

REVISED 1/16/01

SUFFOLK COUNTY VANDERBILT MUSEUM BOARD OF TRUSTEES

A regular meeting of the Suffolk County Vanderbilt Museum Board of Trustees was held on 11/16/00, in the Vanderbilt Museum Planetarium, Centerport, NY.

The following were in attendance:

Dr. Steven Gittelman – President
Gary Fischhoff – 1st Vice President
Dr. Anthony Pecorale – Treasurer
Marjorie Kossoy Fuhrmann – Secretary
Donna deLuca Periconi – Trustee
Michael Broxmeyer – Trustee
Bertram Seides – Trustee
Edward Hahn – Trustee
Susan LeBow – Trustee
Robert LaBua - Trustee
R. Douglas Shaw - Trustee
J. Lance Mallamo - Director
Wendy O'Donohoe – Staff
Melissa Mecca – Staff
David Bush – Staff
Barbara Oster – Staff
Leslie Tannen – Todd Shapiro Associates
Bill Dieck – Staff
Elizabeth McQueeney – Staff
Maryann Zakshevsky – Staff
Mark McHugh – Staff
Rita Beckman – Staff
Ann Marie Pastore – Stenographer

Absent:

Harlan J. Fischer
Carl Luecke
Timothy Votapka

(Dr. Gittelman called the meeting to order at 7:15 p.m.)

DR. GITTLEMAN:

Welcome to the Vanderbilt Museum Board of Trustees' meeting. Do we have a list of visitors?

MS. PASTORE:

Yes.

DR. GITTLEMAN:

Is there anybody who wishes to make a comment to the Board or ask us questions? Thank you for attending. Approval of minutes, Marge.

MS. FUHRMANN:

Just a second.

DR. GITTELMAN:

Okay, I'll move on to the Public Relations' Report.

MS. TANNEN:

We have a tape on the Living History Program to show you tonight. It was done with News 12.

DR. GITTELMAN:

Okay, great.

MS. FUHRMANN:

Did I miss my turn?

DR. GITTELMAN:

We'll come back to you.

VIDEO PRESENTATION 7:20 – 7:32 P.M.:

10/2/00	News 12	Living History Tour
10/5/00	WLNY-TV	Discovery Launch
10/9/00	LI News Tonight	Discovery Launch
10/13/00	News 12	Music Under the Dome
10/19/00	WLNY-TV	Hawaiian Class

MS. TANNEN:

As you can see in your package we also have a number of clips of the daily as well as weekly news. We tried to cover as many areas as possible. If there is something that anybody here feels should be publicized or needs to be

publicized or isn't being publicized, please feel free to get in touch with me at Todd Shapiro Associates.

DR. GITTELMAN:

Are there any questions? Thank you, Leslie, for that report. Okay, let's go back to Marge.

MS. FUHRMANN:

I move that the minutes of October 18, 2000 be accepted with some minor comments.

DR. GITTELMAN:

Do I have a second?

DR. PECORALE:

I'll second it, but what are the minor comments?

MS. FUHRMANN:

Oh, just page 12 and page 14 had two mistakes. Page 12 the software is called Past Perfect. You weren't sure of the first word. It is Past. On page 14 under Mr. Mallamo, three lines down I just think that the word "do" is missing. Other than that they were fine.

DR. PECORALE:

Second, as modified.

MS. FUHRMAN:

Thank you.

DR. GITTELMAN:

All in favor? Opposed? Abstained? It passes unanimously. Thank you, Marge. Education and Exhibits Committee, Marge.

MS. FUHRMANN:

Though we did not have a formal meeting, I did have a telephone conversation with Betsy, who is the Director of Public Programming, and also with Florence, who is the Curator for the house. Betsy is pleased to announce that Kathy Frost has been selected as Education Coordinator. She will have responsibility for all educational programs. Also Lorraine has been promoted to Assistant Director of Public Programming. Her main area of concentration will be issues of the Planetarium.

Lorraine is extremely proud to welcome David, who is sitting here with us. David is sitting at the table next to Ann Marie. He is our new Technical and Production Coordinator. He is a graduate of Five Towns College Audio Engineering

Program. The ads for the vacant Curator's positions will be on-line next week and will run for six weeks at the AAM site. The print ad will be in the December 1 issue of AVISO and will continue onward from there.

