Regional News

ALASKA

Ellen Carrlee of the Alaska State Museum has been focusing on basketry treatments, including the development of a new PEG protocol for the treatment of waterlogged basketry. (She is eager to discuss this protocol with any interested colleagues!) She will soon begin a conservation survey of the museum’s Natural History collection. Ellen led increased IPM vigilance for the Alaska State Library and Archives following the destruction of a nearby building with a large rodent population.

Scott Carrlee of the Alaska State Museum participated in the AIC Collections Emergency Response Training in Seattle in November. There were a number of WAAC members at the training.

Two out of state conservators worked in the Alaska this fall. Dana Seng of DKS conservation in Seattle was in Kodiak cleaning and repairing a large skin covered Baidarka (kayak). Malcolm Collum from the Henry Ford was in Anchorage surveying a significant historical aircraft at the Alaska Aviation Heritage Museum.

Monica Shah of the Anchorage Museum spent the better part of a week in Bethel Alaska de-installing a large show of Yup’ik Eskimo artifacts called Yupik Science. She is busy at the moment treating objects from that show such as a squirrel skin hood, a swan feather whisk broom, and a fish skin parka.

Regional Reporter: Scott Carrlee

ARIZONA

Martha Winslow Grimm is coordinating an Angels Project, a yearly activity of Costume Society of America, at the Jackson Barracks Military Museum in New Orleans. During hurricanes Katrina and Rita, the museum was under 15 feet of water which stayed for three weeks. The building was condemned and the museum is now in temporary quarters. Two years later there is still much to be done to get the museum up and running. The artifacts desperately need help and the Angels Project volunteers will be vacuuming, labeling, documenting, and photographing the objects for new storage facilities. If you would like to assist, please contact Martha Winslow Grimm, Textile/Costume Conservator, mwgrimm@cox.net.

Gloria Fraser-Giffords is finishing the conservation/restoration on paintings and frames at the University of Arizona’s Museum of Art - objects affected by a broken steam pipe last January that filled the rooms with steam and melted the wax on the cork floors!

At the Intermountain Region Museum Services Program, Brynn Bender is busy working as lead conservator for new exhibits at three National Park Service sites in Arizona. Brynn, Audrey Harrison, and Maggie Kipling are performing treatments for leather, beadwork, and textiles from the Vernon collection of Native American items that belong to Grand Teton National Park. Maggie performed a condition survey for objects from Tonto National Monument and continues treating textiles from Montezuma Castle National Monument.

Nancy Odegaard finished her fall sabbatical semester at the Getty Center as a GCI Scholar and made presentations at the Symposium 2007 conference in Ottawa and the recent international biocidal seminar in Berlin.

Teresa Moreno continues as acting head of the Arizona State Museum’s Preservation Division while Nancy is on sabbatical and is overseeing a number of ongoing projects including research and conservation of objects for upcoming exhibits and loans. She, Gina Watkinson, Melissa Kingston (U of A undergraduate student), and Stephanie Ratcliffe (U of A graduate) are working on the conservation of a collection of Native American silver jewelry and other metal-smithing paraphernalia in preparation for the Set-in-Stone exhibit scheduled to open in February.

Teresa is also heavily involved with the Arizona State Museums and University of Arizona’s planning process in the design of a new museum building that will be constructed as part of the city of Tucson’s Rio Nuevo Downtown Development. The museum will play an instrumental role in the interpretation of the city’s historic and prehistoric origins.

Chris White continues his research and work on the ASM’s Pottery Project. Local conservator Marilyn Pool and Norine Carol, who relocated here from of the DC area, have been hired to work with Chris and continue the condition survey and the conservation treatment of the whole vessel collection.

Caitlin O’Grady is continuing her PhD research and the work she is doing in preparation for ASM’s Journeys of Our Ancestors exhibit, which is in development for installation at the new ASM Rio Nuevo facility in a couple of years. Her research includes the development of portable XRF calibrations for copper alloy objects. In addition she continues her research on the ASM’s archaeological ceramics collection looking at historic Mexican restoration fills on Casas Grandes pots.

Rachel Freer has also joined the ASM team as the Samuel H. Kress Foundation Conservation Fellow for 2007-2008. Rachel will be working together with Caitlin on the conservation of objects for the Journeys of Our Ancestors exhibit. Rachel is focusing her research on the textiles and organic materials that have been selected for display.

