



# WASHINGTON CONSERVATION GUILD NEWSLETTER

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## From the Desk of the President

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Hello Members,

Summer is here and that means it is time for the board to begin planning for the 2012-2013 meeting season. The initial planning for the upcoming season begins with the summer board meeting where potential programs and speakers are outlined. As such, if you have any suggestions for a speaker or program you as a member would like to see WCG try to accommodate, don't be bashful. Send an email to the Guild with suggestions. When you do send that email, please include your contact information so that we can get back to you. Remember, we on the board are working to provide programming and events that interest you!

The final meeting of the 2011-2012 season, held at the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) building, was a great success. The members that were unable to make the meeting this year missed out on a truly wonderful meeting. The perfect weather made the use of the IBEW's roof deck extra enjoyable, and I had no difficulty being convinced by a number of members to stay and hold the business meeting and raffle outside. The raffle was a big hit and highly entertaining thanks to the humorous work of Directors Steven Pickman and Helen Ingalls. As always, the members who donated to the raffle provided excellent gifts, whether berrylicious jam from the Pickman household, tickets to the Folger Theater from Erin Blake, or wonderfully crafted pottery from Beth Richwine. I would like to offer a big and sincere thank you to all of the members who donated so generously in order to make the raffle a success. Mark your calendars with a save-the-date now for the May meeting next

year since everyone has a chance at the raffle prizes, but only if you are present to claim your gift!

As I discussed at the May meeting, a few changes in next season's meeting schedule may be on the horizon. While the board has not made any definitive decisions, any changes we make will be to enhance the quality of the offerings at the meetings and balance the time and effort each board member gives the Guild. All of the current members of the board are dedicated to a quality experience for the membership. One of the best ways we can provide this is for you to share your ideas for programs, venues, or other improvements to the experience.

In closing, I want to wish everyone an enjoyable and relaxing summer. I also want to remind you to stay in touch with one another via the WCG Facebook page and by sending those announcements, personal and professional, to Annie Wilker for inclusion in the newsletter. Don't wait until that next meeting where your best colleague may or may not be attending. Go ahead and tell them in digital black and white. I look forward to seeing you all again at the meetings in the fall.

Regards,

L. H. (Hugh) Shockey Jr.  
President - WCG

## Upcoming WCG Meetings 2012

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The Washington Conservation Guild holds meetings from October through May each year, usually on the first Thursday of the month from approximately 5:00 to 7:30 p.m. Most meetings are held at metro-accessible cultural institutions in the DC area. Meetings usually consist of a social hour (with hors d'oeuvres and drinks) followed by an illustrated lecture or tour of interest to conservation professionals. Meetings are free of charge to members, \$5 for non-members (when charging is permitted by the venue). Members and non-members partaking of the hors d'oeuvres and drinks are asked to put a donation in the jar.

Schedule to be announced.

# RECENT MEETINGS AND EVENTS

## March Meeting

*Inexcusable but Appropriate: The Technical Analysis of Hand-painted Tintypes from the Smithsonian National Museum of American History (NMAH) and the Winterthur/University of Delaware Program in Art Conservation (WUDPAC) Collections*

Alisha Chipman, Photograph Conservator, National Gallery of Art

During the March WCG meeting, Alisha Chipman presented the analysis and results of a technical study she conducted for a course during her second year in the Winterthur/University of Delaware Program in Art Conservation (WUDPAC). In this course, each student analyzes the materials of selected artworks using the equipment available in the Scientific Research and Analysis Laboratory (SRAL) of the Winterthur Museum. By doing so, the students attain a greater understanding of the application of analytical techniques used in the conservation field. As a photograph conservation major, Ms. Chipman chose to examine seven whole-plate hand-painted tintypes, six from the National Museum of American History (NMAH) Photographic History Collection and one from the WUDPAC collection. These photographs were selected because of their similarities, specifically the comparable paint colors chosen to enhance elements within each photograph. The materials of three of the

