

SUFFOLK COUNTY VANDERBILT MUSEUM

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Minutes

A regular meeting of the Suffolk County Vanderbilt Museum Board of Trustees was held on August 20, 2001 in the Planetarium lobby, Centerport, New York.

The following were in attendance:

Dr. Steven Gittelman – President
Gary C. Fischhoff – 1st Vice President
Carl Luecke – 2nd Vice President
Dr. Anthony Pecorale – Treasurer
Marjorie Kossoy Fuhrmann – Secretary
R. Douglas Shaw – Trustee
Donna deLuca Periconi – Trustee
Robert LaBua – Trustee
Michael Broxmeyer – Trustee
Edward Hahn – Trustee
William Macchione – Trustee
William Rogers – Trustee
J. Lance Mallamo – Executive Director
Gail Freeman – Todd Shapiro Associates
Mark McHugh – Staff
David Bush – Staff
Maryann Zakshevsky – Staff
Bill Dieck – Staff
Florence Ogg – Staff
Barbara Oster – Staff
Betsy Harris – Staff
Stephanie Gress - Staff
Ann Marie Pastore – Stenographer

Absent:

Bertram Seides
Susan LeBow

(Dr. Gittelman called the meeting to order at 7:25 p.m.)

DR. GITTELMAN:

Welcome to the Suffolk County Vanderbilt Museum Board of Trustees meeting. I want to welcome all guests. Do we have a list of the guests attending?

MS. PASTORE:

Yes.

DR. GITTELMAN:

Is there anybody in the audience or anybody visiting with us who would like to make any comments? If there's nobody wishing to ask us questions or comments, I thank you for attending. Marge, approval of the minutes, please.

MS. FUHRMANN:

I move that the minutes be accepted with one correction. Is there a second?

MR. LUECKE:

Second.

MS. FUHRMANN:

On page 6 it talks about D.O.T., Department of Transportation. That should be Department of Labor.

MS. PASTORE:

That's what he said, D.O.T. It was on the tape.

MS. FUHRMANN:

Did he say D.O.T.?

MR. MALLAMO:

Yes, he did.

MS. FUHRMANN:

Well, then you get credit for completely accurate minutes, and Bert gets one bad thing. But it is Department of Labor, not Transportation. Bert misspoke.

DR. GITTELMAN:

Okay, all in favor of approving the minutes without that change or with that change?

MS. FUHRMANN:

It has to be a change because it is not Department of Transportation.

DR. GITTELMAN:

Could you just put a note to the minutes, please?

MS. PASTORE:

Sure.

DR. GITTELMAN:

All in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? **It carries unanimously. (Vote: 10/0/0/5 Not Present: Mr. Fischhoff & Mr. Hahn. Absent: Mr. Votapka, Mr. Seides, & Ms. LeBow.)**

Public Relation's Report.

MS. FREEMAN:

Good evening. You have before you quite a substantial stack of press coverage that has occurred within the last two months. Our mission in the last couple of months was really three-fold, a combination of covering Dino-stars, as well as the donation from Mr. William Rogers, as well as Cole Porter in addition to everything else that's been occurring at the Vanderbilt.

I believe that we were fairly successful in our coverage of Dino-stars, and William Rogers, and of course Cole Porter is still forthcoming. We have a lot of post-coverage coming up, everything from "House" to "Distinction" as well as all the publications. The photos I should be receiving tomorrow. I heard they came out very well. That should help us substantially. I appreciate everything that everyone has done to contribute.

I was just informed that John Dobson will be here this week. So we will be getting right on that and moving to make that our next plug, as well as continuing everything with the Dino-stars and all of the events that are occurring. If you check the last week of Newsday, the coverage, I don't think we could have gotten more coverage. I think there were eight listings.

Not everything is in here. If you notice, there is usually about a two to three week lapse of coverage because we get everything back from our clipping service. That's why the last time it was a little shorter. It's over 80 pages today. I think that kind of makes up for it, I hope.

We do have clips. We have one of Lance and Madeline Kole for Channel 12. We have another one that was ordered from Dino-stars. We have a lot of video, but it hasn't come in. As soon as it does, we'll get a tape of it. So I thank you.

Also, in the back of this, which wasn't included because I just got this, we were listed in New York Magazine for Land of Oz. I thought that was something that was worth putting in because New York Magazine is a really big one. Any questions?

(Mr. Ed Hahn arrived at 7:30 p.m.)

Video Presentation 7:30 – 7:34 p.m.

