war in Iraq, uniforms that belonged to the average soldier and those belonging to important American historical figures such as George Washington. These uniforms were collected from all over the United States and from foreign armies. The collection was thought at the time to number between 9000 and 12,000 uniforms. The project was piloted in 2005. The project goal for 2006 was to rehouse 3000 uniforms with the objective of rehousing the entire collection in about three years. The goal was nearly reached when 2,760 uniforms were actually rehoused by the end of that year.

The uniform inventory and rehousing project has been one of NMAH's top preservation priorities. Funding for this project comes from the NMAH and the SI's Collections Care and Preservation Fund. The Collections Care and Preservation Fund began in 2005 and is distributed according to a competitive process among 22 collecting units within the Smithsonian. The military uniform inventory and rehousing project was the only project to receive full funding in 2006 and 2007. Funding from NMAH is made up of staff time and supplies. The total cost of the inventory and rehousing project to date is upwards of \$700,000. Preservation costs alone are estimated to be \$460,000. It is estimated that by the project's end the entire uniform collection, now estimated at 6,370 uniforms, will have been inventoried and rehoused.

Richard went on to explain how the Collections Care and Preservation Fund made it impossible to hire staff, but necessary to hire contractors for this rehousing project. He acknowledged some of the challenges that are often associated with hiring independent contractors for this kind of project, which requires a cohesive team effort, but he also heralded the professionalism of the individuals associated with the uniform rehousing initiative.

The rest of Richard's talk was devoted to the logistics of, and the choice of materials used in, the project. A Filemaker Pro database actively being used by Preservation Services was modified for the written documentation of the project. Digital images of the front and back of each uniform are taken for identification but not as a record of condition, and linked to each database record. Each uniform is then surface cleaned using a Nilfisk vacuum with a rheostat for adjustable suction control. A paper pattern is cut to match the interior shape and size of each uniform. The paper pattern is then used as a template to make a muslin insert filled with polyester batting. The inserts are machine sewn, while twill tape labels with accession and catalog numbers are hand sewn to each uniform. Richard emphasized the unique challenges posed by each uniform and the need to address them individually. His slides included images of men and women's uniforms, uniforms from all time periods and some with unique problems, and uniforms in their previous storage units and after rehousing. The discussion of the choice of materials included the reasoning behind using a bleached, de-sized, cotton print cloth and Musetex polyester batting.

### **“Which cracked first: the Inkin' or the Egg? Analysis and Treatment of Ink Deterioration in the William Bache Silhouette Album” by Rosemary Fallon, Paper Conservator, Smithsonian National Portrait Gallery, Lunder Conservation Center and Nora Lockshin, Paper Conservator Smithsonian Center for Archives Conservation, Smithsonian Institution Archives**

Rosemary Fallon and Nora Lockshin summarized the analysis and treatment of ink deterioration in a William Bache silhouette album acquired by the NPG in 2002. This project, a collaboration among curators, conservators, and scientists at The National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Archives and the Museum Conservation Institute, will be presented in the Poster Session at the Denver AIC meeting in April.

William Bache (1771-1845) arrived in Philadelphia from England in 1793 with no apparent training as a silhouettist. By 1803, however, Bache was working as a silhouette artist in Baltimore. In that year, he and two other artists were granted a patent for a device for tracing a profile and reducing it by means of a pantograph. Their machine, known as a physiognotrache, was touted for being able to trace the sitter's profile in such a way so as not to touch the nose and lips of the sitter therefore being less likely to spread disease and thus superior to the machine that the Peale family used for making silhouettes. Mr. Bache traveled to Virginia and also spent time in New Orleans making silhouettes of the diverse community from prominent families to freed slaves.

Mr. Bache's album of silhouettes was acquired by the National Portrait Gallery in 2002. The album contains nearly 2,000 silhouettes cut from prepared paper, coated shiny black on one side and mounted onto album leaves. Last year the

Bache album was selected for an exhibition at the Portrait Gallery, entitled "Legacy: Spain and the United States in the Age of Independence 1763-1848". It was co-curated by NPG Assistant Director Carolyn Carr and opened this past September. The book is on view until February 10<sup>th</sup>, 2008. The relevance of the album to the exhibition are Bache's silhouette portraits of prominent citizens in New Orleans made soon after the Louisiana Purchase in 1803.

Ms. Fallon suggested to the NPG curators to have Nora Lockshin of SIA repair the broken binding for the exhibition. Due to the need for a quick treatment turnaround, the decision was made just to stabilize the binding but then the focus shifted to the leaves to be shown in the exhibition. The black silhouettes were quite glossy in some areas but showed a spotty, uneven, brown, rusty appearance throughout most of the volume. Past analysis of silhouette materials led to initial speculation that this condition could be due to possible iron gall deterioration or a Prussian blue reaction. Ms. Lockshin suggested that possibly the Smithsonian's MCI could conduct some analysis on Mr. Bache's materials.

It was noted during the visual examination that the brown rusty spots were invariably encountered in the highest topographical areas of the silhouettes. Observation under ultraviolet light did not signal iron gall fluorescence (usually yellow or green). The silhouettes did reflect very weakly in the dark blue-violet range, which, Ms. Lockshin noted, forced these paper conservators to step "outside the watercolorist's box" in consideration of Bache's choice of materials. Under ultraviolet light, there appeared to be a coating more typical of materials used as furniture coatings. Ms. Lockshin also noted that Bache's partner was known to have been gilding frames for Bache's silhouettes, indicating such materials would have been at hand for him.

Ms. Lockshin went on to discuss instrumental analysis—using XRF, FTIR, pyro-GCMS, and SEM-EDS—which revealed that the ink used to produce the silhouettes that now appear glossy with brown rusty spots is carbon-based and coated with a substance containing sulfur. Instrumental analysis confirmed that the high points of the silhouettes were worn down due to abrasion of facing pages over time, and the brown powder is a by-product of this abrasion. More specifically, it is now clear that abrasion has worn away the sulfur component of the coating, which is otherwise evenly distributed. Iron gall tests came back negative for several samples. An elemental map showed iron present in amounts lower than calcium and silicon. Importantly, a late reinterpretation of XRF data indicates that there may be arsenic on the silhouettes. The book is being requested for post-exhibition analysis with a warning to the handlers. Possible sources could be anti-putrefaction agents in a tanning process or a subsequent household treatment.

The treatment executed on the pages to be put on display was also summarized. Removal of the brown deterioration product was tested by gently rolling a water dampened, blotter-drained swab over the deteriorated area and the whole silhouette, which was then allowed to air-dry. The gloss remained unaffected, except for perhaps being slightly brighter in areas which had had fine powder and dust over the smooth surface. Each silhouette on the exhibition leaves was cleaned with a new swab and air dried. The amount of water present in the swab allowed for quick surface evaporation and blotter/weights were not applied. The album pages were interleaved with sheets of silicon release paper.