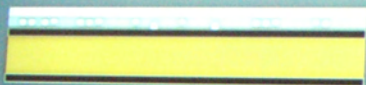
Speaker Alisha Chipman

### Tintype

- Popular from 1853-1930s
- Consists of a lacquered iron support with a collodion binder and silver image material
- Typically coated with a protective varnish



Unknown, unknown photographer, tintype, Lacy West Collection, NPG



Varnish Layer  
Collodion binder with silver image material  
Black or brown lacquer layer  
Iron support  
Black or brown lacquer layer

THE PHILLIPS  
COLLECTION





Audience at March meeting

plates (two from NMAH and one from WUDPAC) were analyzed to compare them to formulas documented in nineteenth-century hand-coloring manuals.

Ms. Chipman began her project by examining the plates and, during the lecture, provided information regarding the tintype photographic process and its history. Tintype photographs were introduced in 1853 and were common until the 1930s. The tintype plate consists of a lacquered iron support, a collodion binder, silver image material, and often a varnish. Tintypes do not contain tin but rather get their common name from the tin shears used to cut multiple-exposure plates. The photographic image produced is a negative; however, it becomes a positive when placed on a dark background (the brown or black lacquered iron plate). Although very detailed, tintypes (along with other early photographs) do not render color. This was considered a major drawback, and so tintypes were often hand-colored with dry pigments or paints (such as watercolors, pastels, and oil paints). This practice became popular as it satisfied the public's desire for a more realistic appearance. The process was also faster and cheaper than traditional portrait painting.

In conjunction with her technical analysis, Ms. Chipman completed historical research and reviewed the lit-

erature relating to the specific photographic process. Using the limited references available regarding hand-painted tintypes, she compiled a list of common pigments known to have been used as well as suggested pigment combinations and recipes. She then analyzed the materials of the three plates to compare the results to the literature and determine if the analyzed photographs have paint recipes in common. The analytical techniques chosen included cross-section microscopy, polarized light microscopy (PLM), x-ray fluorescence (XRF), Fourier transform infrared spectroscopy (FTIR), Raman spectroscopy, gas chromatography-mass spectrometry (GC-MS), and scanning electron microscopy with energy-dispersive spectroscopy (SEM-EDS). Ms. Chipman focused on the comparable paint colors, specifically that of the sitters' gold jewelry, white lace, pink lips, and dark hair as well as that of the purple-gray background of each tintype.

The analytical results indicate the presence of a variety of pigments and media, all of which are consistent

with nineteenth-century materials. Additionally, some of the pigment and material combinations follow the formulas suggested in the literature. However, the analysis also reveals variations in the chosen pigment recipes. For example, the background purple tone of each of the three tintypes analyzed was created using different pigment mixtures. Each combination appears to have iron oxides and chalk, but variable pigments include Prussian blue, azurite, malachite, red lake, and either lead or zinc white. Such variations suggest that while formulas appear to have existed, they were not always followed.

More information on this study can be found in Ms. Chipman's article published in volume 14 of *Topics in Photographic Preservation*.

Sarah Gowen  
Graduate Intern  
Smithsonian American Art Museum

## 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. If you have photographs to submit, please send an email (not the photos!) to: [wcg@washingtonconservationguild.org](mailto:wcg@washingtonconservationguild.org).

## WCG on Facebook

WCG members are invited to join our new Facebook group! The Washington Conservation Guild now has a Facebook page. Please join for updates on meetings, information, and announcements regarding WCG.



