

**SUFFOLK COUNTY VANDERBILT MUSEUM  
BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

**Minutes**

A regular meeting of the Suffolk County Vanderbilt Museum Board of Trustees was held on **June 17, 2004** in the Planetarium Lobby, Centerport, New York.

**The following were in attendance:**

Dr. Steven Gittelman – President  
Carl Luecke – Treasurer  
Marjorie Kossoy Fuhrmann – Secretary  
Dr. William Rogers -Trustee  
Bertram E. Seides – Trustee  
J. Lance Mallamo – Executive Director  
Maryann Zakshevsky – Staff  
Janet Clemens – Research Assistant  
Bill Dieck – Staff  
Mitchell Spivak –Staff  
Leslie Tannen – Todd Shapiro & Associates  
Ann Marie Pastore – Stenographer

**Absent:**

Michael Broxmeyer – 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President  
Dr. Anthony Pecorale - Trustee

**Excused Absence:**

Susan LeBow - Trustee  
William Macchione – Trustee  
Deborah A. Gray – 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President

**(Dr. Gittelman called the meeting to order at 7:50 p.m.)**

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

Good evening, everyone. This is a regular meeting of the Suffolk County Vanderbilt Museum Board of Trustees. Do we have a list of guests in attendance?

**MS. PASTORE:**

Yes.

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

Thank you. Is there anyone who wishes to address the board or ask a question? Thank you for joining us. Moving along with our agenda, the minutes.

**MS. FUHRMANN:**

I move that the minutes be accepted with one correction. Can I have a second?

**MR. SEIDES:**

Second.

**MS. FUHRMANN:**

The correction is on page ten, paragraph six, and it's funny. I said that we would like to mention particularly that the tour guides handled them with aplomb. The stenographer, of course, picked that up as a fruit, which would be perfectly right. However, I did mean aplomb.

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

I would have made the same mistake.

**MS. FUHRMANN:**

Absolutely, and I just chose a poor word. I apologize to you.

**MS. PASTORE:**

My proofreader didn't catch it either.

**MS. FUHRMANN:**

They absolutely sound the same, and it was a poor choice of words.

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

All in favor of accepting the minutes? Opposed? **Passes unanimously. (Vote: 5/0/0/10 Absent: Mr. Broxmeyer, Ms. Gray, Dr. Pecorale, Ms. LeBow & Mr. Macchione. Five vacant positions.)**

Public Relations Report, Leslie Tannen.

**MS. TANNEN:**

Good evening, everybody. Probably the most important update to give you is concerning the wonderful meeting that Lance and I had last week with Bill Bleyer of Newsday, who has been reassigned to focus almost exclusively on the Vanderbilt Museum, which is to our enormous advantage. In fact, the first article that he is going to be writing on the Vanderbilt, he'll be coming down sometime next week. I understand there is a new gardener who is going to be starting, Cheryl Lombardo. She will be starting on Monday. He will be coming down either Tuesday or Wednesday of next week to interview her and to hopefully take photos. That will be the first article that we'll be seeing in Newsday. Hopefully thereafter we'll be seeing one every one or two weeks building up momentum to the fact that we have this wonderful celebration going on this year.

As far as the celebration is concerned, either he or perhaps a special reporter that Newsday will hire exclusively for the purpose of writing two Part Two cover stories as well as perhaps a special pull-out section.

**MR. MALLAMO:**

This is for the Vanderbilt Cup celebration.

**MS. TANNEN:**

Yes, for the Vanderbilt Cup, right.

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

Wonderful.

**MS. TANNEN:**

So I think that's very exciting news to share with you.

**MR. MALLAMO:**

He did call me after the meeting and said he went back and talked to Howard Schneider, his editor. They were very, very enthusiastic.

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

Thank you, that's great. Any videos?

**MS. TANNEN:**

No, not tonight, sorry.

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

Any questions about that report? Development Committee, Carl.

**MR. LUECKE:**

We met today actually to talk about the September 30 event and the Vanderbilt Cup. We agreed to an invitation, which is in the process of being printed, I believe, Lance.

**MR. MALLAMO:**

Yes.

**MR. LUECKE:**

It will be available in the next couple of weeks. Everybody has in their folders a list of attendees that they were responsible for, or who came to the event last year. We would appreciate if every board member will take a look at it and then add names to it.