8/2/01

News 12

Cole Porter

MS. FREEMAN:

We made a really good contact at ABC this past week for the weekend edition. They kind of strayed away from their morning spot, but she was very interested in a lot of what we were doing at the Vanderbilt, producer for the weekend segment.

DR. GITTELMAN:

Well, there is certainly a lot of print that went through as well. Thank you. Are there any questions about that report? If not, thank you very much. Marge, Education and Exhibits.

MS. FUHRMANN:

Well, as was just mentioned, on Thursday we're going to have a special guest at the Planetarium. The fellow's name is John Dobson, who has invented the Dobsonian Telescope Mount. He is going to be here early in the day with the New York Times because they're dogging him around on his tour. We will be providing a luncheon for Mr. Dobson. We will and have already asked Todd Shapiro Associates to do some very quick publicity on this. He is only going to be visiting the Vanderbilt Planetarium and the Hayden Planetarium while he is in New York. In Astronomy Magazine, the September issue, there is an article on Mr. Dobson and his telescope mount. A number of astronomy groups local to Long Island and New York City have been invited to join him here.

On September 14, we have all been invited to the Kings Park Merchant Museum for Science and Technology Museums of New York. It's going to be a conference on gender equity in science. At minimum, Mark and Lorraine from the Planetarium will be going. In the lobby there should be a bulletin board.

MR. MALLAMO:

I think it's right here.

MS. FUHRMANN:

Yes, there it is behind Donna. This bulletin board will be kept up to date with space news, articles off the Internet, and articles in papers. When the school programs start, they're going to have a space vocabulary section on it. That's a new thing that Mark has just started.

In case you have not noticed, NASA and the Johnson Center have both been back to remove some of their items that they had lent to us, unfortunately including the space suit. To replace that, we have put up our own information, such as enlarging the art exhibit that's on the back wall over there, where the butterflies used to be.

In your folders, you should all have a copy of the school brochure that has been sent to 3,200 individual teachers in Nassau, Suffolk, and Queens. We already have many reservations in for the next school year. People who signed up for things that they couldn't get into because they were booked last year have already called to ask if they can book now. We do want to let you know, though, that September is light in bookings. Because of the placement of the Jewish holidays, there is no five-day week of school in the month of September.

The summer camp program was very successful this year and brought in \$9,300 in revenue. When we sent out the bulletin, we also sent a letter to these teachers asking them if they would like to join the Museum at a special rate, as we had previously discussed in meetings.

Fleet Bank has generously underwritten the publication of the bulletin with a \$5,000 donation, which is being split with the Planetarium.

Our new website is up and running. If anyone wants to look at it, it's VANDERBILTMUSEUM.ORG. This was put together by a Bethpage High School 16 year old student.

Past Perfect, the newest version is in. They have begun to start the input. It's going to take a long time. There are 14,000 or 1,400?

MS. GRESS:

There are 1,440.

MS. FUHRMANN:

Okay, 1,440 butterflies alone, which is a lot of inputting.

The Education Department is looking to purchase a laptop computer and digital projector with their half of the \$5,000. The Planetarium is going to be using the money to purchase laser disks and a flight suit.

Dr. Stefan, who was the forensic anthropologist from Lehman College, is looking for computer software to enhance the image of the Vanderbilt mummy that he has created.

The "For All Kids Foundation," which is the Rosie O'Donnell Foundation, has responded that we are not in their scope with our desire to have them fund field trips for under-privileged children to the Museum.

We have sent a letter of intent to the McInerney Family Foundation for a grant to subsidize field trips for students from less wealthy districts. We haven't heard from Tiger Woods Foundation yet on that.

I passed around to everyone a print of a fax. What this is is the Curators of the Ministry of {Cultura} in Madrid. Antonio and Anna Casanovas have contacted us about our tiki figure in the Hall of Fishes. They're interested in borrowing it, perhaps, for a show that they will be doing in Madrid next year called Art and Ritual. They have a companion piece to our tiki exhibit in their museum already. Dr. Douglas Newton, who is the ex-curator of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, put them in touch with us.

We have been contacted by a Dr. James Kastner, who is widely published on South American natural history and culture. He is interested in including the Peruvian shrunken heads in one of his publications. He is very well known. He has sent us copies of some of his publications that have already been published. In fact, we're using them to document the butterflies because they cover a lot of the butterflies that we have in our exhibit.

With the Past Perfect new version in we are still compiling and inputting records for our collection. Dr. Jay Brown, who is a lapidarius from the Smithsonian in Washington, has been helping us identify our more rare species of butterfly.

