

MRCG OFFICERS FOR 2002-2003

Barbara Heller, President
Christine Young, Vice President
James Cutrone, Secretary/Treasurer

NEWS CO-ORDINATORS FOR 2002-2003

Laurie Booth
Barbara Heller
Dawn Heller
Nancy Heugh
David Marquis
Cecil Mear
David Miller
Jodie Utter



**MIDWEST REGIONAL
CONSERVATION GUILD
NEWSLETTER**

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LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

The fall meeting of MRCG to be hosted by the DIA will be an Art in Transit Workshop (AIT)-- hopefully in conjunction with the Chicago Area Conservation Guild. I have written to CACG to confirm this as a joint meeting. We are looking for a date in October or November that works with Merv's and our schedule.

Merv Richards has agreed to conduct the workshop which will be supported, in part, by AIC! (prof training grant). The workshop relies largely on slides but there will be lots of show and tell, plus material lists, data sheets and samples, bibliography etc. (an excerpt of Merv's description follows)

The hotel will be the Inn on Ferry Street, which is a deluxe collection of historically registered mansions built in the late 1800's and feature Victorian architecture and style, and, is one block from the DIA. The rooms offer expanded cablevision, triple sheeting on beds, nightly turndown service, in-room iron/ironing board, coffee maker, complimentary newspaper and amenities basket, a work area, telephones with data ports, and voicemail. The room includes a daily complimentary deluxe continental breakfast.

I would like to solicit talks from the membership for Sunday. I would be happy to discuss the DIA's renovation and how we have been protecting the collections during the construction. This would be a continuation of the talk I gave in Nashville. We could tour our new addition which is being used for collection storage. Of course, we will showcase our

also like to ask the membership to email me their packing, crating, shipping issues, observations or problems so I can forward them to Merv.

Barbara Heller,
president

Merv Richards: ART IN TRANSIT WORKSHOP

I am organizing a one-day workshop on packing and crating to be held at the DIA this fall. It is our desire to benefit from the new crating technologies being pioneered, developed and assessed by the National Gallery Washington, NGA London, Tate, & CCI and/or others. The workshop would be open not only to MRCG and CACG members, but registrars, museum professionals, packers and shippers in the Midwest. Museums use both in-house and outside/contractual crate builders, likewise private laboratories and clients use these same resources.

Crating is becoming more and more of a concern in the Midwest because of the need to often truck works to Chicago or New York before they can commence their journey to their actual loan destination. Now that the airlines have reduced the number and the sizes of the aircrafts available to transport art, we are all having to truck more frequently over roads that are in poor condition. Sometimes it is necessary to truck across the country. I've seen damage to works of art that were transported over water (between Hokkaido Island and mainland Japan, from Portugal to Israel, as well across the English Channel). Are crates that are designed for impact/drop adequately constructed to absorb side-to-side vibration when the shipping container is locked down to the hold of a vessel? (Has this ever been researched?) When is a double wood crate absolutely necessary, when can Foamcor be used as an alternate inner box, when can there be more air space at the bottom of a crate to absorb vibration and less on the top and sides--which could allow a

crated painting or work of art to fit onto a plane instead of a truck, etc.

The workshop will answer these questions, present current crating and packing guidelines, crating materials and specification changes or upgrades, as well as new and/or refined case designs. Participants will become familiar with the concepts and packing recommendations based upon the last 10 years of experience. Additionally, packing strategies for objects such as mummy wrapping, will be included in the presentation.

MINUTES OF THE BUSINESS MEETING, NASHVILLE, 2 NOVEMBER 2002

Old Business:

Vice-President Chris Young (on behalf of Neil Cockerline) called the breakfast Business Meeting of the Guild to order at 7:35 AM.

Minutes from the 2001 meeting in Minneapolis that had been published in the Newsletter were passed unanimously, although no one was able to supply the few bits of missing data.

Cynthia Stow presented the Treasurer's Report, and Shelley Paine observed that there was no mention of a \$1000 donation from a local collector. Cynthia said that she had never been received it, and Shelley said she would report this mishap to the donor. The report was approved unanimously.

New Business:

Three proposed amendments in the Bylaws that had been published in the spring and fall Newsletters were brought forth for discussion and were passed. These were:

- 1) eliminating the requirement of a sponsor for a new member.
- 2) combining the positions of Secretary and Treasurer.
- 3) making the permanent address of the MRCG be that of the Intermuseum Conservation

Association, with no reference to a specific street address.

Elections: Nominations were made, seconded, and approved by vote for two new officers. Barbara Heller was elected President, and Jim Cutrone was elected Secretary/Treasurer.

Upcoming Meetings: With the support of several staff members at the DIA, Barbara suggested the possible topic of packing and shipping for the 2003 meeting in Detroit. Cleveland was approved as the site for fall 2004.