As we announced last week, we're beginning our work on our reaccreditation. As such, Betsy has organized the beginning of a cleaning of the marine exhibits and the marine specimens. That's being done by Bill. The taxidermist is coming in February to do a professional cleaning and minor restoration work of the dioramas. He has also explained to Betsy and will demonstrate when he's here in February how to clean the taxidermy articles.

The house is being decorated this week by the local garden clubs. Florence hopes that everyone will have a chance to come by the mansion and see their work. Last month we also mentioned that the position of Web Master for the Museum was vacant now with Carol's resignation. Betsy had a meeting with a fellow of Tony Pecorale's recommendation. He has given –

DR. PECORALE:

She.

MS. FUHRMANN:

She?

DR. PECORALE:

Yes, she.

MS. FUHRMANN:

Sorry, that was my error. She has given Betsy some names to call. It seems the most immediate problem is we have to have an increased modem speed to do what we want to do with the internet here at the Museum. She called this a big stumbling block.

In our packets there is an announcement of the next LIMA meeting. It's December 1, in Port Jefferson. While these garden club members have been here, they have been looking around the Mansion and have donated many things to the Museum such as some vintage prints, enamelware, soaps that actually date back to the 1930's, and kitchenware. One of the women has offered to sew curtains for the kitchen, which we thought was very nice.

Florence attended a presentation to teachers at Half Hollow Hills West, a school in Dix Hills. It was a program that introduced the Social Studies teachers to what is available here at the Museum for their studies on global studies. They were very surprised to hear that there were so many primary sources available through the Museum. She left a packet with the teachers. There have been some follow-ups already. For information, Doug Shaw was also there as the Director of the Long Island Maritime Museum. But in his presentation, he also mentioned that

he was a Trustee of the Vanderbilt and some of the programs and things that we do here.

Florence also asked me to let you know that she is working with Leslie on publicizing the turn-table exhibit currently being shown.

Lastly, as you all may have noticed, just outside of Willy K's bathroom there is a small table with what looks like an early ham radio on it. The Long Island Telephone Pioneers Museum is researching this ham radio. It's felt that he used this to talk to the Alva when it was moored in the harbor. If the research finds that that is so, they will get it up and running for us as a volunteer project. End of report.

DR. GITTELMAN:

Thank you for that report. Any questions or statements? Finance Committee, Tony.

DR. PECORALE:

Each Trustee has a copy of the Treasurer's Report. It is now actual up through September. Please take a careful look. You will see that we currently are doing fairly well. We hope that it will continue on to the remainder of the year so that we will again have a surplus to fall back on for next year's budget. I understand, Lance, you have already started working on next year's budget.

MR. MALLAMO:

Yes, next year's budget is all set.

DR. PECORALE:

We hope to be able to present that to the Trustees probably in another month and a half or so.

MR. MALLAMO:

I did present that to you several months ago. Maybe you're talking about 2002. That I haven't started yet, but the 2001 budget I think we did review back in the spring. We're just waiting for the Legislature to do the final conformation on it.

MR. FISCHOFF:

Lance, since it appears we may have a budget surplus at the end of the year, there are certain expenses that you have maybe deferred or haven't pursued because of certain money issues. Would it make sense to incur those expenses before the year is up?

MR. MALLAMO:

I don't think that will be a problem. I think we already have begun to –

MR. FISCHOFF:

I don't see any point in coming up the end of the year with a surplus. A deficit is a problem, but I don't see any benefit in a surplus since we're not-for-profit. We should use the money in ways that will further the Museum's –

MR. MALLAMO:

There are a number of things that we have deferred and we are now acting on. There are other areas that we're looking at, such as, right off the bat, inventory in the gift shop, as you can see –

MR. FISCHOFF:

Or carpeting.

MR. MALLAMO:

We made a major commitment to inventory recently and happily it's selling much quicker than we expected. So keeping the shop stocked has now become a priority. We're adjusting that on a day-to-day basis at this point. The shop has been open about three weeks, and we have been surprised that on Friday it's full and on Monday we come in and it's very sparse. We have been expediting our orders and investing more than we originally anticipated into inventory but with the thought that we will get it back.

