

SUFFOLK COUNTY VANDERBILT MUSEUM

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Minutes

A regular meeting of the Suffolk County Vanderbilt Museum Board of Trustees was held on February 16, 2005 in the lobby of the planetarium.

The following were in attendance:

Dr. Steven Gittelman – President
Deborah A. Gray – 1st Vice President
Bertram E. Seides – Treasurer
Marjorie Kossoy Fuhrmann – Secretary
Michael B. DeLuise – Trustee
David D’Orazio - Trustee
Carl Luecke – Trustee
William Macchione – Trustee
Gretchen Oldrin-Mones – Trustee
Daniel Olivieri - Trustee
Dr. Anthony Pecorale – Trustee
Dr. William Rogers – Trustee
J. Lance Mallamo – Executive Director
Mitch Spivak – Staff
Bill Dieck – Staff
Todd Shapiro – Todd Shapiro & Associates
Ann Marie Pastore – Stenographer

Absent:

Susan LeBow – 2nd Vice President-Excused

(Dr. Gittelman called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.)

DR. GITTELMAN:

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

MS. PASTORE:

Yes.

DR. GITTELMAN:

Thank you for joining us. Any questions or statements that our guests wish to make? None. Thank you. Can we have introduction of new trustees? David, would you introduce yourself and tell us about yourself?

MR. D'ORAZIO:

Hello, I'm David D'Orazio. I'm employed by the Long Island Rail Road. This is something I've been interested in doing for a long time. I do work with other types of entities like this, the Long Island Rail Road Museum and have been working a little bit with the Nassau Museum of Art. I have come here for years. I even bring my children here, and this is something I'm interested in continuing and hoping that we can build on it and make it into something that lasts forever for Long Island.

DR. GITTELMAN:

Welcome to the Board of Trustees. Dan.

MR. OLIVIERI:

I'm Dan Olivieri. I'm an attorney in Garden City. I'm with the firm Martello, LaMagna, Olivieri and Harrison. I moved back to Huntington with my family about two years ago. I grew up here. I used to come here as a kid. My little one wants to come up here, and I'd like to see if I can help out.

DR. GITTELMAN:

Michael, I know you're a veteran now of a whole meeting, but if you would reintroduce yourself.

MR. DELUISE:

I'm Mike DeLuise. I'm the Vice President for Development of External Affairs at Dowling College. I'm a 27-year veteran of being a resident of Huntington, so this is really my town. One of the things I'd like to do, as I said last meeting, is I would like to invite everybody to come over to Dowling College, which is another Vanderbilt Mansion, for one of our meetings. I'd really like to do that.

The other thing I would like to do, and, again, I'm keeping my mouth shut, listening and learning for a while, but my experience has been in entertainment, marketing, and promotion before I was with the college. I worked with the Museum of Natural History, the Hayden Planetarium, and a whole bunch of others including the Kennedy Center. I and my partner, who is now the Dean of the School of Aviation at Dowling College, designed the computer box office system for the Schubert's. So the Broadway box office system is what we designed. I offer just to help and to give some advice as we talk about tickets and how to get people through the gates and count them and everything. I'm excited about working with all of you.

DR. GITTELMAN:

Gretchen?

MS. OLDRIN-MONES:

I'm Gretchen Oldrin-Mones. I'm not so new anymore. This is my third meeting. I'm a retired educator. I love education. I love the Vanderbilt, and I hope to be able to help the Vanderbilt in any way that I can. I'm from Stony Brook, and I'm just excited about everything that's going on here. Last week I came up and I saw three programs. They were unbelievably good – two planetary programs and one Egyptian program. I was so impressed with the professionalism of the way that the programs were organized and presented. I can't wait to see all of the programs here.

DR. GITTELMAN:

All four of you are welcome to the board. I realize that you're a veteran, I'm sorry to put you through that, and you too, Michael. Thank you for joining us. Let me know if there is any way that I can help you in making your trusteeship more rewarding for you and of course more rewarding for the museum as well.

Can we have approval of the minutes of the previous meeting, please?

MS. FUHRMANN:

Before I say anything about the minutes, I would like to thank Ann Marie for her diligence and professionalism, as we do each year. You get the minutes out with sufficient time so all of us can review them before the next board meeting. Your accuracy is to be lauded. Thank you again. We have been remiss in not thanking the rotating sound engineers who show up every month to make sure that our microphones work and the sound equipment works. If you would pass that on to the others in the crew and just say thank you.

With that, I move that the minutes be accepted for the meeting of January 19, 2005 with no corrections.

DR. GITTELMAN:

Is there a second?

MR. MACCHIONE:

Second.

DR. GITTELMAN:

If there is no need for discussion, all in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? **It carries unanimously. (Vote: 12/0/0/3 Absent: Ms. LeBow. Two vacant positions.)** Thank you for that report.

Public Relations Report, Todd Shapiro is here tonight.

MR. SHAPIRO:

It's a little out of format from some of the regular publicity reports we usually present to the board. There won't be an actual handout of all the publicity we did for the month.

We had a meeting with Lance to go over 2005, some different ideas for publicity and PR for the museum. We really had a successful meeting on some different projects and events relating to the Vanderbilt and the history of the museum and so on.

Being it's the anniversary of the Alva, which is the 75th anniversary this year of the ship, we talked about doing a lot of events and dedicating a lot of this year to the Alva. We talked about possibly working with local Congressmen.

Tony Pecorale has always been a great supporter of doing something with the Alva. Being it's this year, I'm asking if we could possibly sit down and plan some stuff on it and plan some events as well to celebrate the 75th anniversary of it.

DR. GITTELMAN:

Do you mean the 75th anniversary of her being launched?

MR. SHAPIRO:

Yes.

DR. GITTELMAN:

Right.

MR. SHAPIRO:

Yes, of the actual launching. It was launched in Elizabeth City, North Carolina, and because it was launched in North Carolina, we talked about possibly doing some stuff –

DR. GITTELMAN:

It sank.

MR. SHAPIRO:

It sank, I'm sorry.