## April Meeting

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### *A Technical Analysis of Richard Serra's Screenprints with Paintstik*

Im Chan, Andrew W. Mellon Fellow in Paper Conservation, National Gallery of Art

Im Chan discussed her research project studying works on paper by Richard Serra, who is best known for his large metal sculptures. The screenprints reference the sculptures and are made as a way for Serra to fully understand the sculptural forms. The prints, made with black oil stick applied to oversized paper, were printed in collaboration with Gemini Graphic Editions Limited in Los Angeles, California. In 1981, the Gemini G.E.L. archive was established at the National Gallery of Art. Im's research has focused on the screenprints published at Gemini G.E.L. between 1985 and 1991. She began by describing the materials and techniques used to make the prints and ended with a discussion about fatty acid crystallization in relation to storage.

Serra's screenprints are printed on machine-made Western papers as well as on handmade Kozo Japanese papers. Paintstik® is trademarked by Shiva though is used generically to describe the oilstick used in Serra's prints and drawings. The medium is composed of a pigment, a drying oil (linseed), and wax. The ingredients are heated and formed in molds. Serra's technique involved melting the oilstick, adding linseed oil, and casting into bricks, from which he could cover large areas more efficiently. The printing process involved screenprinting black ink onto the paper support, then adding multiple layers of oilstick. The prints' rich textures, illustrated through detailed images in the slides, were made in varying methods. The large bricks were pulled directly across the sheet or pressed through a screen. Melted oilstick was also applied with a paint roller. Other materials, such as acrylic gel medium, were sometimes present between the layers of oilstick and were observed in a cross section taken from a sample of a print supplied by Gemini G.E.L.

The prints have condition issues that include oil stained supports, abraded, burnished, and tacky media, and efflorescence. The oilstick has been applied in thick layers, and though a film has formed on the surface of the prints, the interior remains soft and tacky. Samples of oilstick from prints in different oxidized states were analyzed using pyrolysis GCMS. A decrease in oleic acid in the more oxidized oilstick samples would indicate a medium that was drying and crosslinking; however, oleic acid was present in all the samples. Because the oilsticks contain wax and were applied thickly in layers, oxygen is not able to penetrate. Therefore, the medium was not drying completely.

Some of the prints exhibit fatty acid crystallization, or efflorescence, which can appear as a white haze or as patches of crystals on the surface of the prints. Under magnification, Im observed small crystals on the National Gallery of Art's impression of *Clara Clara II*. Im has begun to seek connections between the efflorescence formation and the way prints are stored. For example, three impressions of *Clara Clara II* had varying degrees of crystallization and were stored in different ways. To identify trends, Im created a database to track the condition and storage history of each print. From the small sample of prints examined thus far, prints that are enclosed in some way, either in a folder, framed with glazing, or wrapped in plastic, tended to exhibit fatty acid crystallization. More research and testing needs to be done to determine the optimal storage conditions for these works.

### *Improved Cleaning Techniques through Medium Analysis of Paintings by Henry O. Tanner*

Claire Walker, Postgraduate Conservation Fellow, Smithsonian American Art Museum

Claire Walker described her research project which involved a technical analysis of the materials and techniques used by the painter Henry O. Tanner. The goal of the research was to ultimately improve conservation treatment

methods used on Tanner's works. The basis of her project stemmed from previous research conducted on six Tanner paintings in the Smithsonian American Art Museum (SAAM) collection; this collaborative effort involved Amber Kerr-Allison from SAAM, Brian Baade of the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts (PAFA), and Jennifer Giacca of the Museum Conservation Institute (MCI). In preparation for the 2010 retrospective "Henry Tanner: Modern Spirit" at PAFA, Claire had treated six Tanner paintings, making her very familiar with his work.

Paint cracking, cupping, and losses were observed on Tanner's oil on canvas painting, *The Fisherman's Return*. In some areas, this painting has over twenty-one layers of paint and glazes, which were presumed to have solubility issues. Claire obtained two cross sections and, in preparation for staining, tested the samples in a vapor chamber with the following solvents: ethanol, water, petroleum benzene, and acetone. Except for petroleum benzene, all solvents had a softening effect on the samples. Claire concluded that since water had the ability to soften three upper layers of a section (after ninety minutes), that the painting would likely be sensitive to aqueous cleaning methods. Likewise, three layers exhibited softening with ethanol after sixty minutes, and all layers softened with acetone after only ten minutes.