**"The Uses of Surgical Fabrics in Textile Conservation" by Catalina Hernandez, Graduate Dissertation Research Project, Textile Conservation Centre/University of Southampton, 2007**

Catalina Hernandez, currently at the Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian, summarized her research into the use of surgical fabrics by textile conservators. Catalina became interested in surgical fabrics in the context of a low budget conservation project in Bogota, Colombia, where it was necessary to find a cost effective fabric that could replace higher priced barrier materials such as Tyvek® and acid free tissue (which have to be imported and are thus prohibitively expensive).

Surgical fabrics themselves are produced by various methods of manufacture, and with a variety of fibers and finishes, for different uses within the field of medicine (e.g. surgical gowns, or drapes or pillow cases). To help set the parameters of her research, Catalina identified surgical fabrics broadly as belonging to a range of nonwoven products know as "*...sheets, webs or batts of directionally or randomly orientated fibres, bonded by friction, and/or cohesion and/or adhesion, excluding paper...*" Most are made of polypropylene or polyethylene fibers, also known as poly-olefin fibers, as is Tyvek®, the only distinction being the intended use of these materials. Catalina pointed out that the fabrics that were the focus of her research are also available in the European market.

For this investigation a total of 14 samples of surgical fabrics from different manufacturers such as DuPont de Nemours and Kimberly-Clark Europe Ltd., were obtained, along with samples of Tyvek® and acid free tissue to be tested along side the surgical fabrics for comparison. Analysis included tests for: pH; water repellency; physical integrity; breathability; ease of handling; and limitations for use as a barrier material; as well as fiber identification and Oddy testing. Other tests that could not be carried out because of the limited time and resources available for this research project included those pertaining to: thermal properties; chemical resistance; opacity; electrical conductivity properties; biological resistance; soiling, staining and soil/stain removal properties; and linting. Because they are used primarily for medical purposes, however, Catalina noted



that all surgical fabrics are designed to be free of microbial and particulate matter and resistant to microbial penetration and have low linting qualities, resistance to liquid penetration and puncture, good tensile strength, and safe burning behavior. Such are characteristics demanded by European legislation for the standardization of essential requirements for medical fabrics.

One of the fabrics was selected as having the best properties for use in textile conservation: **Sample #1**. Don & Low™ DALTEX® Medical CN4. This material is a 100% pH neutral polyethylene. Among its most desirable qualities, CN4 does not pill, lint, or snag. It has low static build-up and good abrasion resistance. CN4 is non-nutritious and unattractive to the gamut of micro-organisms, insects, and rodents. It is a smooth breathable film that does not allow liquid absorption unless pressure is applied for long periods of time, and is a suitable barrier to 92.5% of all particles larger than 0.19 microns. Some other characteristics to keep in mind include the fact that CN4 is opaque but not a barrier to light. Polyethylene is very chemically resistant, except to chlorinated hydrocarbons and UV radiation. Also, it is difficult to ignite, burns slowly and will not sustain a flame for long. However, it may melt and adhere to other objects.

In conclusion, Catalina emphasized that in some countries, access to these fabrics may be difficult and the minimum price per purchase may seem great. However, in countries where it can be bought off-the-rack in stores, they are an inexpensive alternative to more conventional materials. She urged the need for further research, to carry out tests beyond those performed according to industry standards and to create a list of surgical fabric manufacturers catering to the American market

Elizabeth C. Shuster, University of Delaware/Winterthur Program in Art Conservation

## February Meeting

### **“Protecting National Heritage Properties from Fire” by Jack Mawhinney, Senior Engineer, Hughes Associates, Inc., Fire Science and Engineering**

Bringing over 40 years of experience with regard to fire protection, Jack presented an overview of the concerns and considerations that heritage institutions, whether they are galleries, museums, archives, art storage facilities or heritage structures, face with providing adequate and effective fire protection to their collections. These properties should not be treated as commercial holdings. They require additional thought and care in their assessment and protection. Three points were emphasized in the presentation: 1) active fire protection is essential for heritage properties; 2) a comprehensive design approach is necessary; and 3) the concerns of conservators regarding these systems can be addressed.

Often the nature of fires and the extent of collateral damage from active fire protection systems are misunderstood. While water or chemical by-products from gaseous agents damage collections following a fire, this must be weighed against the potential loss of an entire building and its contents. As such, previously-held assumptions regarding the nature of fires and a response system's ability to deal with fires must be first addressed. Where fire protection relies only on smoke detection, it must be understood that the approach assumes that any fire that occurs will develop slowly, and that there will be trained personnel available at all times to respond effectively. As such, the system will act only as an early warning of a fire but will have no effect on preventing a total loss to fire if any of the assumptions are proven wrong. Also, the severity of any fire depends on the material present. The increasing use of plastics, whether in the collections or in building construction, considerably increases fire loads. Additionally, identification of arson as the most frequent cause of fires at heritage sites means that the resulting fast-flaming and uncontrollable fire can quickly overwhelm built-in response measures. Even where automatic sprinkler systems are present, tests at the National Archives (Canada) showed that an adverse shelving arrangement or storage practice can further impair the effectiveness of the sprinklers. Jack stressed the importance of integrating the design of the suppression system with other best practices.

Concerns by conservators regarding active systems were seen to be influenced by budget limitations, multiple demands of compliances between building codes, collection needs and loans conditions, the effect of an active system's agent on the collections, and where applicable, the influence of piping on the historic fabric of the structure. The perceived issue of leaks was addressed succinctly by the statement that “while the probability of a water leak was greater than the



probability of a fire, the consequence of a leak was much lower than the consequence of a fire.” By preparing carefully considered construction specifications to eliminate some of the risk factors in a design, and ensuring proper supervision during installation, much of the concern about leaks or fitting failures could be dealt with. Jack additionally spoke about water mist systems, demonstrating their benefits compared with water sprinklers -- reduced water volume discharge, greater effectiveness with controlling fires, and less intrusiveness with piping and sprinkler heads. Nonetheless, this was balanced with higher costs in labor and maintenance to ensure reliability, both concerns that could influence installation choices. Jack also addressed the exaggerated claim of the ability of water mist to provide smoke scrubbing benefits to reduce risks. Although water mist does remove some soot and certain soluble gases, it does not remove enough of those to eliminate damage to sensitive electronics or collections. Water mist discharged from nozzles at ceiling level will not provide effective scrubbing of smoke in a room. Having said that, water mist systems were identified as having limited scrubbing benefits if the smoke could first be drawn into a confined spray chamber or pipe, where better mixing can be achieved. In conclusion, Jack stressed that many of the concerns of conservators could be addressed by having integrated active and passive strategies for fire protection, making proper choices of fire protection systems based on the scale of damage that can be tolerated, and adopting “best engineering practices” to minimize deleterious effects.