Regional Reporter: Gretchen Voeks

HAWAI’I

The Honolulu Academy of Arts opened their exhibition on modernism in Hawaii, Hawaiian Modern: The Architecture of Vladimir Ossipoff. You can check out the exhibition web micro-site at hawaiianmodern.org. The show is up through the end of January; it then travels to Frankfurt and Yale.

Regional Reporter: Lynn Ann Davis

GREATER LOS ANGELES

After almost two years of volunteer work, Victoria Blyth Hill has completed the book Care and Handling of Thangkas: A Guide for Caretakers. The basic guide for monastery collections and monks is printed with color illustrations and is translated into Tibetan. (Chinese
transcription is planned for next year.)

With the support of a private trust, the guide will be distributed free of charge to visitors to the new temporary exhibition at Bodgaya, India for their annual Monlan celebration.

Victoria and her husband Charles partook in this behind-the-scenes activity and screened the limited edition DVD while overseeing much of the outside working on a large collection of Fragonard drawings for the Norton Simon Museum in preparation for other ongoing projects.

On March 28, 2008, a mountmaking forum will be held at the Getty Villa in Malibu, California. Intended as a follow-up to the successful mountmaking forum held at the Villa in late 2007, this one-day forum will address principles, applications, and research in the field of mountmaking. The program will be presented in modules focusing on topics such as mount design and aesthetic design. As there are no current registries or organizations of professionals who do this type of work, the forum will provide an opportunity to begin an informal network with the goal of growing this field. There is no registration fee, but reservations will be required. For further information please contact Kathleen Dreyer at KDreyer@getty.edu.

Final year intern Jennifer Kim (NYU Program) and conservation technician Kathleen Olson are currently assessing the preparatory mountmaking process required to open at the Villa in early March. The new publication French Furniture and Gilt Bronzes: Baroque and Régence is at the printers and will be available in February of 2008. The catalogue includes detailed technical summaries for 44 works from the Getty Villa collection, including a collaborative lacquer analysis project with the scientific program of the Getty Conservation Institute.

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The topic of their presentation involves the restoration of Lichtenstein’s outdoor bronze sculpture, State of the Sun: Under the Sun, a monumental outdoor sculpture cast in stainless steel and placed in a Garden. The publication describes the techniques of this brilliant sculptor while illustrating European castings and casting methods and the process of carrying out technical studies of bronze.

Julie Wolfe participated on a panel with the director of the Roy Lichtenstein Foundation, Jack Cowart, for the conference entitled “The Object in Transition” held at the Getty in January. The topic of their presentation involves the restoration of Lichtenstein’s outdoor sculptures.

NYU student Lalena Vellanoweth joined the textiles conservation lab and the research lab at LACMA in July-August 2007 for a Fostering Internships program which worked on a wide variety of projects during her stay.

Janice Schopper has completed internship at the Norton Simon Museum for one year. She has made a great job of wrangling the lights so you can view it day or night. This past summer, SCS spent 4 weeks conserving a bronze fountain in the Aro uçuş of the Mission Inn in Riverside, along with 1 week at the Palm Springs Art Museum helping the museum with the conservation and supervision of their Weiner collection for an exhibition which opened in early November.

They welcome Andy Smith and Carrie Tazdik to their staff.

In Decorative Arts and Sculpture Conservation at the J. Paul Getty Museum, Stephen Bell has been hired as a mountmaker for one year to assist in the preparation and installation of temporary exhibitions, including Color of Life on the Human Figure and Garden of the Gods: French and Italian Polychromed Sculpture. Stephen is also assisting in the preparation of temporary exhibitions, including a beautiful late 19th-c. hat made from silk and woven bird quilts that is destined to the Del Valle family. In addition to preparing condition reports for objects slated for exhibit, Kathleen is doing a great job of wrangling the conservation section’s new KEEMu database.

Griswold Conservation Associates, LLC has recently been awarded a contract to do exhibition mountmaking for the Menil Collection in Houston, Texas, and with the curator of ethnographic art, have started cataloguing African objects focusing on the African object collection, including an examination and analysis project involving terra cotta figures from Mali.

Sara Barger has been acting as the curator for the Diehobeds in New Mexico exhibition that originated at the Harvard Museum of Natural History in Torcas. In addition, she has started new permanent exhibitions in New Mexico, she was the CAP assessor for the Museum of the Southwestern Railroad in Dallas and made a site visit to the Carnival Museum in Minsk, Kansas.