Claire was able to reference several of Tanner's medium recipes, which had been collected by Amber and Brian, from journals at the Archives of American Art. Tanner used a range of materials in complex layering structures, and through analysis, Claire expected to find carbohydrates, proteins, resins, and oils. To serve as references, Claire prepared some of these known medium recipes including flax seed and linseed oil, both pigmented and non-pigmented. Drying experiments were conducted and the results showed that aqueous components such as flax syrup lost mass, while resin and oils gained mass (due to their uptake of oxygen); the mastic component retained its mass during drying. Claire concluded that some of Tanner's materials experienced a significant change of mass after drying.

GC-MS (using the Doerner method) was run on a reference sample of Tanner's medium. The results

proved positive for fatty acids and carbohydrates but negative for resin. Claire was perplexed since resin made up 47% of the dry film. Postulations included having an unsuitable derivatization agent, reaction time being too long, or polymers not breaking down sufficiently. Claire tested the instrument's limit of detection with several materials. In addition, the minimum sample size was tested for mastic and proved to be high. Claire suggested that pyrolysis might break down polymeric fractions more successfully and, in turn, help to detect smaller concentrations of resin. Claire explained that more tests should be carried out and that analytical complications are due, in part, to Tanner's complex painting matrices. Solvent testing indicated that aqueous cleaning methods should be carefully tested. In addition, some paint layers may contain resin and would be sensitive to solvents such as ethanol.

Speakers Brittney Shaked and Gabriella Irving at April meeting





### *Film-Based Photographic Materials Project at the USHMM*

Brittney Shaked and Gabriella Irving, Pre-program Interns, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

In 2011, Brittney Shaked and Gabriella Irving took on a project at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum to continue a survey of damaged photographic materials as well as to rehouse them in archival materials for longevity. The project originally began in 2010 but had not been completed. There were various databases created since that time, and the speakers described much of the information as being “fragmented.” Preliminary data had been collected by Jane Klinger, Chief Conservator of the Holocaust Museum, Sonya Issaeva, a postgraduate fellow, and Heather Brown, a pre-program intern. Brittney and Gabriella carefully counted and measured each item, noting the format, type, and number of images per slide roll. For rehousing, film could either be wrapped around one of two spools (each having a different diameter) or be placed in a zip lock bag. To streamline the process, they devised a decision tree to set a criterion depending on the number of frames each film had. Brittney and Gabriella appreciated working under the fume hood as it exhausted the pungent-smelling acetic acid emanating from cellulose acetate film materials.

When they encountered 60 mm film, they found it was too large for the spools. For this film, the speakers cut

Audience at April meeting





sections of blue board tubes, which were the proper diameter needed. The film was wrapped around the archival tube section, wrapped in tissue, and then placed into an archival box. A blue board grid was made to fit into each box, which allowed each tube to be snug in a contained space. Negatives required archival sleeves that were then placed into archival folders. For successful housing, the speakers emphasized the importance of a detailed labeling system; this included numbers associated with the accession, box, canister, roll, as well as the newly assigned number. These labels will allow a person to find items quickly without having to open boxes in search of specific film. Brittney and Gabriella continued the archival process by diligently updating inventory spreadsheets that contained a shelf-by-shelf account of contents of each unit. The speakers gave each box added protection by wrapping it in a vapor barrier film as well as a polyethylene bag. Two indicator cards, displaying the relative humidity, were placed on the inner and outer bags. Finally, the completed boxes were stored on shelves in cold storage, set to four degrees Centigrade.