DR. GITTELMAN:

That being the reverse of launch.

MR. SHAPIRO:

I apologize. We also possibly wanted to work with Vanderbilt University down there in North Carolina because there is a school located down there. Yes?

MS. FUHRMANN:

Vanderbilt is in Tennessee. It's in Nashville, Tennessee.

MR. SHAPIRO:

Boy, I'm really screwing up tonight.

MS. FUHRMANN:

That's okay, don't worry about it.

DR. GITTELMAN:

It's all right.

MR. MALLAMO:

He's thinking of the Vanderbilt Biltmore House in North Carolina.

MS. FUHRMANN:

Yes, you're thinking of the house.

MR. SHAPIRO:

So I'm getting involved with them in Nashville and getting them involved because it is in North Carolina and it is a Vanderbilt property. It could be a real great event. We could possibly work with local Congressmen to possibly get divers to go down there and work with the school to possibly get the marine program to get some pictures and some stuff of what it looks like today. It would be a real great PR event. It could turn into a really great event as well. That's one thing we talked about.

We also talked about the 101st anniversary of the Vanderbilt Cup Race. I think we have a date already, Lance.

MR. MALLAMO:

Yes, October 2.

MR. SHAPIRO:

We also talked about working in the city with Grand Central Station in setting up exhibits there and stuff like that and working with the New York State MTA as well. Grand Central Station has a link to the history of the Vanderbilt that could really be great that we can possibly raise money and stuff like that and build awareness in Manhattan with all the commuters and all the different people that are in Grand Central Station every day – the millions of commuters that go passed there.

We also talked about doing something in the city. One of Vanderbilt's homes, which was the Tishman building on 5th Avenue, we're thinking about possibly contacting the company there and working with them in celebrating the history of it.

We also talked about doing – one of the things that is very popular today and very trendy are these afternoon teas. If you go to a place like the Garden City Hotel or the Plaza Hotel, they have these teas where mothers and daughters have their tea time. In the summer, it could be a really nice time to pick a month and actually do this every Sunday or Saturday at one or two o'clock. We could have an afternoon tea. It could turn into a really great event and could be very positive PR-wise because these teas are becoming very, very popular today.

MR. MALLAMO:

Particularly in the tent when we're not doing a wedding or other event. That's a good use of the tent, and you can get a large crowd in there. We have had teas in the past, but we haven't been able to have more than 30 people because that's all the Lancaster Room would fit. The tent would fit up to 250 probably.

MR. SHAPIRO:

And doing it outside on a beautiful summer day or something, it could turn out to be really great.

We also talked about getting the Sewanahka Yacht Club involved in Center Island with the anniversary of the Alva. Being that Vanderbilt was a Commodore of the Sewanahka Yacht Club in Center Island, we would try to contact the Board of Directors and see if they would want to get involved in doing some stuff for the Vanderbilt Museum.

We also talked about doing, at the end of the year, the anniversary of the building of Motor Parkway, which would be the 100th anniversary in 2006, toward the end of the year and do an announcement and start to build some awareness for that for next year.

Some of the things we have media-wise in the hopper is that Newsday is interested in doing three articles here at the museum, one about the habitat exhibit, one about the mummy CAT scan, and we're also looking at the ten-year reaccreditation.

Kidsday in Newsday is working on an article talking about the "Journey through the Solar System." Channel 21 has expressed interest in doing a show on "Dino-stars and the Marine World and its History." That's my report.

We would also work with the new board members publicizing them in the local papers and stuff like that, the local weeklies and business papers, like Newsday, Long Island Business News, and the local community papers in announcing that they are new board members as well for the museum. Does anyone have any comments regarding these things?

MS. GRAY:

Lance, I have a question for you. How are we marrying these activities with development? Some of them are public relations and some sound like development, so how are those two things coming together?

MR. MALLAMO:

We are absolutely marrying the two. In fact, we sat down with Todd and Leslie with the staff members, so we're trying to develop new special events and site activities that will work right into this promotional end.

DR. GITTELMAN:

And also our Development Committee should be interfacing with Public Relations. It really will be a Development and Public Relations Committee. That's the way I would like it to be pursued.

MS. GRAY:

Then my assumption is, some of these things are not things that we put into the 2005 budget because we didn't know we were going to do them, right, so we're going to see little budgets and –

MR. MALLAMO:

You're going to see little budgets and it will probably come out under the special events, say the tea program, etc.

MS. GRAY:

Well, the tea program we have talked about, but some of these other things –

MR. MALLAMO:

We talked about the tea program but probably not like this. My idea of the tea traditionally was we do a program in the Lancaster Room for a smaller

group. Todd had suggested that we could expand this into the tent and do kind of a Garden City Hotel – in fact, you got me all the menus and bells and whistles that they do at the Plaza and the Garden City Hotel. We’re certainly considering taking it to the next level. Those will be individual budget items. We have put a figure in the budget for special events, and the budgets that you see of the different events will equal that target figure.

DR. GITTELMAN:

Tony, did you want to say something?

DR. PECORALE:

Yes, Todd, did you ever hear anything about the lions that were stolen – the lions that were on the top of the pedestals outside the mansion across the street.

MR. SHAPIRO:

I checked my car and they weren’t in there.

DR. PECORALE:

No, I’m serious. Sometimes that could be an interesting piece that some newspaper or somebody might want to play up. The lions have been taken. They were actually outside Grand Central Station, weren’t they originally, Lance? Weren’t those lions originally outside Grand Central Station?

MR. MALLAMO:

No --

DR. GITTELMAN:

No, the lions were – go ahead.

MR. MALLAMO:

They’re from England, right? Steve is the lion expert.

DR. GITTELMAN:

Willie built an estate at Lake Success. It was an enormous undertaking for him. The lions were decorative elements, a focal point, at the estate in Lake Success that was called Deepdale. Those lions were transported here juxtaposed opposite the eagles that were from Grand Central Station.

MR. MALLAMO:

The eagles are here at our gate.

DR. PECORALE:

We still have the eagles, but the interest might be that the lions have been taken.