Steven Pickman  
Conservation Intern, U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum

## WCG GRANT ANNOUNCEMENT

WCG Accepting Applications for the Kendra Lovette Fund Award; Due April 1, 2008

WCG will award up to \$350 from its Kendra Lovette Fund this year. Applications are due April 1, 2008; the winner will be announced at the annual business meeting on May 1, 2008. The winning project may take place any time from May 2008 through May 2009.

The Kendra Lovette Fund was established with WCG in 2003 to honor the memory of Washington-area conservator Kendra Deerenee Lovette. The fund is to be used to sponsor continuing education activities for mid-career conservation professionals in all specialties in the Washington, DC, area. The activity should benefit a wide audience of conservators.

Examples of appropriate projects include, but are not limited to, hosting a workshop, panel discussion, or lecture meeting open to DC-area conservators. The award cannot be used to support an individual to attend a conference or event; the activity should benefit a group of people rather than an individual. The funds may be used to pay partial or matching costs of an activity that has funding from other sources.

### How to Apply

Send a letter describing the project for which the funds will be used. Include the full contact information for the principal organizer of the project, the name and qualifications (short bio or resume) of any speaker(s) or instructor(s) as appropriate, a budget indicating how the funds will be spent, the location of the activity, the intended audience of the activity, and the proposed date for the activity.

Applicants must be WCG members. Applications must reach WCG by April 1, 2008.

Submit all materials in one package by email to [wcg@washingtonconservationguild.org](mailto:wcg@washingtonconservationguild.org) or by postal mail to

WCG – Kendra Lovette Fund  
P.O. Box 23364  
Washington, DC 20026

Kendra Deerenee Lovette was a long-time Washington area conservator. In 1977, she began working at the Library of Congress where she was the conservator in charge of treatment for the architectural drawings for the U.S. Capitol. Four years later she accepted the position of paper conservator at the Baltimore Museum of Art where she worked for five years. After that, Kendra was in private practice until the mid-1990s when ill health forced her into early retirement. Kendra died March 6, 2003, after a prolonged struggle with multiple sclerosis. The Kendra Lovette Fund was set up in her honor by friends and colleagues.

# WCG: 1987-1997

*As part of the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of WCG, we will commemorate one decade of WCG's history in each of the four newsletters over the 2007-2008 season. This September newsletter focuses on the founding of WCG. We have included interviews with and tributes to a few WCG officers from this period, items from the WCG Archives and other contributions from WCG members. Continue to check the WCG website for additional photos and information relating to this special event.*

The WCG Archives finding aid is online at:  
<http://siarchives.si.edu/findingaids/FARU7477.htm>

## The Third Decade: Reasserting the role of the Guild as regional support for area conservators

*This article was researched using the archives of the WCG, located in the Smithsonian Institution Archives, Record Unit 7477 Washington Conservation Guild Records, c. 1968-2006.*

A severe winter storm did not deter stalwart Guild members from celebrating WCG's 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary at the Folger Shakespeare Library in January 1997. Founders and members gathered to toast achievements that showed the Guild had matured into an organization that supported professionalism, education, and commerce for regional conservators. It also showed that one of the fundamental components of WCG meetings was always fun; in the third decade the WCG established the ever-popular holiday party and wine tasting.

In 1988 WCG completed its incorporation as a tax-exempt corporation. The board continued to seek ways to enlighten members with interesting talks and new venues throughout the decade. Martin Burke, membership secretary in 1988-89, received historic records of the Guild and established archives at the Smithsonian Institution Archives. Prior to this time many of the records of the Guild had been stored by former officers and directors. An important part of establishing the legacy of the work of the Guild came through the adoption of job descriptions for the officers and directors, initiated by President Carolyn Rose in 1987.

The American Institute for Conservation invited WCG to consider participating in "conservation information/education booths at trade shows in the area." (WCG Board Minutes, 9/7/89) The concept was immediately appealing to the Guild, but there were reservations about the cost, staffing, logistics, and a concern about the appearance of un-ethical behavior in advertising services. A taskforce composed of Connie McCabe, Ann Boulton, and Greg Byrne developed a position paper which was delivered to AIC; this was the beginning of the WCG booth, which finally debuted in February 1993 at the Hunt Valley Antique Show. During this same time period, the board decided to place an asterisk by members' names in the membership directory "to denote when an individual is available for private work." In 1993 also the WCG board established a "speaker's bureau" to try to align the interests of public groups wishing for conservation lectures and advice with WCG members. By 1996 WCG was beginning to develop a website, again for outreach and educational purposes. WCG was responding to the interest and needs of its constituents for an avenue to demonstrate the work of conservators and generate business for those who were in private practice.

Concurrent with these regional emphases, the WCG Newsletter of January 1992 announced a shift away from national and international sources of conservation news to regional and local events and activities. Newsletter editors Cheryl Randall and Suzanne Thomassen-Krauss described a need to revitalize topics of interest for local conservators, and to refocus on the professional needs of the membership. WCG membership spiked to 346 members in 1994-95, but averaged about 290 members on a yearly basis from 1987-1997.

Several courses were sponsored by WCG in the third decade that benefited WCG members. In Spring 1992 there was "X-Radiography for Objects Conservators" organized by Donna Strahan, and having speakers Dan Kushel, Paul Jett, Tom Chase, Rolent Hiscock, and Wilfred Bookman. In August 1993 the WCG sponsored a pre-ICOM-conference workshop entitled "Preventive Conservation in Latin America." A "Microscopy for Art Conservators" via the McCrone Research Institute was offered in 1994. In 1996 WCG sponsored "Museum Lighting." Related to the courses was the enormous effort put into the local-arrangements committee for the International Council of Museums (ICOM) triennial conference in 1993. WCG members Shelley Sturman, Ann Boulton, Steve Koob, Arthur Page and many others organized the effort working closely with Bert van Zelst of the Smithsonian's Conservation Analytical Laboratory (the





30th Anniversary photograph of the Washington Conservation Guild members in the reading room of the Folger Shakespeare Library, January 9, 1997. Photograph by Gayle Krughoff Photography

official institutional invitee for the conference). This conference netted income for the WCG that became the spring board for initiatives benefiting WCG in years to come.

Sarah Stauderman  
WCG Archivist

## Ann Boulton

Ann Boulton, then a private conservator in Baltimore, served as president of WCG from 1993 to 1995 after serving as vice-president between 1991 and 1993. While Ann was president many interesting seminars were held and the Public Events Participation Program (now the Public Outreach Booth) was active. The Newsletter was reformatted at the beginning of the 1994 WCG year, members were encouraged to write to their elected representatives to help save the NEA, NEH and IMLS from the imminent threat of annihilation and, in her Newsletter columns, Ann pleaded with members to participate more in WCG, including in the public outreach programs and with food for meetings.