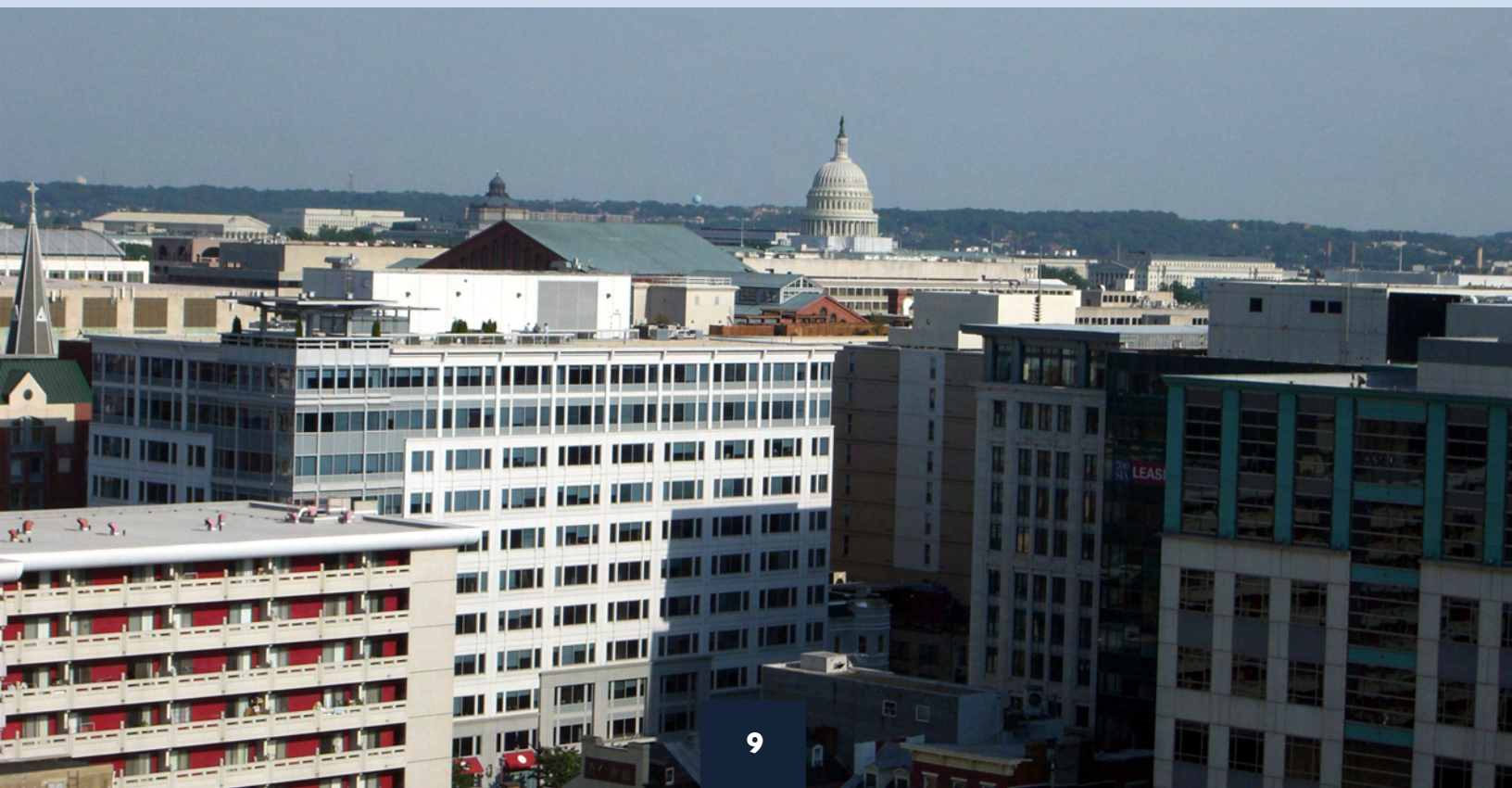
Brittney and Gabriella explained that, despite all their work, more needs to be done. However, they can take pride knowing that many film materials are now safely archived, and the improved archival system can serve as a model for future work. They reflected on all they had learned including the importance of consistency, communication, and meticulous record keeping.