DR. ROGERS:

What ever happened to the lions? Did anybody ever find out?

DR. GITTELMAN:

The town had an order to keep the lions from being removed from the pedestals because in essence in order to – and the thinking of the time was that they would be removed by crane that sat on town property.

MR. MALLAMO:

It was also that the property at Normandy Manor was a designated town landmark, and there was no permit issued to alter that landmark. A permit was required. When they started to be removed and we contacted the town and the police department, and the town issued a cease and desist order preventing the owners at the time from removing them –

DR. GITTELMAN:

But in the middle of the night, apparently, with the aid of some form of a crane from inside the property, they removed the lions, we understand, packed them into a U-haul and hauled them out. There is reason for us to pursue the lions. The significance of the lions is that Willie's effort to building Deepdale was pivotal in his life. The lions were pivotal decoration points. They were set juxtaposed the two eagles. I figured out why they are the way they were. We should get those lions back.

DR. ROGERS:

Does anybody know where they are?

DR. GITTELMAN:

Probably with the people – we would suspect – with the people who owned the property previously. Their title is probably clouded by the fact that there was no permit to remove them at the time. I would like to ask if there is anybody who would like to pursue the issue of how we might go about pursuing the lions.

DR. PECORALE:

I think some PR on it wouldn't hurt.

DR. GITTELMAN:

First I think we should have a strategy as to what we're doing. Can we file a claim?

DR. PECORALE:

You wouldn't know unless you did.

DR. GITTELMAN:

There would have been – the lions are an important architectural element to this institution and we should pursue them.

DR. PECORALE:

With that comment, I think that we should try to get some PR and try to at least get the word out. At some point in time they are going to want to sell them.

DR. GITTELMAN:

I would like to take it one step further and to pursue legal remedies that might be at our disposal.

DR. PECORALE:

So what are you requesting? Are you requesting authorization to pursue legal remedies?

DR. GITTELMAN:

Yes.

DR. PECORALE:

Do you want a motion?

DR. GITTELMAN:

Yes, I do.

DR. PECORALE:

I make a motion that the Vanderbilt Museum instigate discussions with the

town attorney and/or an appropriate attorney of the board's decision to pursue the acquisition of the lions that were originally outside of the mansion. Is that what you want?

DR. GITTELMAN:

Yes.

DR. ROGERS:

The reacquisition.

DR. GITTELMAN:

Do I have a second?

DR. ROGERS:

Second.

DR. GITTELMAN:

Now I would like to open it for discussion. Let me explain why I feel this is so important. Willie failed to build a Vanderbilt type mansion in Deepdale. He built the structure, and he purchased all the land around Lake Success. He pursued it for six years from 1901 to 1907. It actually was seminal in the – it was one of the key elements in his divorce with Virginia. He was fanatic about getting possession of Lake Success. The lions were key architectural elements in the house, which was supposed to be Willie's party house, Willie's big jump into society. Instead, it ended up in shambles. He never gained full control of the Lake. It became so traumatic for him in his marriage that it was one of the contributing factors in their divorce. He also spent \$2 million.

I have read hundreds of articles on it at this point. I never knew that he brought the lions here, and he brought the eagles here. Now, the eagles come from Grand Central Station. You mentioned the celebration of the rebuilding of Grand Central Station or visiting Grand Central Station. His father, Willie K., I, redesigned Grand Central Station.

If you read the mini obituaries about Willie K., I, you will find that he was credited with an upgrade of the quality of the building itself. But the fellow that was working like a little bee behind the scenes was our Willie because our Willie brought electrification of the New York Central Railroad to New York. It was necessary to electrify the trains under Grand Central in order to build the building. Willie became a Vice President of the New York Central

Railroad in 1912. Grand Central Station was opened in 1913. This is a very important time in our Willie's history. This is when he was at his fervor. He brought those detailed lions here as a symbol of failure. He brought those two eagles here as a symbol of success. The lions were across the street. The eagles were brought on this side. This is Eagles Nest, but he never forgot the lessons he learned at Deepdale.

It makes wonderful reading, but from a human interpretation we need the lions back. It makes for a wonderful story. You really can see that's the only element he brought from Deepdale when he eventually abandoned the estate and rented it out. He took just those two lions, and we lost them. It's something that I think we should get back in terms of interpreting the land here.

What I would ask is that if one of the attorneys who has just joined our board might be willing to spend a little research on how we might approach this. What do you think?

MR. OLIVIERI:

Not a problem.

DR. GITTELMAN:

That would be great.

MR. D'ORAZIO:

There is a general concern with the process, though. Do you know how the people – why did the people take the lions?

DR. GITTELMAN:

They're valuable.

MR. D'ORAZIO:

Did they know the value of them?

DR. GITTELMAN:

We don't, they don't, but they are.

MS. GRAY:

Did they own the property at the time?

DR. GITTELMAN:

They owned the property at the time.

MR. D'ORAZIO:

If you have an attorney or an article in there talking about it, it may scare the people who own them to say they don't have them anymore. You may want to try a different course of action.

DR. ROGERS:

They're pretty big to hide.

MR. D'ORAZIO:

They're easy to hide. Anything is easy to hide. My point is, you may want to find a different course of action to finding where they are first before you –

DR. GITTELMAN:

Why don't the two of you noodle it out?

MR. LUECKE:

I think Tony's idea of an article, "Where are the Lions," might produce somebody to tell you where they are.

DR. GITTELMAN:

Or to hide them deeper. You two become a committee of two to pursue it. I will give you all the historical data.

MR. OLIVIERI:

When did they disappear?

DR. GITTELMAN:

About two years ago.

MR. OLIVIERI:

That's all?

MR. MALLAMO:

No, it's about five years ago.

DR. GITTELMAN:

Is it five already?

MR. MALLAMO:

I hate to age everybody, but it's about five years.

MS. GRAY:

Lance, did they take them when they were removing their personal belongings from the property prior to us acquiring it or in the process of us acquiring it?