Seminars organized by WCG during Ann's tenure included "Preventive Conservation in Latin America" in August 1993 and funded by the Getty; a Murals Conservation symposium organized jointly with the APT Washington Chapter in April 1994; two McCrone microscopy courses held at CAL/MSU in late 1994 and a seminar on Care of Collections held jointly with the Maryland National Capitol Park and Planning Commission in October 1994. The WCG Museum Exhibit Lighting seminar given by Toby Raphael in March 1996 was planned and executed by Ann during her year as President Emeritus of WCG. That seminar was later adapted and made into a pre-session for the 1997 AIC Annual meeting in San Diego.

## WCG Presidents: 3rd Decade

Scott Odell (1987-1989)  
Shelley Sturman (1989-1991)  
Arthur Page (1991-1993)  
Ann Boulton (1993-1995)  
Stanley Robertson (1995-1997)



Some of the wide ranging talks given during Ann's presidency included: Linda Merk-Gould on conservation of the Freedom statue from the U.S. Capitol; a docent guided tour of the stained glass windows at the Washington National Cathedral; Greg Landrey speaking on fluorescent microscopy in furniture conservation; Donna Strahan on a technical investigation of bronze Buddhas from Thailand; Michael Swicklick on treatment of Constable's "White Horse" painting at the National Gallery of Art; John Canning on graining and faux wood decoration; James Lerner on advances in non-destructive forensic document examination at the INS and Dr. Barbara Berries' presentation on conservation science at the National Gallery of Art.

In her final "From the Desk of the President" column in the May 1995 WCG Newsletter, Ann wrote that "As a conservator in private practice, the interaction with conservators through WCG has been especially welcome in combating the professional isolation inherent in working alone." In 2001 after 10 years in private practice, Ann became the sculpture and objects conservator at the Baltimore Museum of Art.

Connie Stromberg  
Objects Conservator, Stromberg Conservation, LLC

## Interview with Scott Odell by Beth Richwine

Beth: When and how did you first hear about the guild?

Scott: Late in 1967. I remember chatting with Tom (Chase) and Eleanor (McMillan) and (Robert) Organ and (Robert) Gettens about the nascent Guild and what it might look like on a walk back from the NMNH (National Museum of Natural History) cafeteria, and around the same time was one of those who met over lunch when Plenderleith came to visit. I recall with pleasure and with some amusement Mr. Gettens' sage advice that for a beginning we keep it simple enough for volunteers to run without too much trouble and certainly not get embroiled in producing a newsletter – that dues of \$1 and meeting announcements via postcard would be the way to go! And that's what we did at the beginning. A few years later the dues skyrocketed to \$3!

Beth: How active were you when you first joined? And when did you first get on the board?

Scott: I was always informally involved in one way or another from the beginning, at least right after the CAL and Freer folk had their first discussions at CAL (Conservation Analytical Lab) - as described by Tom in last January's meeting. As for the Board? 1971 - 72 and again 76 -77, plus I was on the nominating committee a couple of times. It was a pleasantly diverse board in those years with conservators, curators, administrators and craftsmen all welcome. Peter Michaels from Baltimore was active, Vic Covey, Beth Gibson, Martha Goodway, Peter Powers, Rodris Roth, Tom Wolf, even Carter Brown was on the Board for a while.

Beth: When were you president of the guild?

Scott: 1987-89

Beth: What was the first workshop that you remember the guild putting on?

Scott: For me the McCrone Polarized Microscopy Course in 1973 was outstanding-- inspiring teacher, well organized with much hands-on practice and it provided very useful information hard to acquire elsewhere. Not certain, but that may have been the first workshop. So popular that it was repeated in later years

Though I did not attend, Monona Rossol's course on occupational hazards a couple of years later was popular, and also one on textile dye identification by Helmut Schweppe -- or was this sponsored by CAL/SCMRE? Mary Ballard would remember. I think that WCG blazed a trail in sponsoring workshops of this sort that now have become standard fare at the AIC annual meetings and elsewhere (Getty, SCMRE, etc).

Another innovative WCG program came in the early 1980's when we got 501(c)(3) tax status to qualify us to sponsor governmental and private conservators for grant applications under the new National Museum Act. AIC/FAIC had chosen a much more limited sponsorship role, so WCG stepped forward and widened eligibility.

Beth: What were some of the most memorable meetings in the early years?

Scott: Robert Feller speaking on criteria for choosing synthetic resins safer than traditional natural resins. Some, like B-72 so familiar today but back then rather new on the scene, along with his cautions about the difficulty of achieving total reversibility. Marjorie Cohn gave a memorable lecture on Marc Rothko's paintings. So many good programs over the years that it seems unfair to start singling them out!

Beth: What were you working on at the time and were you at NMAH?

Scott: In the early years, mostly harpsichords and keyboard instruments, plus technical oversight for the entire musical instrument collection, from 1963 until 1978 when Otto Mayr asked me to start a Conservation Laboratory for NMAH (National Museum of American History). I retired in 1993. I began as a Museum Technician hired away from Boston harpsichord maker William Dowd in 1963, to start a musical instruments laboratory/workshop in the then still-under-construction National Museum of American History and Technology.

My shop for the first few months was actually on a landing of a third floor stairwell at NMNH not too many steps from Charles Olin's Conservation Research Lab, later to become CAL, then SCMRE, now MCI. Eleanor McMillan arrived a few months later and Tom Chase a short time before me. He was the first (NYU) program graduate at the SI and he, Gettens, and (Charles) Olin were always available with helpful suggestions and information. That was a good entree into the world of modern conservation. The SI (and Washington!) was a much smaller place back then and there was more and closer interchange between staff in different offices and museums than is normal today.

The academic conservation Graduate Programs were just starting up in those years, so many or most people working in conservation had come into it from some combination of personal interest and apprenticeship training and often an academic background in science or art rather than formal conservation training. I had taken a lot of chemistry in college and that helped, along with my craft work apprenticeship at Dowd's. His shop was ahead of the curve in keeping notes, taking photographs, making technical drawings and sharing the information with others when we did restoration work on early instruments. At that time most such tradition-based shops carefully guarded their "trade secrets" and kept few records and Dowd's approach was unusual.

Beth: I had heard that you implemented some financial changes that have to this day set up the guild in good financial standing. Tell me about those.

Scott: We had a lot of windfall money given to us by IIC after their meeting in Baltimore – for which WCG had done much of the organizational work. The meeting ended up very much in the black and IIC shared the profit with us. The money was first invested in bonds.

Later, when rates fell I shopped around and found a bank CD at a decent interest rate plus an unusual option to increase the rate whenever rates went up. Rates soared, and we ended up with a lot of money to spend on workshops and other projects for quite a few years.

Big change from the early years of \$1 dues and postcard newsletters!

Beth: What things are you most proud of during your tenure of guild president?