Christine McIntyre  
Paintings Conservation Intern  
Walters Art Museum

## May Meeting

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The Annual Business Meeting and raffle were held this May at the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IEBW). A view from the building is below.







Raffle at the May meeting

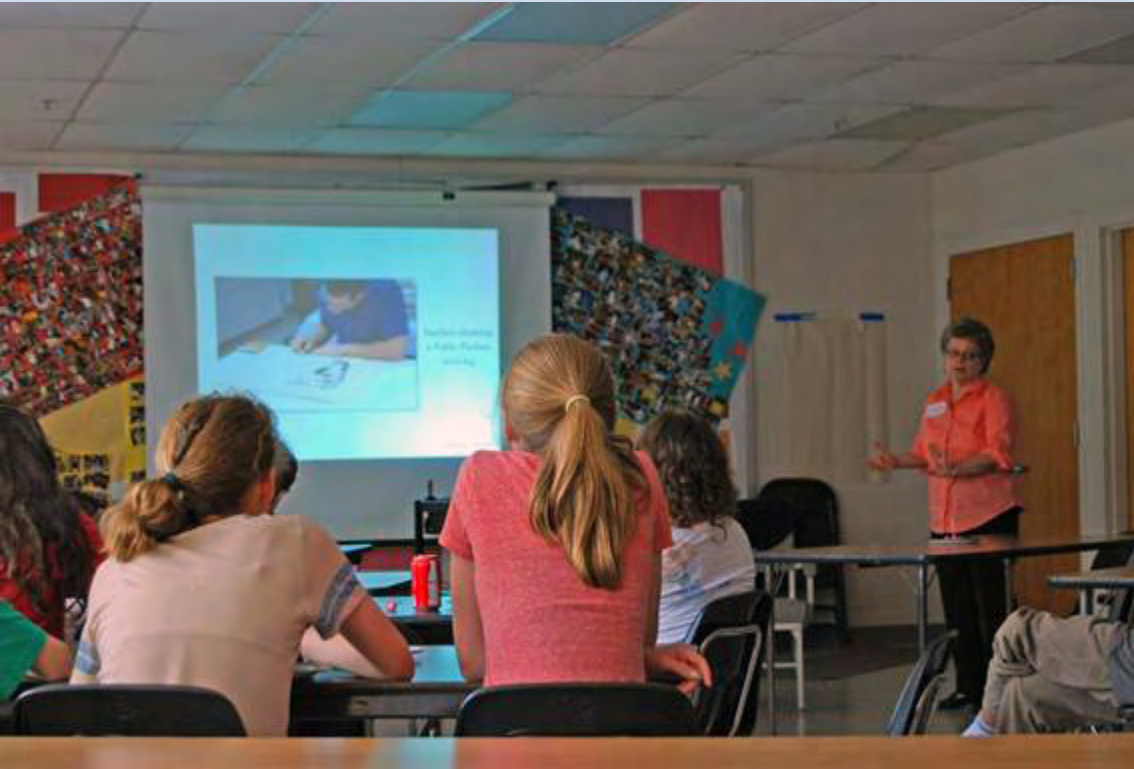




## Career Lunch Series, T.W. Pyle Middle School

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On March 23, 2012, Connie Stromberg gave a presentation on art conservation to five different groups of T.W. Pyle Middle School students in Bethesda for their monthly Career Lunch series. Connie gave a 20 minute power point that included an overview of examination, scientific analysis, documentation, and preventive care such as environmental controls and treatment for objects, paintings, textiles, furniture, paper and photographs. Examples of several types of materials were shown.



