



Images

The newsletter of the VRA

April 2013 Vol.10 No. 2

Memo from the President

By Jolene de Verges (Southern Methodist University)

Conference Wrap up

VRA31 conference attendees who gathered in the “Creative Capital,” Providence, earlier this month encountered brisk New England spring weather, which was offset by the warm hospitality in evidence throughout this unique and historic city. With over 250 members and invited guests present, the 31st annual conference provided for numerous opportunities to network with colleagues and friends, to exchange ideas and experiences, and to welcome and encourage newcomers to the field of image management. I congratulate and extend my sincere thanks to conference organizers, Vice-Presidents Steven Kowalik and Cindy Abel Morris, on an outstanding and impressive conference program and arrangements. Assisting them were Mark Pompelia and Karen Bouchard, the local planning team who, along with VRA New England members, helped draw attention to a wide variety of cultural attractions throughout the city of Providence. I appreciate their contributions towards the stimulating program, especially the arrangements they made for terrific walking tours, open houses and complimentary museum admission.

Virtual experiences of the conference are now available on VRA Facebook, through Twitter (#VRA2013), and <http://storify.com/kboehlert/visual-resources-association-annual-conference-in>, thanks to our Social Networking Contributor, Krystal Boehlert. Watch for conference content to be posted soon in SlideShare.

No event of this kind can be successful without the hard work and volunteer efforts of many. In no particular order, the registration desk staff, Lise Hawkos and a group of volunteers welcomed and informed attendees. Session, workshop and special interest group leaders and panel participants we owe our gratitude to for their participation and contributions. As well, the Education Committee, led by Co-Chairs Meghan Musolff and Beth Wodnick, are to be commended for their part in shaping a program that brought together experts from both within and beyond our membership to impart wisdom and inspiration. Appreciation is also due the Visual Resources Association Foundation for underwriting the VRA Legacy Lecture featuring James Elkins. And a special thanks to all of you who attended and affirmed that VRA is important to your ongoing professional development.

A complete list of conference sponsors is available on the conference website and in the VRA 31 conference program, offered only in printable PDF format for the first time this year!

<http://www.vraweb.org/conferences/vra31/wp-content/uploads/2011/06/VRA-2013-Program-Final5.pdf>

Please consider turning research and conference presentations into articles for submission to the Visual Resources Association Bulletin. <http://online.vraweb.org/vrab/>

Acknowledging that I cannot do full justice describing the highlights of the 31st annual conference, a summary of just a few key elements below:

- The Providence Biltmore: historic and elegant, this charming hotel in the heart of Providence’s downtown was the perfect setting for fostering the collegiality and community-building that is the hallmark of our conferences.
- Engaging, interactive workshops: attendees gained valuable information and expanded their skill sets in a wide range of important areas including Photoshop

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Kelly Smith (Lafayette College) Upcoming Conferences
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and embedded metadata. Other workshop topics addressed legal issues that challenge cultural institutions faced with making their collections more broadly accessible and practical tips for developing effective presentations.

- FREE and spontaneous participant-driven VRACamp: the unstructured forum stimulated ideas for fostering a culture of professional engagement between different communities.
- Thought-provoking plenary speakers: James Elkins and Alex MacLean conveyed their passion about the power and authority of images.
- Terrific FREE walking tours: local guides highlighted a sampling of buildings in the city, with splendid examples of historic preservation and rehabilitation.
- Honor bestowed on VRA pioneers: Gretchen Wagner, Elisa Lanzi, and Greg Reser were honored during an elegant dinner celebration for the contributions they have made to our profession.
- Celebrating the 10th anniversary of the Summer Educational Institute: the impact of SEI following a decade and a look towards the future was the focus of a forum style special interest group meeting.

I enjoyed spending the conference week with longtime colleagues, but I have to say it was a special treat to meet so many new and enthusiastic first-timers. Looking forward to seeing everyone in Milwaukee!