MR. MALLAMO:

No, we were not in the process at that time of acquiring.

MS. GRAY:

So we basically didn't own the property.

DR. GITTELMAN:

We didn't own it, but the town had put an order for them not to be removed. In other words, there is enough to say –

MR. D'ORAZIO:

Is it an historical landmark?

DR. GITTELMAN:

Yes.

MR. D'ORAZIO:

So that's the basis for not taking them.

DR. GITTELMAN:

Well, let's do the legal research to find out what our basis is.

MR. D'ORAZIO:

Just the idea of scaring them into hiding is what I'm concerned about.

DR. GITTELMAN:

Trust me, these people don't scare so easily. You'll get to know that.

DR. ROGERS:

If you can find them, let's find out what they want for them.

DR. GITTELMAN:

Let's find out what the deal is.

MR. D'ORAZIO:

That was the point, maybe there is a third party interested in finding out what they want for them.

DR. GITTELMAN:

But historically, they are very important for this institution, maybe not for any other.

MR. OLIVIERI:

One more question from me. Where would I get the information that we have –

MR. MALLAMO:

I could get that to you.

DR. GITTELMAN:

Lance and I both can.

MR. OLIVIERI:

Including their names and stuff and what I can find out in the Town of Huntington.

MR. SHAPIRO:

I believe there were some local articles in the community papers about the lions and when the town put in their resolution five years ago. So there were certain links into the community.

MR. MALLAMO:

There were.

MR. OLIVIERI:

Do we have any idea where these people may have gone?

MR. MALLAMO:
Corning, New York.

MR. OLIVIERI:
No problem, that's easy.

MR. MACCHIONE:
Do you have an address?

MR. MALLAMO:
I probably do, actually.

MR. MACCHIONE:
I can probably get them on my next trip around the state. I'll slip through Corning and find out.

MR. MALLAMO:
If I don't have it, I can get it.

DR. GITTELMAN:
I have lost track here. Were you finished with the Public Relation's Report?

DR. PECORALE:
Before you leave, because you have a motion on the floor, I wanted to ask the attorneys, would it be better that we hold off with that motion until you have done some research or would you like to have it on the record now?

MR. OLIVIERI:
Well, I don't care about whether it's on the record or not, but I mean, it seems like that's part and parcel of what this motion is. We're sending somebody out to find out what's going on, then report back and then see what other options we take in the future.

DR. GITTELMAN:
Let's have a motion. Well, we have a motion.

MR. OLIVIERI:
I thought you stated it beautifully.

DR. GITTELAN:

Yes, you did a great job.

MR. SHAPIRO:

It really is a great PR opportunity.

DR. GITTELMAN:

Well, we're not doing it for PR. We want the lions back. Any further discussion?

MR. OLIVIERI:

I would only say before you run an article, let's wait to see what we come up with in 30 days.

DR. GITTELMAN:

That would be great. All in favor?

MS. FUHRMANN:

Wait a minute. Could someone read the motion?

MS. PASTORE:

I'm not a court reporter so it's difficult to --

MS. FUHRMANN:

I'm sorry, Tony, could you just kind of paraphrase what you said? You don't have to get it exactly, just paraphrase it.

DR. PECORALE:

I move that the --

MR. LUECKE:

Could you do it off the record so you don't have two motions?

DR. GITTELMAN:

Do it off the record, please.

(Recess: 8:10 – 8:12 p.m.)

DR. ROGERS:

We need to research this and find out where they are and how available they

are, if they are available.

MR. MALLAMO:

I think this can be referred either to the Town of Huntington or the Suffolk County Attorney.

DR. GITTELMAN:

I'm amenable to whatever suits your pleasure, Tony.

DR. PECORALE:

I'm willing to amend it. The only reason why I said the possible town attorney –

MS. FUHRMANN:

I just don't remember the original – does anybody else remember?

DR. PECORALE:

I said the possible town attorney.

DR. GITTELMAN:

We're going to restate it, Marge, it's okay.

DR. PECORALE:

The reason why I said town attorney is that I was under the impression back when this originally started, that the town had an order that the lions were not to be removed. Is that correct?

MR. MALLAMO:

That's correct.

DR. GITTELMAN:

Yes.

MS. FUHRMANN:

That wasn't the problem. The problem was when you restated it, you made a third clause, which was someone else. When you originally said it, I didn't remember the someone else. I only remembered the town attorney or hire our own attorney. I didn't remember by any other means.

DR. GITTELMAN:

Why don't we simply say that –

DR. PECORALE:

Appropriate counsel.

DR. GITTELMAN:

That we seek appropriate counsel to research our rights in recovering the lions.

DR. PECORALE:

I don't have any problem with that amendment.

DR. GITTELMAN:

Do I have a second?

MR. OLIVIERI:

I'll second it.

DR. GITTELMAN:

Thank you. Is there further discussion? All in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? **It carries unanimously. (Vote: 12/0/0/3 Absent: Ms. LeBow. Two vacant positions.)**

MR. DELUISE:

Could I add something on Public Relations? On the teas, Todd, just an idea, we don't have a contract with one caterer here, right?

MR. MALLAMO:

No.

MR. DELUISE:

What you might want to think about is and what sounds great about the teas is as you were talking about the Garden City Hotel, if you had each week a different hotel kind of putting it together, which could involve some kind of sponsorship -- so the Garden City Hotel might come in and the Huntington Hilton I know do these kinds of things, maybe even some of the restaurants. It might give you an opportunity for kind of either fund raising for each event and maybe some kind of a package where people can come in and –

MR. SHAPIRO:

Good idea.

MR. DELUISE:

Part of the deal would be that they would advertise it.

DR. GITTELMAN:

I think that's something that you can take up in the committee and come back to us in 30 days with a better formulated concept.

MR. SHAPIRO:

That's a great idea.

DR. GITTELMAN:

This would be a good point for me to state that Michael and Carl will be Co-Chairs on the Public Relations and Development Committees together, if that's okay with both of you.

MR. LUECKE:

Okay.

MR. DELUISE:

Sure.

