



# **Washington Conservation Guild**

## **Annual Report**

**July 1, 2023 – June 30, 2024**

**Submitted by Rachel Greenberg, President**

## **Introduction**

Founded in 1967, the Washington Conservation Guild (WCG) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization dedicated to the preservation and conservation of material culture. WCG serves as a regional forum for its members and as a resource to the public for learning about the care of personal collections. The Guild welcomes conservators, educators, scientists, archivists, collections professionals, art historians, students, and other allied professionals and conservation enthusiasts in the Washington DC, Maryland, and Northern Virginia region. As an educational association, WCG promotes the exchange of conservation ideas and knowledge through a program of monthly meetings (September through May), outreach activities, workshops, lab tours, dedicated emerging professional activities, and a membership directory.

This Annual Report of the Washington Conservation Guild summarizes the activities and finances of the WCG for the season beginning on July 1, 2023 and ending on June 30, 2024. The purpose of this report is to communicate the activities that WCG has undertaken during the season to those members who missed the highlights presented at the May business meeting. Annual reports since the 2003-2004 season are available on the [annual reports page](#) of the WCG website.

## **Message from the President**

Thank you for helping to make the 2023-2024 WCG season so enjoyable! It's success was due to the incredibly hard working, all-volunteer Board. Those who have not served on the Board may not realize just how much goes into creating a season full of so many professional development and cultural heritage activities. WCG could easily be a full-time job!

The Guild has grown over the years, taking on new goals and priorities, but we remain committed to making WCG a place where every member and volunteer, no matter the years of experience or conservation specialty, feels welcomed and appreciated. We also hope that members look forward to meetings, whether to learn new information or to catch up with old friends. WCG meetings and events are only successful when they are beneficial to our members.

While many projects were done behind the scenes last season in order to get WCG into a good position for the future, we were able to benefit from those projects this season and give back to our members directly. I'm excited to share all that we accomplished in the report below.

## **2022-2023 WCG Board**

### **Officers**

President: Rachel Greenberg  
Vice President: Keara Teeter  
Treasurer: Maggie Bearden

Membership Secretary: Laura Hatton  
Recording Secretary: Austen Anderson  
Past President: Jayne Girod Holt

### **Directors**

Janelle Batkin-Hall  
Rhea DeStefano  
Diane Fullick  
Elaina Gregg  
Christine Haynes

Pamela Kirschner  
Kaitlyn Munro  
Linda Owen  
Liz Peirce  
Howard Wellman

### **Advisory Committees**

#### Communications

Chair: Anne Kingery-Schwartz  
Google Workspace Administrator: Anne Marigza  
Web Administrators: Arianna Carini Johnston  
Web Content Editor: Kate Brugioni Gabrielli  
Social Media: Morgan Brown, Meimei Xu

#### Outreach

Community Partnership Project Coordinator: Dorothy Cheng  
Liaison to the Safety and Cultural Heritage Summit: Anne Marigza

DEAI Chair: Adrian Hernandez

Logistics Coordinator: Katya Zinsli

Archivist: Alison Reppert Gerber

#### Nominating Committee

Chair: Past President, Jayne Girod Holt  
Members: Janelle Batkin-Hall, Jeanne Drewes

### **Membership Summary**

The total number of members this year reached 222. Of those, 19 were new members, 55 were emerging professionals, and 21 were Honorary Members. Last season, WCG implemented one free season of membership for emerging professionals who are new to the Guild. The list of Honorary Members has been revived to include all Past Presidents plus a few members who have gone above and beyond to help the Guild throughout the years. This season, Jayne Girod Holt, Julia Brennan, and Anne Kingery-Schwartz were added to the list of Honorary Members.

### **Monthly Meetings and Events**

Below is the list of monthly meetings, including venues and speakers, held by WCG during the 2023-2024 season. The Vice President was outstanding in finding a varied and interesting selection of speakers while also securing cost-efficient, yet wonderful venues; and the Logistics Coordinators supplied an excellent selection of refreshments at each in-person meeting. The new Member Events Committee was spectacular in organizing special member events in addition to our regular monthly lecture meetings that were both fun and educational. Directors split the various aspects of organizing and running the meetings and member events in order to make each one run smoothly.

Since many members who are unable to attend our in-person meetings are able to join us virtually, we continued with a hybrid season in which several meetings were hosted online over Zoom. Recordings of our lecture meetings are posted on the [WCG YouTube Channel](#).