Notes from the Treasurer

by Allan Kohl (Minneapolis College of Art and Design)

In my “Notes from the Treasurer” for November, 2012, I outlined some of the challenges facing the Association in funding our current operations through what traditionally have been our two primary income sources: membership dues and conference profits. The budget deficits we have experienced in four of the past five fiscal years underscore the fact that these traditional sources are no longer providing us with sufficient revenue to cover the organization’s operating costs. Though the overall trend is disturbing, each individual year’s deficit has been relatively modest: we’re usually within a few percentage points of breaking even. So even a small additional income source would help us balance the books.

If you look at the larger picture, our balance sheet as of March 15 of this year showed total net assets over \$487,000 (N.B.: All figures in this article, unless otherwise stated, are taken from the Association’s balance sheet as of 12/31/2012, and have been rounded to the nearest \$1,000). At first glance, that number looks as though we’re doing great! But how can this be true if we have been running a series of budget deficit years? Without a bit of context, any of these figures in isolation can be highly misleading.



If you were to study our balance sheet closely, you’d see that our assets are distributed

among several different categories, with different purposes. Our Bank of America Money Market account (\$130,000) serves as the ready reserve, taking in major deposits during the November membership drive and pre-conference registration months. We move funds from this account into checking (\$14,000) as needed to pay our obligations throughout the year. When I mentioned earlier that our balance sheet on March 15 showed a robust net asset total on that specific date, this figure reflects income from membership dues and conference registrations, but not the major expenditures that we face when conference bills come due, along with ongoing expenses throughout the summer, and into the fall. The Association is in a position similar to that of an independent contractor who gets paid twice a year, and has to make that income last for a full twelve months. The Certificate of Deposit (\$45,000) and Treasury Bill (\$35,000) provide us with interest income while being readily available in case of emergencies. We don't use these assets to fund operating expenses -- just as an individual wouldn't tap into a 401k to buy groceries.

This careful distribution of the Association's assets among different financial instruments was instituted more than a decade and half ago, at a time when we were accumulating more money than was needed to fund current operations. At the dawn of the new millennium, the VRA began the process of formulating its first long-range strategic plan; the Executive Board established the Financial Advisory Committee to formulate possible investment strategies, and set in place a prudent policy of maintaining a cash reserve equivalent to six months' operating expenses. By the middle of the past decade, the Association's assets had increased to over \$400,000 in value. The growing portion not needed for operating expenses and the 6-month reserve was placed in Fidelity Investment accounts in the expectation that this strategy would bring us a better return than was possible from low-interest bank accounts, in hopes that in time this might allow us to draw on annual increases in investment value to help fund our current operations. The Executive Board believes that it is now time to act on this possibility that was set in place by the foresight of our predecessors.

Currently the Financial Advisory Committee, chaired by former Treasurer Billy Kwan, and the Executive Board are investigating the possibility of using our Fidelity Investment funds -- nearly half of the Association's assets (\$217,000) -- as a form of endowment, drawing down any increase in value over a multi-year average as a third regular income source in addition to membership dues and conference registration fees. With the pro bono advice of a certified financial planner, our goal is to draft an investment policy for the Association that will allow us to use our Fidelity Investment assets to provide additional operating income to help us balance our annual budget, and perhaps also to fund special projects and services of immediate value to our membership. We are investigating three possible strategies (none of which, I hasten to assure our members, would involve withdrawing principal). Instead, our goal is to use our Fidelity Investment funds as many of our institutions use their endowments, drawing down increases in value over a multi-year average. Part of our discussions include considering what level of risk we are prepared to accept in order to improve our projected rate of return. We are in agreement that a baseline principal balance of at least \$200,000 would always be kept intact to serve as our backup emergency reserve while also working as seed capital to generate additional income for us, but concur that any increase in value beyond this base figure could safely be used to provide more direct support for the Association's current operations.

Once the Association's investment policy has been completed and approved by the Executive Board, it will be made available to the membership in the interests of transparency. To me, this proposal represents a realistic way to help balance our budgets, using our accumulated assets in a prudent and sustainable manner while avoiding significant increases in membership dues or conference registration fees.