Scott: I made no big changes. I just worked to maintain the longstanding policy of welcoming all-comers interested in conservation with programs of general interest to all. I felt then and now that WCG should leave the big and sometimes divisive professional issues to AIC and provide a forum where interns and curators and traditional "restorers" and apprentice-trained and school-trained conservators meet on an equal footing. Reduced dues for interns, social hour before each lecture, name tags at meetings so newcomers can more easily find kindred souls to talk to. More recently, the Sidney Williston Memorial Fund carries on that tradition. Martin Burke and I carried on a successful but in hindsight last-gasp effort to keep Smithsonian meeting halls available to WCG at little or no expense – a policy which alas came to grief with the SI's newfound and – in my estimation, wrongheaded and shortsighted – zeal for identifying profit centers and eliminating anything that costs money or increased overhead, no matter how central to its mandate to promote "the increase and diffusion of knowledge among men."

Dillon Ripley, US National Museum Director Frank Taylor, SI Undersecretary Paul Perrot, SI General Counsel Peter Powers were all staunch advocates of conservation and supporters of WCG in its formative years. In fact, Powers was an early Board member, was our first Treasurer and drafted the By-Laws.

In the late 70's it was this background plus Paul Perrot's interest in conservation which influenced the Smithsonian Regents in making conservation one of the institution's top three priorities in their next "Five Year Plan". This surely encouraged NMAH Director Otto Mayr to establish

## Do you have photographs for the WCG archives?

The WCG archives, held in the Smithsonian Institution Archives, does not have many photographs, so we are appealing to members to provide photographs of people and events from all periods of WCG's history. The archives can accept color and black-and-white prints or digital images. Every photo must have a caption, and ideally every person in the photo will be identified. Please send an email (not the photos!) to [wcg@washingtonconservationguild.org](mailto:wcg@washingtonconservationguild.org) if you have photographs to submit.

the NMAH Conservation Department. Before the cutbacks of recent years our lab had a staff of 32 and served as host to dozens of young pre-program volunteers and third-year Graduate Program interns now working privately and in labs all around the USA and abroad.

The 70's and 80's were an exciting time to be in conservation and WCG deserves a lot of credit for providing an organized and effective and open conservation forum in Washington during those formative years.

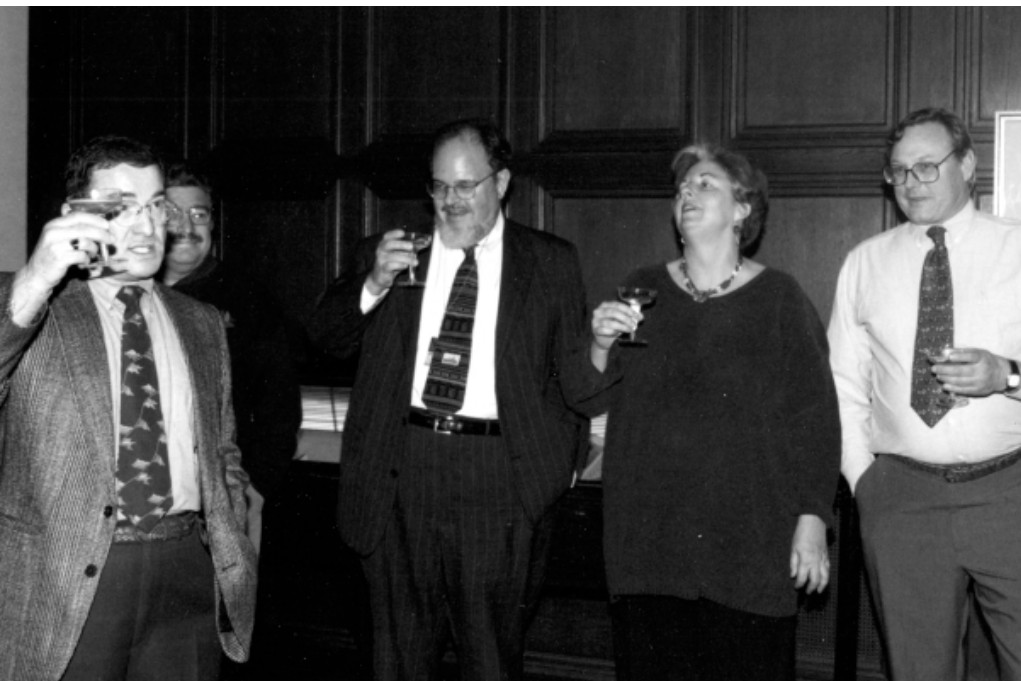
## An Appreciation: Stanley Robertson

In 1987, I was new to the DC area, young(er) and eager to find my way into the field of conservation. A friend told me about Stanley Robertson, a frame and gilded wood conservator who had recently left the National Gallery to set up shop in private practice. He was renting space in the basement of a house in Bethesda on Chelsea Lane and had named his business accordingly. My friend told me he was looking for part-time help.

Because I worked during the week, I was only able to offer my Saturdays to Stanley. I remember driving over on a beautiful Spring day and meeting with a quiet spoken, bespectacled man. His voice still held traces of a Scottish burr, and he offered tea. I ended up working for Stanley on Saturdays for the next few years. I'd drive up first thing in the morning and he would set me to tasks that included stripping bronze paint and applying gold leaf. Stanley always treated me with patience and Old World courtesy even when I proved, at times, to be a bit slow to pick up a new technique or stubborn in disagreeing with him on some point outside conservation. At the end of the afternoon, we'd put away our tools and I'd give him a lift home in my battered old Honda, down Connecticut Avenue to his home on Porter Street. We'd sometimes stop at a grocery store in Chevy Chase and often spent most of the drive south bickering over whether it was best to drive in the left lane (avoiding double parkers) or right (avoiding left turners). I favored the left and Stanley favored the right. When we weren't discussing my driving, Stanley offered advice on everything from relationships to car maintenance. Certainly opinionated, he was also a comforting presence in my life at a time when I was far from home and not terribly sure of myself, and I feel lucky to have had the privilege of being mentored by him.

Stanley had been trained the old school way under Jean Alot, in Paris and Paul Levi in London and loved telling tales about what he endured under this system—the more gruesome, the better. This was always delivered with a sort of wistfulness. He thought apprentices these days had it easy. Part of this tradition also came with a great secretiveness: a Master did not pass on secrets until the Apprentice had proved themselves. Stanley consciously and successfully made the transition from this Old World style of thinking to the more modern type of professionalism that we take for granted today.