Regional Reporter: M. Susan Barger

PACIFIC NORTHWEST

Formally with Art Conservation Services, Cortnie Landrieu has opened her own practice in Seattle. Landrieu Conservation specializes in objects and environments and services the Seattle area and beyond.

J. Claire Dean has been out and about doing field work in Oregon, Washington, California, Texas, and northern Nevada. She has been heading up a project involving terra cotta figures from Mali. She participated in the FIAF-CERT training sessions in Seattle in November and will close out the year in Los Angeles at the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County, where she is serving as senior consulting conservator, museum projects, assisting Tania Collas with conservation issues associated with the museum’s long-term renovation project.

City of Vancouver, BC archives staff were on strike for three months this summer with the rest of the city workers. Picketing in the seaside park in front of the Archives, Sue Bigelow has had a great year as acting archives manager and is back in the lab. She will be relieved to continue to work backfilling Sue while she works on the Digital Archives.

Scott Carriere, column editor

Regional News, continued

NEW MEXICO

Bettina Rapafl was spending the month of August in New Mexico participating in the Menil Collection in Houston, Texas, collaborating with Brad Epley, head of conservation and collections, and with the curator of ethnographic art, have started cataloguing African objects focusing on the African object collection, including an examination and analysis project involving terra cotta figures from Mali.

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Regional News, continued

Project: Projects that Rosaleen and Sabina are working on include: digitizing audio tapes; conserving a 30-year old silent movie, Western Luck; repairing and digitizing numerous objects of oversize-by-lawsch edules; and the condition assessment of incoming video materials.

Artech Fine Art Services celebrates their 30th year anniversary! What once started as a group of ten artists has expanded to a staff of over 60 employees. Their services include art installation, packing and shipping, climate controlled storage, framing, and art maintenance. They look forward to continued relationships with conservators throughout the region.

In December, Dana K. Senge completed a thoroughly enjoyable project with the staff of the Baranov Museum in beautiful Kodiak, Alaska. Together they cleaned and repaired the skin shell of a hundred year old baidarka, or kayak. This vessel was treated in 1978 by graduate students from conservation program at George Washington University and ages have occurred. A new survey was made for a new round of maintenance and treatment.

Marie Laihbinis-Craft of MOC Objects Conservation, completed a condition survey and photo documentation of 26 objects from Dale Chihuly for the Government Services Administration (GSA). The free-blown glass vessels were purchased by the GSA for the Peace Arch Port of Entry in Blaine, Washington with the award of a GSA first commission. The survey was completed as part of the temporary relocation and installation of the Pilchuck Glass Museum on the Tacoma Union Station where they will remain until December 2010, when the construction of the new entry building should be completed.

Marie and intern Erin Stephenson, recently cleaned a Chihuly Floor sculpture in 1978 and its condition maintenance. Erin is also interning with paintings conservator, Nina Olson, and spent over a month assisting with the conservation of muids in Hood River and Portland.

Astrid van Giffen has been working with Marie Laihbinis-Craft the past few months. Astrid moved to Portland this summer after graduating from the Netherlands Institute for Cultural Heritage, (ICN), with a degree in glass and ceramics conservation. She has completed the treatments of a large, heavily damaged ironstone vase and replicate of a Greek vase and is currently working on the treatment of several smaller porcelain and earthenware objects.

Regional Reporter: Dana K. Senge

ROCKY MOUNTAIN REGION

Laura Downey Stannell and Camille Moore plan a survey of the photographs collection of the Arizona Historical Society (Tucson) in January.

Denver Art Museum conservators have all been involved in three traveling exhibitions: Artisan & Kings: Selected Treasures from the Louvre; as Field: American Painting 1950-1975, which have involved a lot of travel, condition reports, and some minor treatments. Thanks especially to Gina Laura and David Turnbull for all of their work.

Third-year intern Liz Homberger from Buffalo is treating several Indian folk art pieces with flaking paint. These objects have not been exhibited before because of condition and will make a major contribution to the museum’s usable collection.

Jessica Fletcher and Carl Patterson have recently been collaborating with the education department on a small exhibit that discusses touching art in the museum. The project relies heavily on our docents who are being trained in the history of one of their favorite American artist. A giant touchable turtle has been named "Carlos" in honor of our conservator–let’s hope the message of being careful comes over more strongly than just plain slow.

Change is possible! Conservation just hosted Samuel Anderson who is proposing plans for his emphasis in laboratory spaces. Staff and projects have increased substantially over the past two years and now expansion is inevitable.