DR. PECORALE:

Good. And we'll have October at the next Board Meeting, the actuals for October.

DR. GITTELMAN:

Any questions or comments on that report? Personnel Committee, Tony.

DR. PECORALE:

Everyone has received copies of the Personnel Manual. If anyone has any concerns, they were to give us a call. I received no such calls, so I assume that it met with everyone's approval. The Personnel Manual has to be incorporated into our reaccreditation report. Having received no comments, I just assume that we'll go forward with it as presented. Again, if there are any comments, we are really running out of time now, so if you have any concerns with anything that's in there, please get back to either Lance or me or Marjorie, and we will take them under advisement and meet with the appropriate people to review them. That's it.

DR. GITTELMAN:

Thank you. Any questions or comments? Development Committee, Carl Luecke is absent. Is there anybody prepared to give his report?

MR. MALLAMO:

We did not have a Development Committee meeting this month.

DR. GITTELMAN:

Okay, moving on to the Nominating Committee, Tony.

DR. PECORALE:

The Nominating Committee did meet. Our report is as follows: We are unanimously recommending that the current offices be continued for the 2001 year. As everyone is aware, tonight we'll just give the report. The actual vote will take place in November.

DR. GITTELMAN:

No, January.

DR. PECORALE:

There can be nominations from the floor. The vote takes place at that time.

DR. GITTELMAN:

Any questions or comments at this time?

DR. PECORALE:

The full Nominating Committee was present for the meeting.

DR. GITTELMAN:

Thank you for your service. The Director's Report.

MR. MALLAMO:

Several weeks ago we had a small reception here in the Planetarium for our Museum volunteers. I think we're well over 40 or 50 volunteers at this point. They had a very enjoyable evening. I'm happy to say that they not only came but brought friends and family and we're seeing more volunteers than ever. We look forward to the expansion of our volunteer program.

That included, of course, the Master Gardeners and Bill Dieck tells me today that we're going to be getting another Master Gardener in. The current core of gardeners with Cornell this week planted over 1,200 tulips in the courtyard and the adjacent gardens as well as a number of new shrubs, daffodils, and crocus. We placed a major landscaping order. We're looking forward to next spring.

Our Capital Projects for 2000 are on the table in the Legislature and will be considered at the December 5th meeting. If any of you have legislative contacts, I can give you a briefing on what those projects are. I will fax a list to everyone and the amounts that we're looking for and an explanation on why they are needed.

Planning for the projects is – most of them are pretty much complete. The wiring and the air conditioning, we're just down to the final details right now, picking out certain fixtures, etc., for the lighting. So we look forward to the implementation of that in the very near future.

Florence Ogg and Warren Newman and I took a trip down to Pennsylvania on November 2 to Westchester, Pennsylvania where we met with Claire Yellin of the Samuel Yellin Iron Works. This is the firm that did all the iron work for the estate including the grills on the windows, the garden gates, the lights fixtures, the curtain rods, the weather vane, the door hinges. She had one of the most extensive architectural files. She had the original drawings for all the estate iron work, as well as photographs when it left the forge in Philadelphia in the 1920's. So we look forward to restoring many of the pieces.

In fact, just the weather vane alone, when she got the drawings out, we realized what pieces have been altered over the years and what was missing. We spent a wonderful day there. Clair is going to be coming up here in several weeks to meet with the County architect. Hopefully we'll be able to initiate some restoration work in conjunction with our capital projects involving that firm. She's very enthusiastic about being able to assist in the effort to restore our iron work. It was absolutely thrilling to be there. When you walked in the forge, you felt you were right at Eagle's Nest because so many of the same designs are inherent in the place.

As you can see, our new gift shop is open. I talked about that earlier. It's doing phenomenally well. We have a number of things to come. We're going to be selling posters and litho graphics by Attila Hejjer who is an artist for NASA and the United States Postal Service. We're the only Long Island Museum to carry these things. We only have a few small samples here yet that the blank wall in the back will carry his art. In the lobby here we'll be doing a temporary exhibit of Attila's art for the winter season. So we're looking forward to doing that. You won't have to go to the Kennedy Space Center to buy your space shuttle art any longer. You can do it right here in Centerport.