### **Monthly Meetings**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Venue</b>	<b>Topic/Speaker(s)</b>	<b>Attendance</b>
October 5	Virtual	American Visionary Art Museum (AVAM) kinetic sculpture race Speakers: Tom Jones and Joe Wall	37
November 9	Howard University Gallery of Art (HUGA)	“An Army of One: Black Activist Curator” Speaker: Nadine Seiler	46
December 7	Virtual	“Maybe you can try this at home: A virtual tour of a painting and painted textile conservation practice” Speaker: Nancy Pollak	34
January 11	S. Dillon Ripley Center	<u>Three-Ring Circus</u> Ring 1 speakers: Arianna Johnston, Kristi Wright, Emily Brzezinski Ring 2 speakers: Newbold Richardson, Sara Leonowitz, Stephanie Hornbeck Ring 3 speakers: Yingyi Wang, Scott W. Nolley, Kelly McHugh	78
February 1	Virtual	“Conserving Plastic Art and Artifacts: A Panel Discussion” Speakers: Kris Clossen, Mary Coughlin, Luke Moses, and Kiri Douglas	111

March 21	Virtual Zoom.com	Conserving Two Protest Signs from the Washington, DC Black Lives Matter Memorial Fence Collection Speaker: Adrian Hernandez	40
April 4	German-American Heritage Museum and Foundation (GAHM)	Emerging professionals talks Speakers: Sejal Goel, Valeria Pesce, and Genevieve Tobin	31
May 2	International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW)	Business meeting and raffle	37

**Member Events**

Date	Venue and Activity	Attendance
September 7	Walking Tour of Congressional Cemetery with docents Barbara Borman & Randy Norton	22
November 29	Walter E. Washington Convention Center – Art Collection Tour with conservator Kristen Loudermilk and curator Robin Moore	15
March 9	Workshop: Private Practice Seminar	postponed to next season
May 4	Field Trip to the Baltimore Kinetic Sculpture Race	8

**Financial Highlights**

As of May 2025, our total financial assets are at \$50,607. We spent a total of \$7,974 on meetings and events, and yet, generated a surprising profit of \$13,873 due to unexpectedly high donations and sponsorship. WCG received several donations from Google employees with employer matching, as well as [sponsorship contributions](#) from our many friends in conservation-related companies, of which thirteen sponsors (see below) were kind and generous enough to support WCG’s initiative this season. The solicitation for these contributions was in response to the cost for building a new website and the increase in venue rental fees and logistics. Since we now have more than the necessary two years’ worth of savings to cover basic operating costs and unforeseen expenses, we can do more to give back to our members, speakers, and cultural heritage partners. Thanks to our sponsors this season, WCG was able to host additional member meetings and events, increase the honoraria offered to speakers, provide additional professional development including AIC membership to our Williston Fund recipients, include accessibility options at meetings, and cover expenses for our Community Partnership Project institution lasting beyond the one day event.

### Sponsors

University Products  
Kremer Pigments  
Conserv  
Spacesaver Interiors  
Bruker  
FH Conservation  
Dorfman Museum  
Figures

Bonsai Fine Arts  
Julia Brenna, Caring for  
Textiles  
Julia Brennan  
Gaylord Archival  
True Vue  
SmallCorp  
Click Netherfield

### Raffle Prize Donors

AIC  
Chipotle  
DC Crawling  
International Spy Museum  
University Products

### **Emerging Professionals Committee**

The Emerging Professionals Committee (EPC) planned in-person social and professional events throughout the season (listed below). Lab tours became the focus for professional events based on a survey the Committee sent out at the beginning of the season. These sorts of events not only provide a networking opportunity to our emerging professional members, they also help create community for many who are new to the area and far from family and friends.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Attendance</b>
November 9	Happy Hour at Clyde's in Chinatown	5 +EPC hosts
April 17	Tour of the Smithsonian's National Museum of Asian Art conservation labs	9 +EPC hosts
April 29	Tour of the Lunder Conservation Center (located in the Smithsonian American Art Museum)	9 +EPC hosts

The Committee also oversaw the Williston Fund, which offered free WCG and AIC membership to five emerging professionals this season. Running this program includes maintaining an updated contact list of supervisors for emerging professionals in the DMV area, reviewing applications, and selecting recipients.

Recipients for the Williston Fund for the 2023-2024 season were:

- Laura Bergemann, NYU graduate student and intern at The Smithsonian
- Sejal Goel, post-graduate fellow at the National Parks Service
- Daniela Gonzalez-Pruitt, SUNY Buffalo student and intern at the Walters Art Museum
- Efeh Ibojie, CUNY John Jay College student and intern at Smithsonian Libraries and Archives
- Hannah Longbottom Estrada, conservation fellow at the The Phillips Collection

Williston Fund recipient Sejal Goel presented her research at the annual Emerging Professionals meeting in March.