Regional Reporter: Paulette Reading

SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA

Elisabeth Cornu, objects conservator, has been the key instructor in PIEDRA 2007, a monument conservation course in Rosario, Argentina in November 2007. This course was co-taught with Marcela Cedrola, museum scientist, and stone conservators Patricia Randigos and Dario Kleier, all from Argentina. It was carried out under the auspices of the Dirección de Restauración de Monumentos, Rosario, Argentina.

The paper conservation lab at the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco has been hosted to Adam Novak, a 3rd year student in the Winterthur conservation training program.

The lab is the recipient of a Kress Fellowship, which has been awarded to Nina Quaasbeck. Nina, a paper conservator on leave from the K20 Museum in Dusseldorf, will be at the FAMSF for a year working on a project entitled "Uncovered and Unknown". This study of the preservation and exhibition issues related to three-dimensional and two-dimensional paper and paper-like objects is being supervised by Timothy Pfeifer. Kelly is also supervising the treatment of a plaster and ivory, and the installation of such occurring before July 2008.

Debra Evans and colleague James Bernstein taught their 25th "Mastering Intaglione" workshop at the Campbell Center for Historic Preservation Studies in October. Jim went on to teach number 26 at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum just after. The two were honored by the AIC for their contribution to the education of conservators with the Sheldon and Caroline Keck Award.

In October Jim also taught a two-day interdisciplinary workshop, "Mastering Fills," for the Midwest Regional Conservation Guild. The course was co-taught by Meg Loew, Craft and Margo McFarland at the Campbell Center. As always, these workshops (and the last newsletter, Jim’s article “A Reminiscence with Others: ARG/CS' movement (and Other Essentials of Canvas Preparation)” is now available for download from www.GoldenPaints.com.

Sarah Gates has been working to prepare Turken carpets, along with Donna LaValle and Beth Szuhay, for the exhibit For Text and Trule: Masterpieces of Turken Weaving. The exhibit will be on view from December 2007 – September 2008 at the DeYoung Museum in San Francisco.

Mark Finn, Associate Head of Conservation at the Asian Art Museum of San Francisco, just returned from his fourth, and probably final, trip to Bhutan working on the sculptures to be included in The Dragon’s Gift (Arts of Bhutan), an exhibit organized by the Honolulu Academy of Art.

At Architectural Resources Group (ARG) and ARG Conservation Services (ARG/CS), Architectural Conservator Kelly Wong is overseeing the exterior renovation of the University of California at Berkeley. She has been working on the condition survey and photo documentation of 26 objects in Santa Cruz.

Margaret (Meg) Geis-Mooney, textile/costume conservator in private practice, gave lectures on caring for family textile treasures at the Wild Wonderful King Vintage Museum (Oakhurst, CA) in September and at the 30th Annual Country Historical Museum (La Conner, WA) in October. She also attended the North American Conservation Conference in Washington, DC in November, with funding provided by both a NAYCC and a professional development scholarship.

Michelle Barger has been named Deputy Head of Conservation of the Eisele-S. Haas Conservation Studio at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art. In this new capacity, she works with Jill Sterrett to develop and implement a new conditions assessment and master preservation plan for the Luther Burbank Home & Gardens in Santa Rosa, California. Kelly completed an Historic Structures Report (HSR) for an historic barn in Monterey. She is grateful to the many conservators and technicians who will have been treated in SFMOMA with Jill Sterrett.

Regional Reporter: Beth Szuhay

TEXAS

Mark van Gelder has completed the conservation treatment of the acid-vandalized Rafael Navarro murals in the lobby of the Seton Medical Park Tower building in Austin. He is grateful to the many conservators who responded with valuable tips and suggestions in the AIC Paintings Group website list. He also wants to thank and acknowledge the two conservationists: Beth Szuhay and paintings conservator Nancy Lew, for their professionalism and expertise in the process.

Mark also recently completed a condition survey of the approximately 300 works of art in the Trust Historic Site, Villa Finale, in San Antonio, Texas.

Gregory Thomas is finishing the conservation treatments of the last five paintings (one is double sided) by A. R. Gurrey in the collection of the Kaua’i Museum in Lihue, Hawaii. Upon completion of these landscapes/ seascapes, a total of thirty paintings by this artist will have been treated in the Art Care conservation studio. Gregory is also continuing the conservation of paintings from local private collections.

Regional Reporter: Ken Grant