New signage is up on the butterfly exhibit. She is working with Florence Ogg on the reaccreditation work.

Back to this now. You also received a handout from us on the next LIMA meeting, which will be in September. It's \$15 to attend. This is the meeting that was supposed to be at the Riverhead Aquarium, but it is not going to be there. LIMA has created a stipend for small low-budget museums to aid them in attending the AAM meeting, which is the first

week of May each year. This coming year it will be in Dallas, then it will be in Portland, Oregon.

Work has already begun on Christmas and holiday decorations, incorporating the World's Fair of 1939 information we already have.

There will be a Vanderbilt exhibit at the Long Island Library Resource Council from October 7 to October 13. Florence is looking for a grant to restore Mr. Vanderbilt's films, which are currently in cold storage in New Jersey and are beginning to deteriorate.

Past Perfect entry of the archives is still ongoing. The Belanske prints are all now preserved in mylar.

The last room of the servants' wing, which is the bedroom, the last room down the hall opposite the sewing room, will be ready for the holidays as a bedroom for two female maids.

We will be pursuing the Long Island Retired Teachers. We will be offering them the Museum for a site for one of their meetings and approaching them regarding volunteers and whatnot.

We are also looking to honor the Long Island Science Fair winners on the local levels. That would be each individual school. At the Museum we will be giving them a lunch, a planetarium show and creating certificates. Tony Pecorale is coordinating that.

I have some data on school attendance and Museum attendance for summer programs. I'm just going to pass that around for everyone to look at rather than sit here and read it. That should be it, unless anyone has any questions for me.

DR. GITTELMAN:

If there are no questions, thank you for that report. Carl and Michael, Development Report.

MR. BROXMEYER:

Cocktails with Cole Porter, I think, was a great event. I think everyone had a great time. I think it all came together very well. The weather held out for us. The decorations were great. The music was great. I think it was a tremendous success.

Financially we did pretty well, too. We were able to raise almost \$34,000. The net profit of the event was approximately \$20,000, so it didn't quite meet the target I thought it would, but I think it was pretty close. I was very happy with that. Also, we now know the courtyard is large enough to

handle 350 to 400 people. So next year's event we'll try to get a lot more people to come. We have already begun discussion for next year's event, which I believe is going to be Cocktails with Gershwin. I think Lance set the date.

MR. MALLAMO:

August 2.

MR. BROXMEYER:

Lance will probably send out a letter in a few months to begin introducing the date, a save-the-date letter. Hopefully we could get more people to come. I think it was really a great event. People enjoyed coming to it. That's my brief report.

DR. GITTELMAN:

I agree with you totally. It was a wonderful event. I thank every member of the committee, Michael, Carl, Donna, anyone else who worked on it for what turned out to be a very lovely evening, a very successful event all around. It really was. It was absolutely perfect. The only thing is that there were some suggestions that there should have been a dance floor.

MR. LABUA:

That didn't stop Donna.

MS. PERICONI:

No, it didn't stop me.

DR. GITTELMAN:

That means people were having a very good time.

MR. LUECKE:

Just one point, Steve, one of the accomplishments was that I think we got a solid list going forward, and we should really give Betsy Harris credit for doing that. We have for the first time a base list of all the events that ever took place here.

DR. GITTELMAN:

That's an accomplishment.

MR. BROXMEYER:

I would like to thank Betsy, especially for her work of the evening. She did a great job getting this together.

DR. GITTELMAN:

Anything else on that subject? I thank the committee very much. It was wonderful. Finance Committee.

DR. PECORALE:

You all have a copy of the Treasurer's Report in your folder. It's the actuals through the end of June. We will have July shortly. If anyone has any questions about the numbers in the Treasurer's Report, I would be glad to respond to them. Generally speaking, though, we're holding our own. We're meeting our payrolls and our debts. Cash flow is still very tight, but we're in pretty good shape.

We are going to look into -- because it was suggested as a possibility -- of having two pay periods per month instead of paying every two weeks, which would mean a pay day on the 15th and the last day of the month. We will look into it. No commitments at this time to implementing it. To the best of my knowledge, we still haven't heard from the County Comptroller's Office about the audit that they did.

MR. MALLAMO:

I had that in the packet. It may even be in there, Tony. We did get the final letter from them. If you don't have it there, didn't I fax it to you?

DR. PECORALE:

No. They originally said they wanted to sit down with --

MR. MALLAMO:

Yes, and then they felt it wasn't necessary.