Connie Stromberg's presentation



## PEOPLE

The University of Virginia Library is delighted to announce that **Steven Villereal** has been hired as the Library's first permanent Audiovisual Conservator. Steven Villereal received his BA from Oberlin College and his MA in Moving Image Archiving and Preservation from New York University. Steven arrived at the University of Virginia in September of 2009 as part of an IMLS-funded postgraduate fellowship from NYU's Moving Image and Archives Preservation (MIAP) Program. He quickly became a vital part of the Library's Preservation Services program. Steven was instrumental in helping to equip the audio and video preservation labs as well as the film inspection station. He conducted several assessments and helped provide technical expertise on grants and outsourcing projects.

Steven's appointment coincided quite appropriately with Preservation Week 2012. As the first permanent audiovisual conservator, Steven's presence will significantly increase the Library's ability to preserve and care for audiovisual collections. His enthusiasm, expertise, and community connections will ensure the stewardship of the audiovisual collections well into the future as the Library defines priorities, refines workflows, and enhances access to previously inaccessible AV materials.

The University of Virginia Library is delighted to announce that **Liz Sorokin** has been hired as the summer conservation intern. Liz will be at the Library for six weeks, performing conservation treatment on a selection of recently donated nineteenth-century trade literature. Liz has had previous internships at the Field Museum, the Oriental Institute at the University of Chicago, and Northwestern University Library. This fall she will begin her graduate training in conservation at Buffalo State.

U S Holocaust Memorial Museum intern **Brittney Shaked** will be heading abroad to obtain her degree in the Conservation of Fine Art at Northumbria University in Newcastle, United Kingdom.

**Jane Klinger** has been accepted as a Coremans Fellow in the Preservation Studies doctoral program at the University of Delaware and will be starting her classes in late August.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

Volumes 1-3 of the series *Artists' Pigments: A Handbook of Their History and Characteristics*, long out of print, was recently republished by Archetype. The books are available at the National Gallery of Art bookshop. Smithsonian employees enjoy a discount at the store.



## **October 1, 2012, to be Release Date for 2013 Conservation Assessment Program Applications**

The 2013 Conservation Assessment Program (CAP) application will become available on Heritage Preservation's website at [www.heritagepreservation.org](http://www.heritagepreservation.org) on Monday, October 1, 2012. The deadline to submit 2013 applications is 11:59 p.m. on Monday, December 3, 2012. Applications are reviewed on a rolling basis, so museums are encouraged to apply as soon as the application is released.

CAP is a federally-funded program that provides professional conservation assessments for small to mid-sized museums of all types. The program also funds historic buildings assessments for institutions with buildings that are 50 years or older. The assessment process helps museum professionals improve their institutions' conservation policies and procedures, learn conservation and historic preservation best practices, and establish relationships with conservators and historic structures assessors. The resulting CAP report helps museums to develop strategies for improved collections care, long-range planning, staff and board education, and fund-raising. CAP is administered by Heritage Preservation and supported through a cooperative agreement with the Institute of Museum and Library Services.

In 2012, 97 museums in 34 states have been selected to participate in CAP. To view the entire list of current CAP participants, visit [www.heritagepreservation.org/CAP/12recipients.html](http://www.heritagepreservation.org/CAP/12recipients.html). To search for any CAP participant from the program's 22-year history, check out the Past CAP Participants Search Tool at <http://www.heritagepreservation.org/cap/Search.html>.

Professionals from small and mid-sized museums across the United States have attested to the benefits of CAP. Ellen Anderson, Executive Director of the Oxford Museum in Oxford, Maryland, notes that "CAP is an inexpensive investment for valuable and far-reaching conservation advice." Amanda McGuire, Associate Director of Collections at the General Lew Wallace Study and Museum in Crawfordsville, Indiana, confirms that "CAP can kick-start fundraising efforts. Our CAP reports inspired our staff and board to successfully complete a \$200,000 capital campaign." Stephanie Lantiere, President of the Avery Memorial Association in Groton, Connecticut, praises CAP for "its ability to show funders that the museum follows good practices, while at the same time providing recommendations to improve those practices for the preservation of both collections and historic buildings."