We also discussed the raffle tickets. We made a fair amount of money last year on raffles, and this year we're going to do a 50/50 with some additional prizes. The raffle tickets are also in the process of being printed, and we'll be able to start bringing in money from raffle tickets beginning, I'm sure, at the next meeting when we'll get our raffle tickets. The price will be the same as last year, \$10 a ticket, three for \$25. That was the basis of what we discussed.

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

Is there anybody who has any questions or wishes to add to that?

**MS. FUHRMANN:**

Steve.

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

Yes.

**MS. FUHRMANN:**

I'd just like to add if anyone does have any other raffle prizes, I'll still take them because we will still be putting together some baskets, as well as the 50/50.

**DR. GITTELMAN:**  
Dinosaur Committee.

**MR. MALLAMO:**

We are pleased to report that the work on the building has begun. The steel has arrived. The contractor and the equipment are here so we hope to be wrapped up with the structural work in about eight days.

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

And what follows the structural work?

**MR. MALLAMO:**

The HVAC work, but that's technically not required to get our CO at this point, but they were here today. We plan on opening July 4 weekend.

Also the curators and I will be going into the city the week after the next to meet with a consultant about a new interpretation technique using technological resources for that exhibit. Hopefully we will have more to report at the next meeting on that subject.

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

Any questions about that? Education and Exhibits, Marge.

**MS. FUHRMANN:**

Work is continuing on the ship model room. Mike Kerr is hanging the new art. An intern from Barnard, whose name is Samatha Keylord, is helping with the research on models made of bone. She's working at local libraries.

Florence is preparing materials for the Vanderbilt Cup exhibit in the turntable garage. She has presented her plan to Lance. She is researching photographs for the centennial celebration of the race in the race brochure. She has an intern working with her, Janet Clemens, who is working with Lance on editing the journal that he is preparing.

Four speakers have been scheduled for Thursday evenings in October concerning the Cup Races and the Long Island Motor Parkway. These lectures will be presented in the planetarium. Florence has been working with greeters to prepare an informational packet on the Vanderbilt family history, the Vanderbilt site, and support materials on the exhibits. These packets will be distributed to greeters and a copy will be left at sites where greeters are stationed.

Florence has also been working with the guides on the Living History Program. There are new scripts being written and new costumes. She has made an appeal if anyone has any mid-arm length daytime gloves that they would like to donate to the museum in white or pastel colors, she would be happy to take them.

Recent donations include a sewing table, sheet music from the musical "The Vanderbilt Cup," clothing from the early 1940's and printed materials on the Vanderbilt Cup. These will all be acknowledged with a thank you letter.

The planetarium's information and the school program information are being passed around the Trustees. It has been a very good year for attendance both for the public and for the schools.

Now that the school year is over, the educators are working toward the summer camp, preparing for the July 12 opening. The theme is the Vanderbilt Cup. There will be trophies, trophy making, and race pennant making. They will be making little cars and preparing a race log. Between July 6 and August 20, there are four one-hour programs available to camps, including a new one, which is a one-hour tour of the architecture.

During the summer, Beth will be revising and updating the school programs and will begin work on the school brochure after July 4.

In the fall the Vanderbilt Museum will be starting a new program for adults on horticulture classes. There will be a new full-time gardener on staff. Lance will be talking about her in his discussion as Director. She's out of the Master Gardener Program. She will be offering horticulture classes here at the museum.

There's an International Museum Day at the Middle Country Library. We went and sent up a touch box and information on our programs. It was acknowledged that we had the best table of everyone who was there. This was on April 20.

As a result of that, we were invited to the William Floyd Elementary School Library with our touch box. They borrowed it because they do not have the funds generally to come to visit the museum. The students were so enthused by what they saw and felt in the touch box, that the librarian let us know that she can't keep natural history books on the shelves anymore. They all wanted maps as to how to get the museum, so that their parents could take them here. The librarian, needless to say, was very, very pleased by the response to this program. This librarian is planning to have a William Floyd Elementary School International Museum Day at the end of September, and she said that we will be invited to participate.