VRA Website Migration Update

By John Trendler (Scripps College)

Roughly one year ago the Website Migration Advisory Group was formed in order to investigate migrating the VRA's website to another more user (both editor and visitor) friendly platform, assess the current website content, reorganize the site to function primarily as a communications and marketing tool, and implement a more dynamic and visually appealing look. The Website Migration Advisory Group consists of myself, Public Relations & Communications officer as chair, Jackie Spafford, Web Editor, Betha Whitlow, chair of the Publishing Advisory Group, Jennifer Kniesch, Website Technology Coordinator, Krystal Boehlert, Social Networking Contributor, and Teodora Bozhilova, Communications Technology Advisor.

The group built off of the 2009 Strategic Plan and the recent Publishing Advisory Group (PAG) recommendations, both of which provided much of the initial research and recommendations. Over the past year the advisory group investigated the current website, analyzed its content, generated site maps, met regularly utilizing GoToMeeting, explored platforms and recommended WordPress (a web editing platform), which was subsequently approved by the board. WordPress testing is currently underway; the VRA 2013 conference website was built on an installation of WordPress and met all expectations.

Content migration is in progress, as is the overall site layout and redesign with the current color scheme and logo remaining the same. Most of the current content can be migrated in a fairly straightforward fashion. Content migration allows opportunities to revise certain sections of a website which may be out of date or stagnant due to a lack of consistent or frequent updates. New or revised sections of the website, such as Opportunities (including internships and mentorship) and Resources, will benefit from being more actively updated to a more friendly web based editing interface.

In the coming year we will be working with content stakeholders (committees, appointees, etc.) to ensure that migrated content is up to date and that timely news and announcements are published in a highly visible manner on the homepage; a place where each visit provides new insights, announcements, and relevant information.

Farewell to Images from the Editor

By Marlene Gordon

Image Stuff and Images: A Short History

Image Stuff was idea of Corey Shultz (formerly Stanford University) and Kristen Solias (formerly University of Massachusetts, Boston). Its mission was to present VRA members and others with information of online resources, new image sets, copyright issues, topics of interest to the membership, and present an opportunity to VRA members to share knowledge and information. The first issue was published on February 1, 2004.

Over the years, Image Stuff became Images and there were changes in editors and column editors. Kristin resigned as Co-editor after the October 1, 2004 issue, but Corey stayed on as sole editor while another was appointed. I began my appointment as Co-editor for the April 2005 issue until Corey resigned prior to the August 2005 issue. There were also changes in column editors over the publications history. I have searched all the issues from the first to the issue before this and have assembled a list of contributors, column editors, and technical adviser. All issues of the newsletter will be available on the VRA web site and Images will be part of the website migration that John mentioned in the previous article.

My heartfelt thanks go out to all who have contributed to Image Stuff and Images over the last nine years. It has been my pleasure to work with so many wonderful and knowledgeable individuals.

Articles appearing in Image Stuff and/or Images

Additional Articles

Maureen Burns, "Collection Spotlight": Cartography Associations Visual Collections, "The Transitions", and the "Visual Resources Association White Paper"; Jan Eklund, "Daily Description Dilemmas" and "Cataloging Conundrums"; Leigh Gates, "The Transitions"; Allan Kohl, "Conference Presentations"; Steve Kowalik, "Symposium Summary": Open Collections: Exploring Online Cultural Resources"; Mark Pompelia "VRA Bulletin News"; Amy Robinson, "Relaunch of Online Resource Provides Unique Access to Visual Arts Collections"; Cynthia Scott "Museums, Libraries, and Archives: Summer Institute for Knowledge Sharing"; Kristin Solias, "Online Resources; Museums, Libraries, and Archives": Summer Institute for Knowledge Sharing"; Maryly Snow, Daily Dilemmas; Caleb Smith, "The Gates"; Margaret Webster, "The Transitions" and "VRA-L Listserv Summary-Slides:" Then Into the Dumpster they Go...Really?"