Stanley led a colorful life. In his youth, he served a stint in the Royal Air Force, was a wrestler and played bass and flute in a professional jazz ensemble in Hong Kong and Honolulu. It was with this group, the Society of Seven, which Stanley appeared on the Ed Sullivan Show. Before apprenticing himself, Stanley studied art history and the chemistry and physics of organic solvents at Darroch College as well as taking courses at the Edinburgh College of Art. After extensive study in Europe, Stanley moved to the



States to join the National Gallery of Art in DC as their frame conservator in 1984. He left there in 1986 to pursue private practice. Stanley was recognized internationally as an expert on, and passionate advocate for, frames and gilded objects. He was deeply committed to the advancement of conservation and served as president of both the American Society of Gilders and WCG. He also was actively involved with the Campbell Center for Preservation in Chicago.

More details about his life and career can be found in the Memorial article appearing in the WCG Newsletter for June 2003, vol. 27, n. 2.

Sadly, Stanley was diagnosed with lung cancer and died in May of 2003. He was only 65. Reflecting Stanley's concern for individuals and the wider profession of conservation, his wife and friends asked that his Memorial statement included the warning to fellow conservators that the

Stanley Robertson proposing a Scottish toast, roughly translated "Here's to Us, Those like Us! They're damn few and They're all dead!" In the background, Steffano Scarffetta, Tom Chase, Eleanor McMillan, and ? Photograph by Gayle Krughoff Photography



types of solvents that he worked with for stripping bronze paint from frames may have contributed to his demise-- particularly since they were used in unventilated spaces and without the use of masks. Stanley left us too soon but not before making his mark on his profession.

Jayne Girod Holt  
Paper Conservator, Private Practice

## Recognizing Shelley Sturman

Shelley Sturman was a graduate student at Winterthur when she attended her first Washington Conservation Guild meeting and tour of the King Tut exhibition at the newly-opened National Gallery of Art (NGA) East Building. "It felt like a great organization from my first introduction to it, getting people together, exchanging information, and having good times." She remembers piling into the car to drive to monthly meetings from the Walters Art Museum where she was an intern and later a Mellon Fellow. "Many of the WCG members were conservators I admired and looked up to; they had written the papers I studied in school, and it was very reassuring to be welcomed by such talented and experienced people."

Shelley served as Director and Vice President before becoming President of WCG on May 4, 1989, three days before the birth of her daughter Sasha. Asked why she chose to become president, Shelley said, "I guess it just happened. You join, you want to give back, you start working hard, you get on the board, and next thing you can't say no. The friendliness of the members, the willingness of so many people to pitch in and volunteer, and the lack of 'tough politics' in WCG made it a pleasure to serve." At that time WCG had 270 members, making it one of the largest conservation professional organizations outside of the AIC.

The Guild's interest in expanding its involvement with projects reaching beyond the local conservation community is evident in the partnerships that developed during Shelley's tenure as president. Beginning in the fall of 1989, WCG began making arrangements to co-sponsor the International Council of Museum's (ICOM) 1993 Conservation Committee triennial meeting in Washington DC together with the Conservation Analytical Laboratory (CAL, now known as the Museum Conservation Institute/MCI). The Guild also offered complimentary memberships to thirty museum professionals in Central America "to strengthen networks of support and information sharing among North American conservators," during that time.

Shelley guided the Guild in preparing to host several specialized education courses including a three-day course in x-radiography in April of 1992 at the National Gallery of Art, and a week-long course in pigment identification. Some of the popular and more unusual meeting topics while Shelley was president included "Crime Scenes and Conservation" (Charles S. Tumosa, May 1990), "Cellulose Ethers: Chemistry Should Explain Everything" (Robert Feller, February 1991), "Technology and Conservation of Two Time Globes" (Diane van der Reyden and David Todd, April 1991) and "Fabergé: The Inside Story" (Carol Aiken, May 1991).

In 1990, the Board explored meeting beyond the academic calendar year and tried a summer meeting and at least one special meeting at Shelley's home. At the same time, it pursued ways to encourage wider involvement in the general meetings. Shelley is especially pleased to have instigated the Guild's first holiday wine tasting event at the National Museum of American History. With 110 participants, this gathering was so successful that it has become an annual treat. The following spring, WCG investigated offering structured childcare for members attending monthly meetings. Shelley is also proud of having been able to sponsor several WCG meetings at the NGA while president. Because the Gallery does not permit the serving of food from outside, it actually catered these meetings. People were so impressed that they came out in droves to attend the next Gallery meeting.

Perhaps in order to keep the membership attuned to the results of their tireless summertime work, the Guild published the newsletter bimonthly rather than quarterly during the 1990-91 season. In addition, it investigated the use of recycled paper for the newsletter and directory, and ultimately approved the change despite increased cost. The "People" column was also introduced during Shelley's tenure.

During the 1989-90 season, the board confronted the giant task of comprehensively revising the officer and board member job descriptions laid out in the WCG bylaws, adding positions for the Food Chair, Archivist, and Past President. Martin Burke was made WCG's first archivist, and made great strides in archiving complete collections of WCG records in the Smithsonian Institution Archives, CAL, and the Getty.

Having previously been involved in bestowing Honorary Member awards as an AIC Board member, Shelley thought WCG could initiate a similar honor, and recommended that Sidney S. Williston become the first recipient of a presidential citation for honorary membership in acknowledgment of his long-standing service to the Guild and to the field of conservation. In her tribute to Mr. Williston, Shelley noted his providing valuable opportunities for conservation training at his studio, Mario's Conservation Services, and his great generosity in sharing test results and information. In fact,

Shelley remembered that at one of her very first WCG meetings Sidney had been one of the speakers, sharing incredibly valuable information about adhesive tests he had made and aged for several years. She was very impressed that as a private conservator Sidney had made the time to test so many products and could make recommendations not only for longevity and aging properties, but also about compatibility and handling.

Looking back, Shelley remembers "it was a lot of work but also a ton of fun, good memories, with so many fabulous role models from former officers and regular members. It does make a difference to have a professional organization get together, sharing ideas, good food, and being available to one another on so many levels. It makes it so much easier to pick up the telephone and ask for advice from a colleague when you have these kinds of relationships that are fostered through the Guild." Shelley encourages new interns and fellows as well as staff to attend Guild meetings and continues to support new WCG initiatives.

Having worked with Shelley for two years at the National Gallery of Art, I am familiar with her dedication to bringing skilled people together to undertake projects of unusual significance, and her ability to inspire energy and drive in her colleagues. I am certain that these are the same qualities that enabled her to make these key contributions as WCG president, and am pleased to recognize her here.

Julia Sybalsky  
Objects Conservation Technician, National Gallery of Art

## A Look Back at WCG's Membership

According to a photocopied sheet of mailing labels in the WCG archives, in its first year the Guild charged \$3.00 for membership and counted 146 members, mostly from the District, Maryland, and Virginia, with a few from Pennsylvania, New York, and California. Twenty-four members were representatives from the Smithsonian Museums, including curators, librarians, technicians, and conservators. There were five members each from the National Park Service and the National Gallery of Art. Professionals from other institutions mostly local to DC or Baltimore numbered 40 and also included members of related disciplines such as curators and art historians. Seventy-two members were listed without any institutional affiliation. These members, mostly conservators, were likely in private practice or students/interns.