Also being passed around is the letter acknowledging that we have received the IMLS grant, and that it is on the official website. There were 452 applicants; 63 were accepted. That's a 13.9 acceptance rate. When the news release gets around, you will be able to read it. You should ignore the date on the newsletter because we only received it this past week. Senator Hillary Clinton's visit to formally present the grant to the museum is currently being worked out. Lance is working on the capital budget resolution for the match.

We have filed our annual Smithsonian workshop application. It's unclear if we will get it this year, but we apply each year hoping we'll get it.

Stephanie would like to thank the educators for helping her with the conservation work that she has been doing. She has two interns working with her. One of the interns is Jessica Martin, who is an archeology student. She is working with the natural history collection, cataloging, cleaning, etc. The other is Carol Wheeler, who is studying humanitarian studies. She's helping to rewrite the ethnographic catalog.

The museum was invited to the New York State Marine Educators Association meeting on June 4. We went to distribute materials and had a display table. We also had our touch box with us.

Currently corporate funding sources are being investigated for Acoustiguides. Lighting changes are being done in the marine museum, which is a major job because these huge glass doors need to be opened. That is being done with the help of the educators.

Other than that, we have nothing else to report. Thank you.

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

Any questions or comments? Thank you for that report.

**MS. FUHRMANN:**

You're welcome.

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

Finance Committee, Carl.

**MR. LUECKE:**

On a regular basis I meet with Barbara Oster to sign checks or to review various financial matters. We have recently been looking at some revenue issues and also some issues with respect to insurance. When something becomes worth bringing to the board's attention, we will bring it to their attention. The last time I met with Barbara she showed me this draft budget, which I asked her to send to all the board members, which she did. We got some comments back to make changes on this. We're talking about the Suffolk County financial statement for 2003. We're going to meet with the auditors next week probably either Tuesday or Thursday. If any of the Trustees would like to come to that meeting, that would be great. We can try to finalize the 2003 financial report.

In your folders you have the Treasurer's Report for 2004, the month-by-month report with the actuals up through April. The plus is that admissions are back to what they were the year before last. Last year, as Lance reminded me, we had severe weather that caused attendance to go quite low, especially during the month of February when there was a vacation.

It stares you in the face every time you look at it, but somehow we have to find a way to get our membership up. Our membership is not nearly what the goals are. They aren't necessarily lower than they were years before but a museum in this location and of this size, somehow we should be able to have a much larger membership base. That's the financial report.

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

Any comments or questions?

**MS. FUHRMANN:**

I have a question.

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

By all means.

**MS. FUHRMANN:**

Carl, how will you be notifying the Trustees of the meeting with the auditors?

**MR. LUECKE:**

Barbara will do that. Do you mean by telephone or by –

**MS. FUHRMANN:**

Yes.

**MR. LUECKE:**

I don't know.

**MR. MALLAMO:**

E-mail or phone.

**MS. FUHRMANN:**

Thanks.

**MR. LUECKE:**

It will be either Tuesday or Thursday.

**MS. FUHRMANN:**

Okay.

**MR. LUECKE:**

Assuming they can make it either one of those days.

**MS. FUHRMANN:**

Thanks.

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

Personnel Committee.

**MR. MALLAMO:**

Well, we did not have a Personnel Committee meeting, but I would like to note that we have two new employees. Philip Grandlin is a new astronomer here in the planetarium. Philip is a recent graduate of the Astronomy Program at SUNY Stonybrook. He is very energetic and enthusiastic. We think he's going to be a great addition.

The other staff member is Cheryl Lombardo, as Marjorie indicated, who is going to be our gardener here at the museum and provide horticultural programs for adults and high school students. Cheryl is a former volunteer with the Cornell Master Gardener Program. She had headed up the master gardeners here at the museum several years ago and stopped to go back to school and start her own business. We are very happy that she agreed to come and work here with us. We're very enthusiastic.

If you haven't been down to the mansion this year, our gardens, with the master gardeners help, look absolutely spectacular. We are confident that they will be maintained like that all summer. That's my report on personnel. These positions, I should just note, were in the budget approved and are in conformance with our reorganization plan that was adopted last October.

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

Any comments or questions? If not, Lance, you're on a roll.

**MR. MALLAMO:**

Okay, I go again. You can probably tell from the noise coming from the theater that we have a rehearsal going on tonight of "The Great Vanderbilt Cup Race," which is the adaptation of the Broadway show that is going to be starting here at the planetarium on July 18. They are rehearsing every night. I appreciate your patience in dealing with that. I think it's going to be a great show.