ARTstor articles

Eric Behrens

Awards

Mark Pompelia; Eric Schwab; John Taormina

Books, Articles and More

Joan Beaudoin; Elizabeth Darocha Berenz; Vicky Brown; Marlene Gordon; Allan Kohl; Max Marmor; Heather Seneff; Kristin Solias; John Taormina; Betha Whitlow

Cataloging Conundrums

Jan Eklund

Chapter News

Megan Battey; Johanna Bauman; Merriann Bidgood; Anne Blecksmith; Barbara A. Brenny; Ching-Jung Chen; Sherman Clarke; Heather Cummins; Abigail Dansiger; Emy Nelson Decker; Claire Dienes; Jodie Double; Jennifer Faist; Jane Fisher; Marcia Focht; Sarah Goldstein; Marlene Gordon; Jen Green; Elizabeth Gushee; Macie Hall; Jeanne Keefe; Jeannine N. Keefer; Karen Kessel; Steve Kowalik; Bill Kwan; Adam Lauder; Trudy Levy; Jeanette Mills; Katherine Moloney; Rebecca Moss; Joshua Polansky; Greg Reser; Jenni Rodda; Joe Romano; Heather Seneff; Jacqueline Spafford; Christopher Spinelli; Evan Towle; John M. Trendler; Emily Vigor; Carey Weber

Committee News

Meghan Musolff; Elaine Paul; Betha Whitlow

Conference Chuckles

Jonathan Cartledge

Conference Presentations

Allan Kohl

Data Standards

Ann Whiteside

Digital Collections

Edward A. Galloway

Digital Scene and Heard

Eric Anspach; Margo Ballantyne; Johanna Bauman; Maureen Burns; Marta Bustillo; Priscilla Caplan; Susan Chute; Nori Duncan; Jacquelyn Erdman; Reinhard Foertsch; Sheryl Frisch; Sarah Goldstein; Michael Greenhalgh; Liz Gushee; Nancy Harm; Kevin Hegg; Leslie Johnston; Virginia Kerr; Andreas Knab; Steve Kowalik; Christine Kuan; Rosalie Lack; Elisa Lanzi; Elizabeth Meyer; Shannon Michalak; Anna Miller; Tammy Moore; Meghan Musolff; Salwa Ismail Patel; Greg Reser; Heather Seneff; Christopher Strasbaugh; Steve Tatum; Christina Updike; Carmen Wiedenhoef; Susan Jane Williams

Education Committee News

Betha Whitlow

From the President's Keyboard

Eliza Lanzi

Image Sources

Marlene Gordon; Amy Robinson

IPR News

Ryan Brubacher; Jane Darcovich; Marlene Gordon; Jen Green; Jean-Marc Gutton; Carl Johnson; Benjamin Kessler; Adam Lauder; Megan Macken

MDID

Kevin Hegg; Andreas Knab; Christina Updike

Memo from the President

Kathe Albrecht; Maureen Burns; Allan Kohl; Jolene de Verges

Nominations Sought

Ann Burns

Notes from the President

Macie Hall; Allan Kohl

Notes from the Treasurer

Allan Kohl

Positions Filled

Jonathan Cartledge; Anne Norcross; Mary Duff-Silverman; Gretchen Tichel

SECAC

Emy Nelson Decker

Slides and Digital Image Sets

Samantha Pawley

Software Reviews

Corey Schultz (Picasia 2); Susan Jane Williams (VireoCat)

Summaries of VRA-sponsored sessions at CAA

Maureen Burns; Ben Kessler; Dana Leibsohn; Max Marmor; John Ott

Summer Educational Institute (SEI)

Kathe Hicks Albrecht; Maureen Burns; Trudy Jacoby; Jeanne Keefe; Elizabeth Schaub;
John Taormina; Karin Whalen

Summer Educational Institute (SEI) Taskforce

Macie Hall

Tech Tips

Serenity Ibsen; Jennifer Kniesch; Meghan Musolff; Alex Nichols; Chris Strasbaugh;
Betha Whitlow

Upcoming Conferences

Brooke Cox; Marlene Gordon; Brooke Sansosti; Kelly Smith

VRA Bulletin News

Macie Hall; Mark Pompelia

VRA Executive Board Nominations

Ann R.F. Burns

VRA Foundation

Elisa Lanzi

VRA Call for Proposals

Betha Whitlow

Visual Resources Emerging Professionals and Students (VREPS)

Allison Olsen; Alyx Rossetti

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Digital Scene and Heard

Jacquelyn Erdman

IPR column

Jane Darcovich; Ryan Brubacher

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