### **DEAI (Diversity, Equity, Accessibility, and Inclusion) Committee**

The DEAI Committee (renamed from the IDEA Action Committee) is responsible for implementing a vision for a more diverse, equitable, accessible, and inclusive WCG by establishing goals for the Board of Directors as well as hosting events. This season, the Committee researched companies and received quotes for American Sign Language (ASL) and Communication Access Realtime Translation (CART) services for both in-person and virtual meetings. CART services were tested for the virtual meeting in March, which was a success and will be utilized as requested in the future. The Committee urged the WCG board to search for accessible venues, which led to the WCG venue questionnaire being updated and wheelchair accessibility being listed on meeting announcements. The committee advocated for increased speaker honoraria, which is being implemented next season. The DEAI Chair also worked closely with the Community Partnership Project (CPP) coordinator (more below). We hope that WCG as a whole, for both members and board volunteers, offers a welcoming environment.

### **Outreach Committee**

#### **Community Partnership Project (CPP)**

Last season, the DEAI Chair put our Community Partnership Project (CPP) coordinator in touch with Nadine Seiler, curator of the Black Lives Matters Protest Memorial Fence collection, for a collaborative project that was carried out this season. In advance of the project, the DEAI Chair and CPP Coordinator invited Nadine to speak at the November meeting and the DEAI Chair presented on the conservation of two protest signs from the Fence collection at the March meeting.

After months of planning, the pro-bono event was held at the Lutheran Church of the Reformation in Capitol Hill on April 13. Conservation professionals and WCG members helped preserve a portion of the Memorial Fence memorabilia, which were exposed to precipitation when they were secured to a fence in front of the White House in 2020. The majority of the 260 affected artifacts were successfully vacuumed, dry-cleaned, photographically documented, and rehoused in archival document cases and flat storage boxes. The CPP Coordinator and several volunteers are committed to returning for a second session to complete this work. Supplies were purchased using the \$1000 FAIC Community Partnership Projects grant we were awarded as well as funds from the Washington Conservation Guild account. WCG also helped with longer-term housing of the collection by donating funds to cover eight months of storage unit rental payments.

#### **Safety and Cultural Heritage Summit**

The 7th Safety and Cultural Heritage Summit was held in-person at the Smithsonian American Art Museum and hosted virtually by Smithsonian External Learning on October 27. Planning for the Summit began in February 2023 of the previous season and consisted of committee members from across five organizations, including staff from various branches of the Smithsonian Institution and members of the Potomac Local Section of the American Industrial Hygiene Association (AIHA). The 2023 Summit included seven full-length presentations by safety

and cultural heritage professionals, as well as three lightning round presentations and three posters. A summary of the Summit with contributions from several members of the planning committee appeared in the [April-May 2024 issue of IIC News in Conservation](#), and a photo from one of the tours was the cover image.

### **Communications Committee**

The Communications team continued to reach interested parties and recruit new members from across the globe. The [new WCG website](#) was launched in April 2023, but improvements have continued to be a priority this season. This has included reformatting of old posts to maintain and improve the readability, accessibility, and security of our content. Photos on the website and the Flickr account are also being updated with captions and alt-text. Our videographer has continued to produce high quality recordings of WCG meetings and posting them to the [WCG YouTube channel](#), where anyone interested, not just members, can virtually participate in both in-person and virtual events. The social media team promoted WCG meetings, created “sponsor spotlights,” and posted bi-weekly job roundups on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#). Due to a lack of moderation of content that did not align with WCG’s values, the board chose to close the WCG Twitter account. The team is continuing to search for ways to reach those who are unable to attend in-person meetings or those who live outside of the DC area to encourage them to engage virtually with WCG.

### **Preparation for Next Season**

The Nominating Committee worked diligently throughout the season to encourage and select candidates to run for Board positions. Voting is now conducted entirely online, and the results are shared at the annual May Business Meeting. The election outcome was very positive and the new members of the WCG Board will be welcome assets. While the summer is typically a break from member events, a lot of work is undertaken by the Board during this time. This includes training new Board members, meeting for multiple planning sessions, and reaching out to potential speakers and venues. We hope our efforts will result in a successful next season.

### **Acknowledgements**

WCG is grateful to all the institutions that hosted our monthly meetings this season, especially those that provided their spaces free of charge. The Guild would also like to acknowledge the support of the Smithsonian National Collections Program with help from the National Museum of Asian Art, without which the 3-Ring Circus at the Ripley Center would not be possible. Thank you also to companies who donated raffle prizes, exhibitors at the 3-Ring Circus, and sponsors who helped us financially, allowing WCG to continue its programming and better serve our membership and professional field.