We have for the first time this week air conditioning in the mansion, which has been a very nice week to have air conditioning. It's very, very comfortable for the guests.

As Marjorie indicated, the education programs are doing very well this year. We have been this spring doing afternoon programs for the first time. That's actually worked out very well.

I'd also like to acknowledge, and we didn't get to bring this up in the Exhibits Committee because this came in later this week, a recent gift to the museum from artist, Attila Hedja. Attila is an esteemed artist living in Nassau County. He had donated to us several years ago his canvas of postage stamps that he did for the United States Postal Service. This week he has provided us with a new painting on the surface of Mars. We don't have it here tonight. It's out being framed right now, but I did stop by his studio to see it in its spectacular. It will make a wonderful addition here at the mansion.

Incidentally, I had Ed Smits here from the Nassau County Museum, and he wants to borrow it right away. I told him it has to stay here for a while.

A couple of weeks ago we had a wonderful thank you party for the volunteers for the Cornell Cooperative Extension Marine Science Program, in particular the Huntington Senior Water Logging Program, which we haven't really talked about. I was familiar with it, but until you see 90 senior citizens sitting in front of you in the planetarium, you really can't appreciate the impact of their work. What these seniors do on a weekly basis is they go out in their boats, and they take water samples of Long Island Sound and the water along the Towns of Huntington and Smithtown. They have been recording this data for a couple of years. This was a project initiated by a volunteer, Eileen Rogers, who works with Cornell at the museum. She brought them all together to show our appreciation. It was really a wonderful night. It was great to see the museum involved in research and that we really have a lasting impact on the health and vitality of Long Island Sound in the future.

We will be asking for your approval tonight of a resolution for funding through the New York State Program for Waterfront Development. This would be for a project adjacent to the seaplane hangar. We had applied for a grant in this category a year ago, and it was not approved. But we were encouraged to reapply in the current program. We are essentially asking for the same amount that we did last year. Do you have it there, Marjorie?

**MS. FUHRMANN:**

Are you ready?

**MR. MALLAMO:**

Yes.

**MS. FUHRMANN:**

"Be it resolved that J. Lance Mallamo, as Executive Director of the Suffolk County Vanderbilt Museum, is hereby authorized and directed to file an application for funds from the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation in accordance with the provisions of Title IX of the Environmental Protection Act of 1993 for Title III of the Clean Water/Clean Air Bond Act of 1996 in an amount not to exceed \$350,000 and upon approval of said request to enter into and execute a project agreement with the State for such financial assistance to this Suffolk County Vanderbilt Museum for restoration of the seaplane hangar and a preservation

covenant to the deed of the assisted property.”

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

Can I have a second?

**MR. SEIDES:**

Second.

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

Any discussion? All in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? **Unanimous. (Vote: 5/0/0/10 Absent: Mr. Broxmeyer, Ms. Gray, Dr. Pecorale, Ms. LeBow & Mr. Macchione. Five vacant positions.)**

**MR. MALLAMO:**

That's my report.

**DR. ROGERS:**

May I ask why it was rejected the last time?

**MR. MALLAMO:**

The way it was explained to us was that essentially, Bill, we had too much of the project covered. We were looking for funds to restore the ramp in front of the building, and we were using the restoration of the building funds as the match. We were vastly overmatched. We have two and a half million dollars for that project. What they asked me to do is break it up and ask for a specific component of the project and match it with \$350,000 only. That's what we're going to do this time.

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

Okay, I guess it's up to me. Janet Clemens is here. She has been feeding me stuff so that I can write the Willie book. I hope that Janet has been having as much fun as I have. Although, she's been spending more time in the stacks, if you will, searching for stuff. But I did want to thank her, since she's here, for the help. I'm having a lot of fun doing it. We're discovering a lot of great stuff about Willie.

If anybody knows whether Willie had a copy of Darwin's "Origin of Species" or "Voyage of the Beagle," let us know. We're trying to see whether he had that in mind when he went down there. We have been chasing down intellectual components of Willie. When he went to the Galapagos, was he just looking, catching, collecting, or was it part of the intellectual process? Those are the kinds of things that we're doing. It's really exciting. When he built the highway, did he have a vision for a ribbon of roads across the nation, or was he just building a racetrack?