In that first year, the Curator of the White House, Betty C. Monkman, was a member, as well as J. Carter Brown, the Assistant Director of the National Gallery of Art, and Frank A. Taylor, the founding Director of the National Museum of History and Technology (now the National Museum of American History).

Ten years later, the membership had grown to 261 and dues had increased to \$5.00. Although AIC had formed in 1972 and a number of regional guilds throughout the U.S. followed, WCG had members in California, Colorado, Nebraska, Michigan, Minnesota, Connecticut, New Jersey, Rhode Island, Ontario, and New Brunswick, in addition to Pennsylvania, New York, Maryland, Virginia, and the District.

Representatives from the Smithsonian had doubled, and those from the Park Service had tripled. Twenty-six members came from other D.C.-area institutions such as the Library of Congress and the Corcoran Gallery of Art, and 47 from institutions scattered throughout the rest of the nation. Members listed without any institutional association or practicing privately numbered nearly one hundred. Twenty-two members identified themselves as students or interns, including a few perhaps familiar names: Bruce Christman, Debra Prina Hess, and Alexander Katlan.

In the late 1980's, membership remained steady around 260 even though dues had increased to \$15.00. A listing of members by specialty in 1988-89 showed a majority of objects conservators, 81, of various disciplines, with roughly equal numbers of book/paper and paintings conservators, 55 and 54 respectively. There were 28 textiles conservators identified and nine specializing in photographic materials. Information of institutional affiliation at this time is incomplete, but it appears that the ratio between private and institutional professionals had increased slightly in the Guild's second decade.

With AIC establishing itself as the national organization of conservation professionals and other conservation groups popping up throughout the United States, WCG's membership became decidedly regional, with the majority of its members from the D.C. metropolitan area. There were also fewer members of the Guild who were not conservators, perhaps as groups for other museum professionals were established.

Dues had increased to \$25.00 by the late 1990's, but WCG still maintained a membership of around 260. The balance between institutional and private conservators was about even, where it remains to the present. In addition, the Guild averages about 20 student/intern members each year. Objects specialists of various disciplines – architectural materials, archaeological and ethnographic objects, frames and gilded objects, furniture, sculpture, and wooden artifacts – still make up the majority of area conservators, followed by those working with books and paper materials, and then paintings conservators. The number of textile conservators has decreased only slightly since the late 1970's, while the

membership of photographic conservators has increased to fifteen. "Conservation scientist" has been recently added as a member specialty, and four WCG members identify themselves as such.

It is unfortunately impossible to mention all the familiar names associated with the WCG throughout the years. However, just a look at the membership numbers over the Guild's forty year span illustrates a special aspect of WCG and indeed the conservation community in the Washington area. It is often evident at each of its monthly meetings that the Guild's foundation of longtime local members gives it stability and purpose, while the constant influx of students, interns, and other young and mid-career professionals helps it to remain dynamic and fresh. The involvement of the membership is truly important, and there are many opportunities to contribute to and shape the Guild. Members can submit news, reviews, or short items to the quarterly Newsletter, volunteer for the Outreach Booth or a local Angels Project, participate in the January Three Ring Circus and March Intern Talks, help to coordinate one of the many diverse meeting venues and presentations, serve on the board of directors, and just encourage friends and colleagues to join and take part.

Patricia Favero  
Membership Secretary, WCG

## Don't Miss the May Meeting!

Hillwood in May is reason enough to come to the May 1<sup>st</sup> WCG meeting. But there is so much more in store:

- Elections for open positions
- Awarding the Kendra Lovette Fund grant
- Unveiling our new website design
- Identifying people in archives photos (we'll show them on the big screen)
- Highlights from the Annual Report
- Door prizes
- Wine and hors d'oeuvres

## Upcoming Deadlines

For more details about the individual grant or scholarship funding organizations, please consult their websites. This list is intended only as a reminder and is not a complete list of available grants, scholarships or events. If you know of an upcoming deadline for grants, papers or other events that should be added to this list, please contact the Newsletter Editor. Also, check the WCG web site for further notices.

### FAIC Individual Professional Development Scholarship

The Foundation of the American Institute for Conservation (FAIC) offers scholarships up to \$1000 to help defray professional development costs for members of AIC. Proposed projects may include seminars, courses, research, or other continuing education endeavors that support the professional development of AIC members. This award is not available to support expenses for attending the AIC Annual Meeting, with the exception of workshop fees. The next deadline for receipt of applications is **September 15**.

### FAIC Lecture Grants

The Foundation of the American Institute for Conservation (FAIC) provides funds toward the presentation of public lectures to help advance public awareness of conservation. Up to \$500 may be used to help defray lecturer travel costs, honoraria, site fees, and publicity costs. These awards are not intended to be used for lectures associated with the AIC annual meeting. The next deadline for receipt of applications is **September 15**.

### FAIC Regional Angels Grants

The Foundation of the American Institute for Conservation (FAIC) offers grants of up to \$1000 toward the development and implementation of Angels Projects not associated with AIC annual meetings. Funds are to help defray organizational costs, necessary materials and supplies and other expenses such as marketing and publicity. Materials and supplies should also be augmented through donations outside of FAIC. The next deadline for receipt of applications is **September 15**.



# Washington Conservation Guild 2008 Preliminary Slate of Candidates for Election

## **Running for Director Positions:**

### **Patti Favero, Phillips Collection**

Patti received her MA from Buffalo State College, with a specialty in Paintings Conservation, in 2002, and has been a Fellow in Conservation at The Phillips Collection since 2004. She has served on the WCG Board for the last two years as Membership Secretary, and would like to stay involved as a Director.

### **Morgan Zinsmeister, National Archives and Records Administration**

Morgan Zinsmeister is a conservator at the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA). He received a BA in art history from Indiana University, Bloomington and an MA in art history from the University of Virginia. After completing pre-program work at various private and institutional labs in Washington, DC, Morgan attended the art conservation graduate program at Queen's University, receiving his degree in 2003. Prior to joining the staff at NARA in 2006, he was a contract paper conservator at the Smithsonian's National Portrait Gallery and a conservator at the Conservation Center for Art and Historic Artifacts (CCAHA) in Philadelphia. Morgan is a Professional Associate member of the AIC.

### **Hugh Shockey, Smithsonian American Art Museum and the Renwick Gallery**

L.H. (Hugh) Shockey Jr. has worked in the field of conservation for the last thirteen years in large museum, regional center, and private business settings. These experiences have included Elvis Presley's Graceland, the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, Balboa Art Conservation Center, the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, the National Park Service, the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of the American Indian, and the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of American History. He is a graduate of the University of Delaware / Winterthur Masters of Science in Art Conservation program with a specialty in objects. After completing a post graduate Mellon Fellowship at the National Museum of the American Indian Mr. Shockey worked in private practice and is currently one of two Objects Conservators serving the preservation needs of the Smithsonian American Art Museum and the Renwick Gallery. He is a member of the American Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works and the Washington Conservation Guild.