MR. MALLAMO:

There is no report of that committee this month because we haven't had a meeting.

DR. GITTELMAN:

Gretchen and Marge will serve as Co-Chairs –

MS. FUHRMANN:

No, we have an announcement to make on our own.

DR. GITTELMAN:

By all means, Marge.

MS. FUHRMANN:

This is my last meeting as Chair of Education and Exhibits. Gretchen and I have decided to flip positions. She is going to chair, and I'm going to sit.

DR. GITTELMAN:

She's going to chair and you're going to –

MS. FUHRMANN:

--Sit on the committee. She sat on it when she joined. She was originally going to sit on it for a year and get the feel of the land, but we decided not to wait because she's an educator and I'm not.

DR. GITTELMAN:

Okay, that's fine with me.

MS. FUHRMANN:

So this is my last report.

DR. GITTELMAN:

Okay, by all means, go on with your report.

MS. FUHRMANN:

As you may recall, last month I mentioned that they had sent out the break brochure to the Elwood School District for the first time. Well, the Elwood School District came back to us that they would like to participate in all our break periods from now on, so we will be sending them our brochures.

On the same subject, we are still taking reservations for the break week. We will be suggesting to visitors to our planetarium that they come back for the break week and send their children to the break program while they take a mansion tour. If you look over by where we have the coffee, you will see that there is a display case, which has a display of one of the crafts that will be done during the break week. Over the course of this, there will be other display cases put up in the lobby so you will be able to see all the crafts that will be done during the break week. This is to help publicize the programs.

Preparation is now going on for the March break, which is a very abbreviated break of only three days, March 24, 25 and 28. They are going to be doing almost a repeat of the Vanderbilt Cup Races during that time. They still have cars, so they're going to be running races, making cars and whatnot.

Again, on the same note, for the April break, which is really only a long weekend so there is really one day involved, April 25, we're going to be running a one-day program on Belanski and a watercolor fish program.

DR. PECORALE:

Do you have a date for that?

MS. FUHRMANN:

As I just said, April 25.

The numbers for attendance for museum school programs are up for the month of January. We ran a discount during the month of January of \$1 per student, but we still generated an increase of nearly \$2,000 in income on the museum programs alone during the month of January. And 540 additional students came during this month. We attribute a lot of this to our discount, which encouraged districts that don't have large budgets for trips to come. So next year for the 2006 winter, we are going to extend this dollar discount into the month of February and going to publicize it more in hopes of it attracting even more of these lower income districts.

As you may recall in previous months, we had been discussing starting in September a program to bring in middle school children for a scavenger hunt and to incorporate the middle school language programs where they discuss the cultural heritage of Spain and the Latin American countries. That is now being developed in both English and Spanish. For the lower middle grades, the first scavenger hunt will be done in English. For the eighth grader a volunteer has agreed to do a complete translation of the entire scavenger hunt and all items and descriptions into Spanish for us so that the eighth graders can come and do the entire program in Spanish. We are also going to pursue the scavenger hunts with English as a second language students in schools as well as adult programs. The volunteer who offered to do the translation is my son, Joshua, by the way. He said it would be his pleasure.

Under the same dollar discount program, attendance and income in the planetarium was up for the month of January as well, so we will be continuing that program into February during 2006.

A grant proposal is being prepared to obtain funds so that we would be able to bring in more students and other children not necessarily in schools to our

programs. We would be paid from a grant source.

A very interesting experience took place on February 9 here. Twenty-eight English and Library Science teachers who are taking a course at Stony Brook University called Science in Science Fiction Novels came to the planetarium here and saw our planetarium show, had a question and answer period with our planetarium staff, as well as their teacher from Stony Brook. It was very well received, and this is an audience we never get – high school Library and English teachers. Most of them had never realized that they could actually bring students here, for example. They all went away and the feedback we're getting is good from the teacher, and he would like to do this sort of thing again, bring his college students in here for programs with our planetarium. That was pretty exciting.

We did return our exhibit to Maryland, and we have a new exhibit in the lobby on Dr. Robert Goddard and rocketry and space science. We are still working on getting that de-accessioned Goddard display. Hopefully we will be hearing about something on that soon. We have both e-mails and phone calls in to them.

We are also working with the local universities' laboratories to participate in another 100th anniversary that's coming up this year. It's the 100th anniversary of Albert Einstein's first paper on relativity. It's a big deal in physics. All of the school districts, science labs and universities are participating. We will be joining them. We have contacted all of them and offered our services and asked them how we could perhaps participate. On our level here at the Vanderbilt, we are developing perhaps a planetarium show on relativity for our school students and are looking into doing other things that will bring in Albert Einstein to our students to incorporate this year of physics.

If you hear banging from the auditorium tonight, it's because the new laser equipment is being installed tonight. Next month we're all going to go into the planetarium and we're going to get a demonstration of the new equipment for the laser shows. We're going to get one song, and you're all going to see how the new laser equipment works. It's quite spectacular. There are 46 pre-set settings. It's got tons of sub-woofers. It's really quite spectacular.

A proposal has been put into the National Science Foundation for a grant to

upgrade our planetarium observatory for renovations making it handicapped accessible and to get a new telescope and new software. The proposal is due June 5, and we are hopeful.

Our planetarium director is also developing two adult education courses, one called "Planets" and the other is called "Stars and Galaxies." In addition to that, we are also looking into developing a course with one of the local yacht clubs on celestial navigation for adults, again, through the Adult Education Program.

As I reported last month, NOAA Weather Station is up and running. When the weather is nicer in May or June we're going to take all of the trustees over to the weather station so that you can see a demonstration of how the equipment is run, what it is showing us, and how we will access it from our homes.

At the present time, NOAA is working with Lance and Lorraine, who is the head of our Education Programs here, to schedule a press conference to announce this new location for their equipment.

Stephanie would like to report that the second interim report to IMLS has been filed on the status of her grant. Among the other things she reported is that she reported on the status of the County projects as it interacts with hers and that the planning of those County projects has begun. We are now in good standing with IMLS. She has been helping with the break programs.