DR. PECORALE:

That means that they got a good report.

MR. MALLAMO:

They did send us a letter and I answered that most of the items that they had suggested, we had already implemented. So I think they seemed to be very satisfied with the results.

DR. PECORALE:

Other than that, we're in pretty good shape financially. Any questions? Does anyone want to go over any portion of it? Thank you.

DR. GITTELMAN:

Thank you. Personnel Committee. Gary is not here this evening.

MR. MALLAMO:

Gary phoned and said he was going to be late, but there was no Personnel Committee meeting. There will be next week.

MS. FUHRMANN:

When?

MR. MALLAMO:

September 5.

MR. FUHRMANN:

That's two weeks.

MR. MALLAMO:

At nine-thirty.

DR. PECORALE:

What's the date?

MR. MALLAMO:

September 5 at nine-thirty.

DR. GITTELMAN:

What day of the week is that?

MR. MALLAMO:

I think that's a Tuesday.

MS. FUHRMANN:

That's a Wednesday.

MR. MALLAMO:

It's a Wednesday? I'm going to have to check the calendar on it. The Board meeting is the 6th of September. So I think it's the day before at nine-thirty.

DR. GITTELMAN:

Okay, if there is no further report, Membership Report, Doug Shaw.

MR. SHAW:

Wendy O'Donohoe and I have been talking recently about ideas for continuing to drive increases in membership through the new tourist season. The visitors that we get in the fall are different than the folks who we see in the summer. One of the ways that different organizations seem to be attacking that same issue is collecting letters to this effect and to have Board Members either personally or through a committee make

direct mail appeals to folks. So look for communication from Wendy and me in the coming weeks asking for your help in continuing to drive membership increases.

Just in my personal experience, membership numbers are important, and I expressed this when the members were all here for the reception last month, it's not simply important in terms of the Treasurer's Report, but as we pursue public money to show x-number of people support the Museum as members is a vitally important statistic to show.

DR. GITTELMAN:

Anything else? Any questions about that report? If not, thank you for that report. Ed Hahn.

MR. HAHN:

Could I get a short recess, a thirty-second recess?

DR. GITTELMAN:

Sure.

(Recess 7:52 p.m. – 7:54 p.m.)

DR. GITTELMAN:

We're back. Sorry for the interruption.

MS. FUHRMANN:

Did I pass something around that I didn't want to pass around?

DR. GITTELMAN:

What did you pass around?

MR. LUECKE:

No, there's a note written on a page.

MS. FUHRMANN:

No, it probably came with the minutes.

DR. GITTELMAN:

Ed, would you continue, please?

MR. HAHN:

Yes, the Dinosaur Committee last met I believe it was three weeks ago. The exhibit is up and running. I think as expected there was a lot of fine-tuning that is going on with a number of different aspects to it. What I would like is an executive session on some contract issues and some of

the things that have come up that I think the Board should be informed about.

DR. GITTELMAN:

Is there a second?

MR. LUECKE:

Second.

DR. GITTELMAN:

All in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? **Motion carries. (Vote: 11/0/0/4 Not Present: Mr. Fischhoff. Absent: Mr. Votapka, Mr. Seides & Ms. LeBow.)** This would be an executive session that we would go into at the end of this agenda. Is there anything else you want to comment on now, outside of the executive session?

MR. HAHN:

No.

DR. GITTELMAN:

Thank you. Director's Report.

MR. MALLAMO:

I just wanted to bring you up to date. We have accomplished some major projects this summer. Of course, we had some major expenses associated with those, but these are things we had planned to do this year anyway. We just did them a little bit earlier, including buying a new lawnmower. Our lawnmower bit the dust and we had to get a new mower, which is a one-time, hopefully, every ten-year expense.

We replaced the lighting in the Planetarium. We have redone all of our garden pools, which has helped increase our revenue. Not only does it make the estate look better, but it has increased our revenue for wedding potential and even site use here in the Planetarium. So while our expenses are up somewhat, these were projects that we had planned to do. We have just done them a little bit early. We have taken out – I announced at the last meeting – a collections' insurance policy. That went into effect, I believe, last Friday.

The only change from what we discussed last time, I think we were talking about a one million-dollar policy with a thousand dollar deductible. When the company reviewed our collections listing, they recommended and the County concurred to raise it to a two million dollar level of coverage. This would cover traveling exhibits that we take in as well as exhibits that we loan out. I did agree that the deductible does stay the same, one thousand dollars, so we were happy to obtain that coverage.