Membership: Cynthia brought up the disappointing drop in numbers of the Guild membership over the past few years (from a steady enrollment of about 80 to fewer than 60) and the general lack of interest or involvement by those members. It was agreed that communication in the Guild needs to be stimulated, and the possibility of an MRCG website was put forth as both an attraction for membership and a way of keeping current with each other. It was not supported, however, because of the expense and time required updating the site. Dawn Heller and Jodie Utter agreed to coordinate contacts in each state to report news and information for the Newsletter. David Marquis suggested having volunteers from each state poll lapsed members to determine why the numbers are dropping.

Elena King recommended a raise in membership dues but because of time restraints this is to be tabled for discussion at the next meeting.

Respectfully, if haphazardly, submitted,

Cynthia Stow
Secretary/Treasurer

(On an embarrassing note, there was some discussion about term limits for officers, the lack of a nominating committee, and the fact that any changes will require a Bylaws amendment. Neither Chris nor Cynthia recall the actual substance of these discussions. If this rings a bell with you, please contact us!)

LETTER FROM THE VICE PRESIDENT

It was decided in the last business meeting, that we need to make greater effort to re-enlist lapsed members, enliven the Newsletter, and to become more pro-active in general. To this end, we now have a group of volunteers willing to serve as conduits of information. This is by far the "newsiest" and easiest Newsletter I have edited, and I would like to heartily thank both conduits and contributors. Kudos to Laurie Booth, Barbara Heller, Dawn Heller, Nancy Heugh, David Marquis, Cecil Mear, David Miller, and Jodie Utter.

I would like to re-iterate that if you know of someone in our region who once was, but is no longer, a member of MRCG, please speak with him or her. It is important that we halt the trend, and it would be great to entice them back.

Speaking on behalf of the conservators of Nashville, I would like to thank everyone who attended the last meeting here. Feed-back has been great, and we hope you had a memorable time. We would like to take a moment to acknowledge a number of contributors to the meeting. Our thanks go to Lucas and Susan Simons of Nashville and to Cecile Mear; enormous thanks also to Mark Golden and to Victoria French, who donated their expenses and honoraria; and finally, our thanks to FAIC for a workshop grant. Cynthia would also like to extend thanks to Bob Strauss for his a donation to the Guild, given last year.

Chris Young
Vice-President

NEWS FROM OUR MEMBERSHIP AND REGION

INDIANA

INDIANAPOLIS MUSEUM OF ART

The museum is undergoing major expansion and renovation to be completed in 2005, partially opening in conjunction with the AAM

meeting in Indianapolis that May. There will be a new entry pavilion, a gallery pavilion adding 44,000 square feet of new display space on three floors, and a garden pavilion for special events. New print and drawing study and storage, and an expanded conservation department are planned.

Dorothy Stites Alig, Senior Conservator of Textiles, and Mandie Holden, Conservation Technician, will travel to Washington DC in May to install "The Fabric of Moroccan Life". This exhibit of 150 Moroccan textiles from the IMA's permanent collection will be featured at the National Museum of African Art from June 6-September 21, 2003. The treatment of this collection is the subject of an article that Dorothy and Mandie co-authored with fellow conservator, Julie Randolph (now at the Philadelphia Museum of Art), for the May issue of the AIC Newsletter.

MINNESOTA

UPPER MIDWEST CONSERVATION ASSOCIATION

UMCA has three new staff members.

Colin Turner joined the staff in October as the new Executive Director. Prior to UMCA, he served 5 years as Director of the non-profit, United Arts in St. Paul. Colin has a special interest in ethnographic works and holds BA degrees in Anthropology and History.

Nathan Otterson, Senior Objects Conservator has already been with UMCA six months. Nate received his M. A. from the Art Conservation Department, State University College at Buffalo, New York in 1988. He was most recently at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York and the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston Massachusetts.

Patricia Ewer will join the staff in July of 2003 to expand UMCA's services to include textile conservation. Patricia has been a professional textile conservator since 1980. This past summer she was a Quinque Fellow at the Burrell Collection in Glasgow, Scotland. Patricia is this year's Mellon Fellow in the conservation laboratory at the Michael C.

Carlos Museum at Emory University, Atlanta, Georgia.

The UMCA Board of Directors recently took a significant step in community representation when it passed a resolution expanding the total number of Board seats available and opening some of those representatives to individuals not affiliated with member institutions. To date, UMCA now has two community representatives and hopes to fill additional slots with interested, qualified people.

The Minneapolis Institute of Arts is planning a new expansion. Construction is slated to begin in the summer of 2003 and will include new labs, storage and office space for UMCA. Staff members have been busy planning for the new space and to minimize work disruption during the construction period of approximately two years.

Field Services will be offering basic, two-day workshops throughout the Midwest in the months of April, May and June. Contact UMCA for dates and places. Three workshops are planned: Basic Conservation of Paper, Care of Textiles, and Collections Salvage after a Disaster.

Neil Cockerline is back to work 3 days per week in his post as Director of Field Services after pancreas transplant of one year ago. Due to complications from the original surgery, he underwent complex pancreatic conversion surgery the week before Thanksgiving to stop internal bleeding that had developed. He is feeling much better now, especially since he is no longer a diabetic!