Florence is working on the tours of the Living History. The year is 1936. She has been researching who visited Eagles Nest actually in 1936. Howard Hughes was here in 1936. Sammy Snead, Albert Gwynne Vanderbilt were here, and a whole bunch of people from the Algonquin Round Table came to visit, among others. She has also been organizing correspondence and working with a researcher who is doing a book on Cornelius Vanderbilt, II. The next meeting of LIMA is Monday, March 28, and she has no details on that.

There was an article in Newsday on January 31, and I have it attached here, called "Vanderbilt's Nautical Side," and it goes on to say, "Millionaire's passion for speed wasn't just for racing cars. His love of watercraft is now on display at the museum." This also included a picture of Florence, and it's a very large article, which generated a letter to Florence from Angie Carpenter,

Legislator of the 11th District, congratulating her on this achievement and wishing her well.

As I said, this is my last report. Gretchen will be taking over as of next month.

DR. GITTELMAN:

I want to thank you for the many reports that you have given over the years.

MS. FUHRMANN:

You're welcome.

DR. GITTELMAN:

Finance Committee, Bert Seides.

MR. SEIDES:

I'd like to bring forward a motion. The motion is in regard to the long-standing retirement plan. This is a motion to approve extra amendments of TIAA CREFT, our retirement plan, as recommended by our attorney, Irwin Rubin of the firm Danziger & Markhoff.

DR. GITTELMAN:

Is there a second?

DR. PECORALE:

Second.

DR. GITTELMAN:

Discussion? There being no discussion, all in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? **It carries unanimously. (Vote: 12/0/0/3 Absent: Ms. LeBow. Two vacant positions.)** Thank you. Is there more to your report?

MR. SEIDES:

No, there is not.

DR. GITTELMAN:

Thank you very much for that report. Personnel Committee, Deborah has agreed to stay as Chairperson for the Personnel Committee.

MS. GRAY:

The Personnel Committee did not have a meeting this month, so there will be no report.

DR. GITTELMAN:

Okay. We did have a meeting of the Executive Committee. The next meeting of the Executive Committee will be -- what date is that?

MS. GRAY:

I don't remember. Lance, were you sending us an e-mail on that?

MR. MALLAMO:

I have it, but --

MS. FUHRMANN:

Do you want me to tell you?

DR. GITTELMAN:

Yes, Marge, please.

MS. FUHRMANN:

Of course, I do.

MR. MALLAMO:

Is it March 2?

MS. FUHRMANN:

No, it's not March 2. It's a Monday, it's at 5:30 in the afternoon on March 14.

MR. MALLAMO:

At the Expressway Diner in --

MS. FUHRMANN:

At the Expressway Diner in Hauppauge.

DR. GITTELMAN:

So it's 5:30 at the Expressway Diner. I want to extend an invitation to those trustees who would like to join us, please feel welcome to join us. We will just take a bigger table and stay a little longer.

We did have a meeting, and I will ask Deborah with very little notice to just give us an overview of what the meeting was about.

MS. GRAY:

The officers of the board met as the Executive Committee last Wednesday evening, and Steve was nice enough to host it in his house. The main purpose was for us to start thinking a little bit about providing some new initiatives for the board so that we better understand our roles and responsibilities as board members.

Part of the discussion, if not most of it, centered around the book that Lance recently handed out to board members that talks to roles, responsibilities, and fiduciary interests. We talked about revisiting our mission, our visions, understanding our strategic plan, understanding our budgets, what development is about, and how to evaluate staff. We felt for those of us who had read it, we felt that there were some very interesting chapters and that there was a lot of information that would help us as a board better understand our roles and perform our activities better on behalf of the museum.

The Executive Committee intends to meet on a regular basis to review the book and use some of the scripts from the books and establish an agenda for education and for various activities that we might do as a board in the collective. The Executive Committee is using this as an opportunity to better understand what we see as the gaps, but we're really looking for the board members to talk to us about issues and items they don't understand or they would like additional information on. Then we hope to go forward using this format to better use our time here as board members. There is a lot of discussion about using some time before board meetings, and using special days to do these sorts of things. It will probably be a combination of all of those things.

For those board members who didn't receive the book, I'm certain Lance is going to get it to the new members, but it really is worth reading. It's best if you don't skip around the chapters if you go through it, because there is a progression to the information. For people who sit on other boards, it won't be new information, but I do believe for us here, it would be helpful for us to use it as a training manual and to work our way through the various issues. I think it's an opportunity for us all to learn more about the museum and to

learn more about what our roles are or what our roles could be here. I think there is a lot more that this board has to offer this museum. This is our opportunity to do it.

In addition, I would assume that the Executive Committee will deal with other regular issues, but anything that's discussed at the Executive Committee will be discussed here. The Executive Committee meetings are always open to all the board members. I think Steve will be announcing them at board meetings.

Our intent is to meet one week prior to each board meeting or at least a few days prior to the board meeting. We are really open to any suggestions anyone has as to other activities and other thoughts you might have that we might consider.

DR. GITTELMAN:

Tony.

DR. PECORALE:

Two things. It's my understanding, and correct me if I'm wrong, that if the Executive Committee meets and other trustees do not go to that meeting, it doesn't constitute an open meeting. But if the other trustees were to go to the meetings, and it was to constitute a quorum, that that then would come under the Open Meetings Law.

DR. GITTELMAN:

You pose a dilemma.

DR. PECORALE:

That's correct. That's why I'm posing it, not because I'm trying to create a problem, but because I don't want to see us have problems.

MS. FUHRMANN:

One trustee would make it a quorum other than the Executive Committee.

DR. PECORALE:

That's why when I knew you were having a meeting, I purposely did not go to the meeting.

DR. GITTELMAN:

The Executive Committee does not have a final vote on anything.

DR. PECORALE:

It doesn't matter whether you have a final vote. It's whether you have a meeting.

MS. FUHRMANN:

Sunshine Laws.