The last item, if you would consider, I'm hoping to complete a grant application to New York State for the seaplane hangar. While we do have funding for the seaplane hangar, we are probably lacking the funding for the ramp and some of the waterfront structures associated with it.

I met with the Department of Public Works last week, and we discussed it. We came to the conclusion that if I were to apply for a grant of \$300,000 from this program that's coming up, that would close the gap that we have right now.

What I would require from the Trustees is a resolution authorizing me to apply for that amount of money from the Environmental Protection Fund. We do have the matching funds in place. It's a 50 percent match project, and the project we have over two and a half million dollars in funding right now. So we're well above the match requirements.

DR. GITTELMAN:

Marge, in your capacity as –

MS. FUHRMANN:

I move that the Board authorize Lance to pursue a grant of \$300,000 from EPA –

MR. MALLAMO:

EPF.

MS. FUHRMANN:

EPF of New York State to enhance the monies already donated for the waterfront seaplane hangar.

MR. LUECKE:

Second.

DR. GITTELMAN:

All in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? **It passes unanimously. (Vote: 11/0/0/4 Not Present: Mr. Fischhoff. Absent: Mr. Votapka, Mr. Seides & Ms. LeBow)**

Anything else?

MR. MALLAMO:

That's my report.

(Mr. Gary Fischhoff arrived at 7:59 p.m.)

DR. GITTELMAN:

President's Report. I have had a very, very busy four weeks since the meeting. I spent a week and a half with my family on vacation and two and a half weeks working on various elements of the exhibit down at Central Islip. I was very impressed by everything Donna did and the crew did at our Cole Porter. I feel very comfortable with the direction of the institution. I'll leave it at that. Hi, Gary.

MR. FISCHOFF:

Hi.

DR. GITTELMAN:

Gary, we're going to jump right to you, in your capacity as Personnel Committee.

MR. FISCHOFF:

Okay, Personnel Committee has a committee meeting scheduled for – Lance, if you could remind me, is it a Wednesday morning?

MR. MALLAMO:

September 5?

MR. FISCHOFF:

September 5 at nine-thirty at Lance's. We're going to discuss some of the personnel issues regarding a Development Director and continue the discussion regarding whether we have a need or the ability to consider an Assistant Director. That will be all brought up at that time.

I know that Tony and I have been talking about it from a financial point of view and will continue that discussion at the Personnel Committee. So that's really the main issue before the committee at this time.

DR. GITTELMAN:

But that will be in two weeks.

MR. MALLAMO:

Yes.

MR. FISCHOFF:

Is September 5 – I don't recall that as the day we talked about, Lance. I have a trial meeting that day. The fourth and fifth I have a trial, so it can't be the fifth.

MR. MALLAMO:

Is it next Wednesday? I don't have my calendar down here.

MR. FISCHOFF:

I just came back from an outing with my daughter, so I don't have my diary. I thought it was perhaps next Wednesday or even this Wednesday.

MS. FUHRMANN:

Could it be August 29?

MR. MALLAMO:

Yes, I guess it was August 29 then. September 5 is the meeting we have with Gaffney. Then it was August 29. I apologize.

MR. FISCHOFF:

Then it's next Wednesday at nine-thirty.

MS. FUHRMANN:

Nine-thirty at the Museum?

MR. FISCHOFF:

Right, Lance's office.

DR. GITTELMAN:

While we're on the subject of meetings, was there anything else you wanted to say? If you were doing it in two weeks, then I was going to force the issue to go into executive session –

MR. FISCHOFF:

No, we're doing it next week. I remember. September 5 is the Gaffney meeting, which I said I couldn't make because I have that trial scheduled.

DR. GITTELMAN:

Personnel will be at nine-thirty on the 29th. We have established the date for the next Board Meeting. I show by my records that it is Thursday, September 6. Is that what you show in your records?

MS. FUHRMANN:

Yes.

DR. GITTELMAN:

Okay, if that was all your report, we were at my report, which was finished. Unfinished business? If there is no unfinished business, is there new business? No new business. Then we have already established a need for an executive session. I would like to retire to the classroom to do that, please.

(Executive Session 8:05 p.m. – 9:11 p.m.)

DR. GITTELMAN:

We're back from executive session. Is there a motion to adjourn?

MR. SHAW:

Motion.

MR. LUECKE:

Second.

DR. GITTELMAN:

We stand adjourned.

(Dr. Gittelman adjourned the meeting at 9:12 p.m.)

SG/ap