This fall, the 2013 application will be available online and for download as PDF and Word fill-in forms. To receive notification of the availability of the 2013 CAP application, or for more information, please contact the CAP staff at [cap@heritagepreservation.org](mailto:cap@heritagepreservation.org) or 202-233-0800.

## **Association for Preservation Technology Offers Free Membership for DC Interns**

The Association for Preservation Technology Washington, DC, Chapter (APT DC) is excited to offer a free summer membership for DC-based interns interested in the field of historic preservation. APT DC is a non-profit educational association founded in 1980 to serve the needs of preservationists in the greater Washington, DC, metro area. APT DC promotes the exchange of ideas and knowledge concerning the conservation of historic resources and the application of preservation technology. The free summer intern membership would include member access to all tours and lectures from June to August, including the summer picnic at historic Gunston Hall.

In addition to the education offered at the events, a membership to APT DC would provide networking opportunities with seasoned preservation professionals in the DC metro area. Those interested in the free membership can apply on the APT DC website, <http://aptdc.org/join.php>, today!

Any questions, contact APT DC at [info@aptdc.org](mailto:info@aptdc.org)

### **Sidney Williston Fund Applications Due**

It's that time of the year again.....to nominate your favorite interns for the annual WCG Williston awards!

The Sidney Williston Fund will provide five interns/fellows each year with membership in the Washington Conservation Guild. Sidney Williston's studio, Mario's Conservation Services, provided training for dozens of conservators, many of whom head their own labs today around the country. He was a Fellow in the AIC and was an honorary member of the Washington Conservation Guild. He has been greatly missed since his death in December 2000. The Williston Fund was created to recognize his contributions to the Washington area conservation community and to the Guild in particular.

Membership includes free entry at eight meetings, a quarterly newsletter, and reduced registration on all WCG-sponsored workshops and conferences. This past year WCG organized tours at a different conservation lab every month and five happy hour events for the benefit of our intern/fellow/student members. Due to the high turnout of members at monthly Guild meetings, the Williston fund recipients will be required to assist the WCG Board of Directors by volunteering at one of the eight monthly meetings. Volunteer tasks may include summarizing the talk for the newsletter, setting up and cleaning up refreshments, and taking donations at the door. A WCG member must recommend applicants to the Sidney Williston Fund in writing. The application form may be downloaded from our website at [www.washingtonconservationguild.org](http://www.washingtonconservationguild.org).

Traditionally, only five interns are chosen for the award every year. Please consider sponsoring an intern as so many of them are here only a short time and would greatly benefit from our local events and networking opportunities.

2012/2013 season applications are due by September 1 and may be either snail mailed or emailed to the following addresses:

Ana Alba, Intern Coordinator  
Sidney Williston Fund  
Washington Conservation Guild  
P.O. Box 23364  
Washington, DC 20026

OR

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

Please put "Williston Fund" in the subject line, and note the application must be received by September 1, 2012.



# 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 July 1 through June 30. Membership forms can be requested by mail from the Membership Secretary at PO Box 23364, Washington, DC 20026 or can be filled out and submitted on our website. 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:

- April: Membership renewal notice mailed
- July 1: Beginning of membership year
- September 15: Deadline for membership renewals

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# WCG Board of Directors

2011/2012

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Recording Secretary	Anne Kingery

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	Helen Ingalls
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	Steven Pickman
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Outreach Booth Coordinator	Howard Wellman
Website Guru	Erin Blake
Logistics	

# Newsletter Submissions

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WCG Newsletter is printed quarterly (Fall, Winter, Spring, Summer). Items for inclusion in the WCG Newsletter should be directed to:

Annie Wilker  
National Archives  
700 Pennsylvania Ave  
Washington, DC 20408  
Room B-1  
Tel: 202-420-9730  
Email: WCGnewsletter@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.

Next issue: Fall 2012

Deadline for submissions: August 15, 2012