DR. PECORALE:

If you were to have a meeting, and it was to become a quorum, that then involves the Open Meetings Law, as I understand it. Somebody else may want to correct me because I did ask the question of somebody that is not connected with the County. I asked the question specifically as it relates to meetings dealing with organizations that come under public scrutiny, and we do come under public scrutiny.

DR. GITTELMAN:

Then perhaps the best way of handling this –

DR. PECORALE:

I think you need an interpretation.

DR. GITTELMAN:

Yes, what we could do is, I'll ask Lance to put together a letter under both of our names, which we will send to – I think we'll send it to Mea Knapp. Yes, Marge.

MS. FURHMANN:

I'm just wondering if we're meeting in a public place if it mitigates it at all, since we're meeting in an open diner.

DR. GITTELMAN:

It might, but what we'll do is –

MS. FUHRMANN:

The meeting in your house may be different than meeting in an open place.

MS. GRAY:

It requires public notice.

MS. FUHRMANN:

It's the public notice that he's got a problem with, but he just announced it, and he announced it more than 30 days in advance. That is a public notice. These are public minutes. Anyone can read them.

MS. GRAY:

For the purpose of what we were trying to achieve, I would suggest that the officers continue to meet as officers to establish agenda items, training programs, and deal with issues of the museum, if the board would agree with that.

MR. LUECKE:

I agree because it's more important for you to meet than –

MS. GRAY:

Then you can resolve whether or not that's appropriate.

DR. GITTELMAN:

The reason why this is kind of new is because we haven't had any Executive Committee meeting, other than the last one, for a decade. When I became President, the first thing I did was just say we would meet as the whole board once a month. It used to be that we met every other month. Now we're meeting once a month as a board and once a month as an Executive Committee. So we have gone from six board meetings to twelve board meetings and twelve Executive Committee meetings – twenty-four meetings a year. It's a change. It's new. We will research it out. The next meeting, if you'll excuse us, we'll have it at the diner without you, so that nobody can really raise an issue.

MS. GRAY:

Steve, do the officers – is that the definition of the Executive Committee?

DR. GITTELMAN:

Yes.

MS. FUHRMANN:

It's in the bylaws.

MS. GRAY:

Typically Executive Committees include Chairmen of Committees as well, not just officers. We could make a distinction between the officers meeting to

conduct the kind of business we're trying to do, which is to promote programs for the trustees, versus an Executive Committee meeting that might include other people.

DR. GITTELMAN:

Tony.

DR. PECORALE:

I just raised it as a question. The other thing, first I'd like to thank Lance for sending me the book. I did receive it, and I did have an opportunity to look it over. You mentioned evaluation of staff. The segment on dealing with evaluation of staff is extremely clear.

DR. GITTELMAN:

Yes.

DR. PECORALE:

We, as a board, evaluate the Director.

DR. GITTELMAN:

Yes.

DR. PECORALE:

And an Assistant Director, if such were to exist. The Director evaluates the rest of the staff.

DR. GITTELMAN:

Yes, one of the things we concluded in the Executive Committee meeting that we have already had, with Lance present, was that the chapter on evaluating the Executive Director, which includes a questionnaire, would be the questionnaire that we would adopt for, if you will, evaluating Lance's performance today. We realize that it's not something where he was given notice that we were going to use this questionnaire and that this is what we wanted him to fulfill, but he agreed to let us use it – not agreed – but he was comfortable with us using it. We're going to use it. We're going to have you all fill it out. We recommend you read the chapters. It's 200 pages. It's homework. Hit the books. Read it right before bed, and you'll get a good night's sleep. Just read it. We're going to use it. We are going to use that questionnaire to evaluate Lance. We will come back to you.

We want to do a board retreat. I'm going to ask Susan LeBow, who is our 2nd Vice President, to take charge of the board retreat. Yes, you brought up a good snag, and we will deal with it.

DR. PECORALE:

The other thing is that evaluation of staff happens to be of great interest to me. As some of you may know, I am the author of an evaluation system for school administrators. The chapter implies that each museum may have specific things tied to that museum that may make it necessary to modify or identify some uniqueness of this museum.

DR. GITTELMAN:

What we would have done had you not brought to our attention that we might be breaching the Open Meetings Law is it would have been good to have a discussion, which we were going to have at the Executive Committee. I think what we're going to have to do now is have a meeting of the Executive Committee and then bring this to the Personnel Committee so that other trustees can have input into the questionnaire if you want to modify it.

DR. PECORALE:

I guess that's where I'm going.

DR. GITTELMAN:

Would that be okay with you, Deborah?

MS. GRAY:

Yes.

DR. PECORALE:

I guess that's where I'm going. I would hope that the evaluation piece might become a separate committee discussion rather than it just be the Executive Committee.

DR. GITTELMAN:

So then the Executive Board has functioned very well. We now have brought to the Personnel Committee one of its first charges for the year, and that is to review the questionnaire, take it out of the hands of the Executive

Committee, let's have the other trustees involved. It's a better process. Good, you pushed us that way.

DR. PECORALE:

I'm sorry that I brought this up –

DR. GITTELMAN:

No apology necessary. You have done some good steering here.

MR. LUECKE:

Question.

DR. GITTELMAN:

Sure.

MR. LUECKE:

Is the breaching of the open committee meeting because of the number of people or the type of committee? In other words, if you had a Development Committee and you had more than the quorum, is that a breach also, or just because it's the Executive –

DR. PECORALE:

As I understand it, and I'm speaking now strictly from an entirely different forum, I'm looking at it from the standpoint of schools. As I understand it, if you have a quorum, then that comes under the Sunshine Laws of the State of New York with respect to the Open Meetings Law. If I had a seven-member board of education, and if four of those members were to have a separate meeting, that would be a violation of the law unless we opened it up and announced it and allowed the world to come in. I wasn't trying to create a problem for the Executive Board. What I was trying to do was shield the board from criticisms that may come if a number of us were to go to the Executive Board meeting. I don't see any problem with either the Executive Board stating that this is an open meeting and that any members of the board could come. But making it a declaration that this would constitute a meeting, then I guess we have to start to decide whether or not any actions can be taken at that meeting that would require minutes. I can't speak with respect to our group, but I can tell you that you can get into a big hassle when it's a school board. That's where my experience comes from.