The agreement with Cornell is about to bear fruit. Cornell has received about \$500,000 in grants in which to begin their program. We're interviewing right now for staff positions. They will be adding three full-time employees at the Vanderbilt beginning January 1. They will be housed in our boathouse. Of that money we will be receiving for a good portion of it a percentage administration fee in the grant funds. We receive 50 percent of the administrative cost for any project that occurs here, so that will be a new revenue source for the Museum as well. Chris Smith was here today. He did a public service television show from the Museum. I was interviewed, and we talked about the joint programs we're going to be doing. Among the projects they'll be working on in January will be the lobster die-off in Long Island Sound, ways to remediate storm water run-off in the Long

Island Sound, as well as an engineering project on drainage. So both of us look forward to beginning that.

In December we have a number of major activities coming. December 1 we'll be having our members evening here in the lobby, which we will be doing the official opening of the Planetarium gift shop. We'll have a champagne reception here and a free show for members and their guests. On December 8 will be the Trustees' dinner in the Lancaster Room of the mansion, and you'll be receiving an invitation in the next few days on that event. On December 15 is our holiday reception in the mansion. December 26 to December 30 will be our candle light evenings in which the mansion will be opened each evening to view the decorations in the evening hours. On December 31 we'll be holding 2001 a Vanderbilt Space Odyssey here in the Planetarium. We look forward to a great event on that evening as well. I think that's all I have to report tonight.

Oh, I have one other thing. We're about to get new sidewalks and fencing. All of our chain-link fencing will be replaced with a wrought iron fence, and we'll be getting new pavers where there are asphalt walkways. That's going to be beginning either next week or the first week in January, depending on what the weather is.

(Susan LeBow entered the meeting at 7:45 p.m.)

MR. FISCHOFF:

All the asphalt is going?

MR. MALLAMO:

Yes, and we'll be putting in some new sidewalks where there aren't sidewalks currently. That's my report, Steve.

DR. GITTELMAN:

Thank you for that report. Are there any questions or comments?

MS. FUHRMANN:

I have a question.

DR. GITTELMAN:

Yes, Marge.

MS. FUHRMANN:

Can we publicize that we're selling this artist thing?

MR. MALLAMO:

I believe – is Leslie still here or did she leave?

MS. FUHRMANN:

I think she stepped out.

MR. MALLAMO:

Yes, we actually are promoting that evening. Attila actually was planning on being here, signing his work that evening, but he got called off for a special project with NASA, so he's not going to be able to be here, but he will provide the artwork signed beforehand.

We also have another artist who we met at the Planetarium Conference in Montreal who makes jewelry out of meteorite fragments. He's going to be selling his jewelry in our gift shop as well. We understand that he may be here on December 1.

MS. FUHRMANN:

Is that on consignment?

MR. MALLAMO:

That will be on consignment. He's actually a Planetarium Director out in Kentucky. His work is absolutely beautiful. He also had a contact for Egyptian jewelry that we're working with to bring genuine Egyptian jewelry here. We expect a shipment of that any day now to look at.

DR. GITTELMAN:

Thank you for that report.

MR. MALLAMO:

Tony, did you have a question?

DR. PECORALE:

Not a question. The other day I was at the Post Office, and they have a new sheet out of underwater sea creatures. We had that stamp thing when we did the space –

MR. MALLAMO:

Yes.

DR. PECORALE:

Have we ever tried to put any stamps or stamp covers in our gift shop?

MR. MALLAMO:

I don't know.

MR. FISCHOFF:

Can they make any money?

MS. MCQUEENEY:

We never have.

DR. PECORALE:

You can make your own cover, put the stamp on it, and put a Vanderbilt –

MR. MALLAMO:

That's a very good idea. We will definitely talk to the Postal Service about that because our exhibit over here is going to be all about stamps and space. We are looking at a number of new product lines for the Planetarium that we generate, such as framed photographs of the estate, drawings, cards, and stamps is a very good one. We're going to be adding videos and CD's that we don't currently house. We're trying to bring a number of new dimensions here. I think if you see what we have done even to date we have added an Egyptian line. We're trying to develop a line of Polynesian. We even have a dinosaur –

DR. PECORALE:

The reason I ask is because Vanderbilt was originally into fish and sea life. I don't know if any of you have seen the new sea life fish stamps that they have, but they are really beautiful stamps. I would think that we might be able to design the Vanderbilt emblem, put it on an envelope and do it as a cover. It would be the kind of thing that's not that expensive. Sure, the stamp costs you 33 cents, but you can sell the envelope and things for about a \$1 and stamp collectors do look for those kinds of things; right, Gary?