We're trying to come to an understanding of what it is. We're also looking into siblings, as to what their intellectual processes were. It's become quite a fun project. It might get finished some day. What do you think?

**MS. CLEMENS:**

Maybe.

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

I'm grateful for the opportunity to do it. I want you to know that.

I spoke to Mary Ann Jedrlinic. She is not here tonight. She has resigned from the board for personal reasons, having nothing to do with the museum. I offered to her that there is a place here for her because she seemed to really like the place, and she expressed that. I said, "Well, when you get passed wherever you're at in your life, let us know." She will be missed. I have nothing else to report. Old business? New business? Do we have a date for the next meeting?

**MR. MALLAMO:**

We don't have a date for the next meeting, but we have a date for the meeting after that.

**MS. FUHRMANN:**

We don't have August.

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

August is a tough time.

**MS. FUHRMANN:**

We don't have August.

**MR. MALLAMO:**

Before I forget, Bill Macchione had called to tell me he was ill this evening and requests an excused absence. Also Susan LeBow is still recovering from surgery.

**MR. LUECKE:**

I had down the 21<sup>st</sup> of July. I don't know where I got that date.

**MR. MALLAMO:**

We had put that down tentatively if there was a need for that meeting.

**MR. LUECKE:**

And August I had the 18<sup>th</sup> written down. I don't know where that came from either.

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

Well, for the time being, July's meeting was up in the air. Let's leave it for July 21<sup>st</sup>, if that's possible, and let's leave it at –

**MR. LUECKE:**

August 18<sup>th</sup>?

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

That doesn't sound good.

**MS. FUHRMANN:**

I have August 25<sup>th</sup> written.

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

I know August 25<sup>th</sup> is no good for me. At least I'm hoping it's no good for me.

**MS. FUHRMANN:**

Right, you're going away.

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

Well, if we don't have a July meeting, can we have an early August meeting? Would that be a possibility? Why don't we just settle on August 4<sup>th</sup> or something like that for the summer meeting?

**MS. FUHRMANN:**

Isn't that – no, wait a minute. Isn't that when Bill can't make it?

**MR. MALLAMO:**

No, it's on the second Wednesday.

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

If we can settle on August 4<sup>th</sup> –

**MR. MALLAMO:**

That's a date we've never picked.

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

Let's just settle on August 4. That's the meeting for the summer and no July meeting. Does anybody have a problem with that?

**MR. LUECKE:**

I don't have a problem with that. I'm not sure how much we want to do in terms of the September affair, and whether or not we would need a July meeting.

**MR. MALLAMO:**

We have a September meeting on the 22<sup>nd</sup>.

**MR. LUECKE:**

Well, that's too late by then. In other words, we have one more meeting between now and the affair.

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

Yes.

**MR. LUECKE:**

If that's what you want.

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

It's not what I want. It's actually what we had scheduled. The July meeting was cancelled.

**MR. LUECKE:**

It was?

**MS. FUHRMANN:**

It was left as kind of a tentative meeting.

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

Yes, it was left as a tentative meeting.

**MS. FUHRMANN:**

If we needed it, we'd have it.

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

What's your pleasure? Why don't we leave it – what was it, July what?

**MS. FUHRMANN:**

July 21<sup>st</sup>.

**MR. MALLAMO:**

But there were a number of people who couldn't attend on that date.

**MS. FUHRMANN:**

Actually I won't be able to be here July 21<sup>st</sup>.

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

Let's just make it August 4<sup>th</sup>. Is that satisfactory? Good. Done.

**DR. ROGERS:**

No July.

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

No, no July meeting. We have no need for an executive session. Is there a motion to adjourn?

**MS. FUHRMANN:**

Are we getting rid of the meeting at the end of August now?

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

Yes. It's now August 4<sup>th</sup>. Motion to adjourn?

**MS. FUHRMANN:**

Yes.

**MR. SEIDES:**

Second.

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

All in favor? Opposed? **We stand adjourned. (Vote: 5/0/0/10 Absent: Mr. Broxmeyer, Ms. Gray, Dr. Pecorale, Ms. LeBow & Mr. Macchione. Five vacant positions.)**

**(Dr. Gittelman adjourned the meeting at 8:30 p.m.)**

**SG:ap**