MS. GRAY:

Steve, can we seek some other clarification, too, because it seems to me that we have a lot – not a lot – but a few committees, Personnel Committee, Development Committee, PR Committee. If we don't then have assigned people to those committees, are they going to experience the same difficulty that Tony is talking about? We need some clarification on that.

MR. LUECKE:

That's my question exactly.

MS. GRAY:

Because I think that when someone signs up to sit on a committee of a board, it's clear that that committee makes recommendations to the board. It doesn't act on its own. That to me would shield it from the public process because everything that's going to be recommended has to come here, be discussed, and be recommended.

DR. GITTELMAN:

One of the charges of the Executive Committee should be to investigate this problem. I think rather than taking more time here, why don't we at our next meeting find out what the deal is. Would that be okay with you, Tony?

DR. PECORALE:

Absolutely.

DR. GITTELMAN:

We'll report back to you what we find in reference to this. New challenge. Okay, that was Executive Committee. Was there anything else that we left out? It was a pretty good open discussion. It lasted a couple of hours. I hope that we can have it so that more people can attend because I think it's productive.

Director's Report.

MR. MALLAMO:

My report is very short tonight. I have completed the capital budget requests through 2008 and submitted that to the County last week. We should have our hearing in about two weeks on that request.

Other than that, I encourage everyone to pray that the weather keeps up like it has been this week for next week, which is traditionally our busiest week of

the year. With good weather we could really have a very successful week. With a snow storm, we could be facing challenging times. So, please keep your fingers crossed. Thank you.

DR. GITTELMAN:

On the President's Report, I think a lot of what I might have said was covered by the Executive Committee. Stan Feldman has resigned the Board of Trustees for personal reasons.

We made it clear that trustee education is an important area of focus for us in the near future. I think that we have to pursue it. We have new trustees. It is not a question of us suspecting that any one of us doesn't know what our responsibilities are. We all need to know what our responsibilities are. It's not just because of the addition of new trustees. Everyone needs a re-education.

I found in reading the old orange book and the new book, that the focus is different, that the American Association of Museums, the original orange book was written by museum directors. The current book seems to be written more by museum trustees. Their emphasis is substantially different in terms of how they believe we should conduct ourselves. I urge you to read the current edition. It will make for some interesting discussion. It will be a good learning process.

I approached Steve Israel, the Congressman. We did discuss the idea of going after the Alva. They want to know how. If anybody has any ideas of how we might pursue getting a peak at the Alva now that she's off the coast of North Carolina, let me know if you have knowledge of that type.

MS. FUHRMANN:

Do you mean to go down there?

DR. GITTELMAN:

No, not to go down there but maybe just do whatever it is, some imagery. I don't know what might be available to us. She might be a dive site. I don't know how deep she is.

MR. MALLAMO:

It's not very deep, about 300 feet, I believe.

DR. PECORALE:

How many feet?

MR. MALLAMO:

About 300, that's what I understand.

DR. GITTELMAN:

She might be a dive site.

MS. GRAY:

That's a little deep for diving –

DR. GITTELMAN:

I got a very warm response from the Congressman --

MS. GRAY:

Is anyone familiar with any salvage companies?

DR. PECORALE:

I would just like to see them bring up a piece, any piece.

MS. GRAY:

But that would have to be a salvage company. Three hundred feet is too deep for diving.

DR. ROGERS:

Where is it located now?

DR. PECORALE:

The Navy has got a salvage facility.

DR. GITTELMAN:

Off the coast of North Carolina.

DR. ROGERS:

How far?

DR. GITTELMAN:

On the continental shelf, I understand.

DR. ROGERS:

How far under?

MR. MALLAMO:

I believe, Bill, don't quote me on it, but I think it's about 340 feet. Marjorie asked me a question when Todd and I met, and one thing we threw out is possibly getting Robert Ballard's submersible, the Alvin, from Woodshold involved in it. It's an idea. I haven't pursued it since that meeting. It's another thing we'll look into.

DR. GITTELMAN:

For those of you, just briefly on the Alva, this was Willie's final yacht. She was some 264 feet long. She had the same name as his mom did. She was also Alva. His father had a yacht called the Alva, but when the original Alva the yacht sank, dad got off, ordered a new yacht, and it wasn't Alva II. They were on their way to divorce. Willie was very close with his mother. He donated the Alva to the Navy. She was named the Plymouth. She was sunk in 1941, I think. She was sunk in World War II.

DR. PECORALE:

No, it was 1942.

MR. MALLAMO:

Yes, 1942.

MS. GRAY:

So it was the Plymouth that sunk outside of South Carolina?

DR. GITTELMAN:

Yes, the Plymouth. All Willie K. expressed at the time was that he was very gratified that all members of the crew and the captain were removed safely. The torpedoes that sunk the Alva were manufactured in the same German marine works that built the ship. Kind of freaky. That would be my report. Old business? Is there any old business? Yes, Marge.

MS. FUHRMANN:

The directory of trustees that everyone got is not up to date. Hopefully by next month we will have a completely corrected directory of trustees.

DR. GITTELMAN:

Thank you. New business? We have not established a need for an executive session. Can I have a motion to adjourn?

MR. LUECKE:

Motion.

MR. SEIDES:

Second.

DR. GITTELMAN:

All in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? **It carries unanimously. (Vote: 12/0/0/3 Absent: Ms. LeBow. Two vacant positions.)** Thank you. Let's just confirm the date of the next meeting, although I realize it's automatic. It's the third Wednesday.

MR. MALLAMO:

I believe it's March 16.

DR. GITTELMAN:

Okay, and the Executive Committee meeting is –

MR. MALLAMO:

March 14.

DR. GITTELMAN:

Thank you.

(Dr. Steven Gittelmann adjourned the meeting at 8:40 p.m.)

SG:ap