Donna Haberman, Senior Objects Conservator, is treating the plaster cornice and the fire place for the circa 1730's Grand Salon from the Hotel Bouexiere in Paris. At least two rooms were deinstalled and brought to the U.S. in the 1920's. The smaller room was installed in the St. Louis Art Museum soon after while the Grand Salon changed hands and sat in storage for many years. Upon completion, the room will be installed in the Minneapolis Institute of Arts.

Nathan Otterson, Senior Objects Conservator, is currently treating approximately 130 Mimbres ceramics in the

collection of the Weisman Museum of Art. The conservation is funded by a matching grant awarded to the Weisman by Save Americas Treasures. The Mimbres pottery was excavated in the 1930's by the University of Minnesota and the Minneapolis Institute of Arts.

MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The conservation pages on the Minnesota Historical Society Web site have been redone and expanded. We welcome suggestions for additions and other comments. Go to <http://www.mnhs.org/preserv/conservation/index.html>.

Sherelyn Ogden, Head of Conservation, is finishing work on a book she is editing on preservation of American Indian cultural objects to be published by the Minnesota Historical Society Press.

Bob Herskovitz, Chief Conservator, gave a workshop on salvage of water damaged archival materials for TCART, the Twin Cities area Archives round table group.

Paul Storch, Objects Conservator, gave a workshop in Las Vegas on framing two and three-dimensional items for the Professional Picture Framers Association.

Ann Frisina, Textile Conservator, has been doing tacking edge analysis and research on upholstery fabric and trim as part of a large furniture treatment project for the Society's Alexander Ramsay House.

Tom Braun, Objects Conservator, and Bob Herskovitz gave a presentation to the Minnesota Wood workers Guild on conservation treatment of furniture at the Minnesota Historical Society.

NEBRASKA

GERALD FORD CONSERVATION CENTER

The Ford Center now has a paper conservator on staff, Tara Kennedy. The center is very busy with lots of work; besides treatment they are conducting numerous assessments for small museums and historical houses, and they are hosting various workshops. An upcoming workshop will focus on display

techniques for art and collectibles. The digital imaging lab is working double shifts on two big projects for the Kansas State Historical Society and for the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers.

OHIO

CINCINNATI ART MUSEUM

The Museum hired its first objects conservator in January. Antje Neumann is a graduate of the Buffalo State College training program and came to the CAM from a fellowship at the Walters Art Museum in Baltimore.

The CAM conservation staff has been working hard to complete treatments for the newly renovated Cincinnati Wing which will open May 17. As part of the museum's renovations, a large Joan Miro oil on canvas mural has been removed from the wall by Andrea Chevalier and Per Knutas of the Intermuseum Conservation Association in Cleveland. ICA conservators will remove the old mount from the painting and will reline it. When it returns to Cincinnati, it will be reinstalled in a new gallery where CAM paintings conservators Fred Wallace and Patricia Favero will complete the treatment.

INTERMUSEUM CONSERVATION ASSOCIATION

The ICA has officially moved and is now located at: 2915 Detroit Ave., Cleveland, OH 44113. (216) 658-8700. Their propaganda reads: "This newly renovated and updated facility will provide ICA's professional staff with spacious, state-of-the-art workspaces and will allow ICA to offer members and clients a full range of fine art conservation and preservation services, as well as provide state-of-the-art fine arts storage."

THE TOLEDO MUSEUM OF ART

The Museum has announced that they hired Suzanne Hargrove as their head of conservation (not sure of her title) but she is their first conservator on staff.

OHIO MUSEUMS ASSOCIATION

Ken Be and Fred Wallace are giving a presentation at the Ohio Museums Association meeting in Cincinnati on Ken's conservation exhibit in Cleveland.

TENNESSEE

FISK UNIVERSITY, NASHVILLE

Three wall painting cycles painted by Aaron Douglas in 1930 to decorate Fisk University's then library, Cravath Hall, are being restored by the fine arts painting conservation team of Cunningham-Adams, as part of the university's restoration of historic Cravath Hall. The Douglas mural restoration will be completed this summer. As a prominent participant in the Harlem Renaissance, and referred to as "The Father of Black American Art", Douglas was a distinguished national figure when he went to Nashville to add his provocative work to the stylish neo-gothic architecture of Henry Hibbs.

Dee Minault and Cynthia Stow will be providing moral support and labor for this project.

WORKING STIFFS IN PRIVATE PRACTICE

Shelley Paine remains busy as always. A project of special interest is an Alfred Leslie collage sculpture.

Jodie Utter and Chris Young will be working together to complete the restoration of a room of 1880 wallpaper at Naper Settlement, in Naperville IL. Jodie is already kvetching about repetitive use injuries; Chris just wants it done by the end of April.

REMINDERS:

Be sure to contact Barbara Heller if you have a paper for the annual meeting or if you have questions or topics for Merv Richards.

If you have news, please contact Chris Young (VP-editor) directly or speak to a regional volunteer.

Christine Young, Vice President
Midwest Regional Conservation Guild
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