MR. FISCHOFF:

Yes.

MR. MALLAMO:

Well, we'll be talking about the Postal Service as far as what we're doing here in the lobby, so we'll add that to the agenda.

DR. GITTELMAN:

We should add Vanderbilt season greeting cards.

MR. MALLAMO:

I think that's underway as of today; right, Rita?

MS. BECKMAN:

I ordered them today from the printer. It's the holiday one, the one with the gate that Steve Moore had painted.

MR. MALLAMO:

But not the gate you're thinking of. This is another gate.

MS. BECKMAN:

No, it's the gate that goes out to the front of the lawn from the courtyard.

DR. PECORALE:

You could also do a Christmas ornament that would be unique, just the Vanderbilt –

MR. MALLAMO:

Yes, we're looking at that as well.

DR. PECORALE:

I like that Fire Island ornament that she sells at her store. She's got an exclusive on it. I can't remember the name of the company, but it's a nice little ornament for \$9.

MR. MALLAMO:

Well, we still have room.

DR. GITTELMAN:

I've got plenty of fossils I could drag in. I have fish by the boxes. Okay, thank you for that report. I guess it's my report. I still have not heard any word from Congress regarding the bill we have pending. When they finish their budget, we'll have an answer. Unfortunately, our sponsor for that bill, as you all know, lost his Senate bid. But the bill is still alive as far as I was told today.

We are also moving ahead with our work on the sea-plane hangar, the exhibit project. We have spent a lot of time preparing materials for a sequence of presentations that actually begins next week. I have a meeting with certain major donors beyond the ones that we have already discussed to see what we can do. It's the beginning rounds of the Legislature. Beyond that I have nothing else to report. Are there any questions? Unfinished business? Any new business? There is no reason to establish an executive session. May I have a motion to adjourn? Is there a second?

MR. MALLAMO:

We may have a problem with the December meeting.

DR. GITTELMAN:

Right now we have the December meeting scheduled for Tuesday the 19th. Would Wednesday, the 20th be acceptable?

Ms. DeLUCA PERICONI:

I have so many functions in the month of December.

MS. FUHRMANN:

The only day –

DR. GITTELMAN:
What's the conflict?

MR. MALLAMO:
Ann Marie has to go to the General Meeting of the Legislature, and I will probably have to be there as well.

DR. GITTELMAN:
So will I. It's a chance I might cancel this one anyway. I want it scheduled in case I need it. Sorry.

MS. DeLUCA PERICONI:
What about the week before, Steve?

DR. GITTELMAN:
The week before?

MS. DeLUCA PERICONI:
Yes.

DR. GITTELMAN:
I would be fine with December 12, 13, --

MS. DeLUCA PERICONI:
The 14th?

DR. GITTELMAN:
Thursday, the 14th.

MS. FUHRMANN:
No, that's no good.

MS. DeLUCA PERICONI:
The 12th?

MS. FUHRMANN:
I can do Tuesday. Can you do the 12th?

DR. GITTELMAN:
Okay, we'll make it Tuesday, December 12th.

MS. BECKMAN:
Should I send this out?

MR. FISCHOFF:
Yes. When do we schedule the meetings for the following months?

DR. GITTELMAN:

Well, let's do January now if you want. Tuesday, January 16th? Then we will move forward, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday.

MS. FURHMANN:

The 16th?

DR. GITTELMAN:

Yes, is that acceptable to everybody?

MS. FUHRMANN:

It's the day after the kids are out of school.

DR. GITTELMAN:

What are they out of school for?

MS. FUHRMANN:

Martin Luther King Day.

DR. GITTELMAN:

We're just going to do Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and see if that works. Thank you, everyone.

(The meeting was adjourned at 8:05 p.m. by Dr. Gittelman)