## **Running for Membership Secretary:**

### **Joanne Klaar Walker, National Gallery of Art**

Joanne Klaar Walker is a graduate of the Conservation Center of the Institute of Fine Arts at New York University, and currently is the William R. Leisher Fellow in Modern and Contemporary Painting Conservation at the National Gallery of Art. She has held internships and fellowships in painting conservation at institutions including the Scottish National Galleries of Art, Villa La Pietra, Worcester Art Museum, and the Balboa Art Conservation Center. She has been involved with WCG since 2004, and has been the Intern Coordinator for the organization for two and a half years.

Please contact Lisa Young, WCG Director and Past-President, with any nominations to the slate at this time. All submissions must be received by March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2008. The person nominated must be willing to serve in the position and must be a current WCG member. Please send nominations to [wcg@washingtonconservationguild.org](mailto:wcg@washingtonconservationguild.org) with the subject line "Nomination 2008".

Submitted by the WCG Nominating Committee:

Lisa Young  
Michelle Savant  
Edward McManus  
Connie Stromberg

Michele Pagan, head of marketing efforts for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition of the CRfAA, is looking for suggestions from WCG members for retail outlets for the 600 copies still available for sale.

Michele can be reached via email:  
[michele\\_johnpagan@yahoo.com](mailto:michele_johnpagan@yahoo.com)  
or by phone: 202-546-5439.  
Your help is greatly appreciated!

WCG Angels Project Suggestions Needed!  
We are always looking for new ideas for our future Angels Projects. If you know of a museum, historic house, or any organization that needs a little help caring for its collection, please send us an email at:  
[wcg@washingtonconservationguild.org](mailto:wcg@washingtonconservationguild.org)

## People

**Carol Ann Small** has moved her paper conservation studio, Art Conservation Services, LLC, to a new location: 3729 Prince William Drive, Fairfax, Virginia, 22031. Her new number is 703/352-2111.

Congratulations to the following retirees: **Ed McManus** retired from the Smithsonian's National Air and Space Museum, **Stefano Scafetta** retired from the Smithsonian's National Museum of American Art and **Martha Smith** retired from the Smithsonian's Freer Gallery of Art.

The Smithsonian Libraries Book Conservation Lab is delighted to announce that **Phuong "Phu" Pham** will join the staff as a preservation technician, starting on March 17th. Phu comes from Philadelphia where she most recently interned with Denise Carbone at the American Philosophical Society, and at the Special Collections Library for the University of the Arts.

**Jayne Girod Holt** appears (somewhat anonymously) in a recently published book on careers in the arts, titled *Creative Careers* by Elaina Loveland.

**Emily Jacobson** recently spoke about her work with a burned diary at the annual meeting of the American Academy of Forensic Sciences.

## Jobs

### **Maryland Department of Planning Division of Historical & Cultural Programs Jefferson Patterson Park and Museum**

#### **Head Conservator**

Annual Salary: \$37,837 - \$47,968

Full time position with Maryland State Government in the Special Appointment job category. Full state benefits package available.

The Maryland Historical Trust is seeking an experienced Head Conservator of archaeological materials at the Jefferson Patterson Park and Museum, a State Museum of Archaeology located in Calvert County, Maryland.

Applicants must have a degree in the conservation of objects from a recognized conservation degree program, plus three additional post-graduate years of practical experience in the conservation of archaeological objects. Equivalent work-experience of three additional years practical conservation of archaeological materials may be accepted in lieu of a conservation degree. The applicant must be able to lift fifty pounds, work on ladders or in crouching positions, and must have experience with computers operating the Windows OS and MS Office applications, or other equivalent computer software. Prior training in health and safety management, hazmat management, personnel supervision, photographic processing, X-radiography, or the use of lifting and moving equipment will be considered a bonus. Applicants must be US citizens or have a currently valid work visa.

Send resume with cover letter by April 18th, 2008 to:

Norma Burke  
Attention: Head Conservator Position  
Jefferson Patterson Park and Museum  
10515 Mackall Road  
St. Leonard, Maryland 20685  
AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER

## Conference

Heritage Preservation's 2008 Annual Meeting will take place Monday, April 21, at 4:00 p.m. at the Hyatt Regency in Denver, Colorado. The meeting will last two hours and will be followed by a reception.

If you are planning to attend the annual meeting of the American Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works April 21- 24, be sure to make travel arrangements that get you in early enough to attend Heritage Preservation's meeting.

In keeping with the AIC's theme of Creative Collaborations, Heritage Preservation will focus on our collaboration with the Institute of Museum and Library Services on Connecting to Collections and with national organizations to advance emergency preparedness, as well as collaborations between artists and conservators on Rescue Public Murals. A report on federal funding for preservation and conservation will also be part of the program.

The meeting will feature a tribute to board chair Debbie Hess Norris, who is leaving the board after a decade of service.

To register online paying by credit card, click [here](#).

If you prefer to pay by check, call 202-233-0800 for an invoice.

Please register by March 26. We look forward to seeing you in Denver!

# MEMBERSHIP

WCG dues are \$30 per year, \$20 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](mailto:wcg@washingtonconservationguild.org)

The membership schedule is as follows:

- Early March: membership renewal notice mailed
- Mid-April: 2nd and last renewal notice mailed
- 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 check our website ([www.washingtonconservationguild.org](http://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 Patricia Favero at [wcg@washingtonconservationguild.org](mailto:wcg@washingtonconservationguild.org).

## How to reach WCG

Web site: [www.washingtonconservationguild.org](http://www.washingtonconservationguild.org)

Email: [wcg@washingtonconservationguild.org](mailto:wcg@washingtonconservationguild.org)

Address: PO Box 23364, Washington, DC 20026.



## 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: jayne@girodholt.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 2008

Deadline for submissions: May 15, 2008

## WCG Board of Directors 2007/2008

### Officers

President	Claire Peachey
Vice President	Eliza Gilligan
Treasurer	Steve Mellor
Membership Secretary	Patricia Favero
Recording Secretary	Julia Sybalsky

**Directors** Lisa Young (Past President)  
Julia Brennan  
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Jane Norman  
Sunae Park Evans  
Susan Peckham  
Larry Shutts

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Intern Coordinator	Joanne Walter
Newsletter Editor	Jayne Girod Holt
Nominating Committee	Lisa Young

### Public Outreach:

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Booth Coordinator	Nancy Pollak
Web Site Guru	Erin Blake
2nd EDITION	Michele Pagan
CRfAA	

**Refreshments** Genevieve Bieniosek