Dumbarton Oaks

Newsletter

VOLUME II, NO. I FEBRUARY 1980

Repair and Renovation Update:

Now that the repair and renovation of the main building is behind us, with the Trustees' permission the Fellows Building will be the next area to be attended to. Renovation of the Fellows Building was at the top of the priority list almost two years ago, but the discovery of the structural weakness of the third floor of the main building removed it temporarily. It is foreseen that a renovation will include air-conditioning and a revised heating system to ensure year-round use, an updated and more spacious kitchen, and bathrooms and telephones in each room. Present thinking is to relocate the kitchen and Manager's office in the East Cottage thus allowing for a larger dining area, a small kitchen for residents' use downstairs and an extra sleeping room upstairs. A number of plans are currently under consideration. If the Trustees give the go-ahead, it is hoped that work can begin immediately upon the close of the second term, i.e., June 16, and would be completed in time for the opening of the first term of the next academic year, September 15.

The urgency of the Orangery renovation has been temporarily relieved with the installation of a support system of six wood columns. They have effectively braced the roof and allowed for continued use while alternatives for repair or replacement are being considered. The symposia luncheons will take place in the Orangery this spring as in the past, although it is hoped that repair work may begin in the early summer.

The area outside the new main floor lounge is being prepared as an outdoor extension of the lounge. By the time warm weather has arrived, garden furniture should be in place.

Other items: the typing carrels, designed and built by cabinetmaker Astor Moore, are in place; carpeting has been installed on the two main staircases in order to cut down on falls and noise.

* * * *

Byzantine Collection News:

New Acquisition: In early October, the Collection acquired one of the finest and historically most important examples of middle Byzantine painting to have come on the market in recent years--two long lost folios from the 'Lectionary of Catherine Comnene,' previously known as the Phanar Gospels. Mounted incorrectly as a bifolio, the leaves consist of an imposing full-page illumination--nearly a foot high--of the Evangelist Mark, and an elaborately decorated text page with the opening lections of Matthew. The Mark leaf had been exhibited in Paris in 1931, but its whereabouts

since then had been unknown. Both leaves originally formed part of a luxurious Gospel Lectionary which, according to a dedicatory inscription at the back of the manuscript, was presented to the Monastery of the Holy Trinity on the island of Chalki in the year 1063 by the Empress Catherine Comnene.

To highlight this acquisition, a small exhibition of Byzantine illuminated manuscripts was organized. With the generous loan of the Evangelist portraits of Matthew and Luke from the same Lectionary by the Cleveland Museum of Art, all four surviving pages from this de luxe manuscript were brought together for the first time in nearly 50 years. In addition, the 'Gospels of John Angelos' was borrowed from the Harvard College Library, reuniting a detached leaf now in Dumbarton Oaks with its parent manuscript. Entitled "Gifts from the Byzantine Court," the exhibition opened February 6 and will continue through June 1. A booklet to accompany the exhibition was written by Gary Vikan and is available at the Sales Desk for 50 cents.

With the opening of a new exhibition area this fall, three small specialized exhibitions were mounted for the meeting of the Byzantine Studies Conference which was held at Dumbarton Oaks October 26-28. They were: "The Sion Silver Treasure: Conservation and Restoration," "Coins of the Justinianic Renaissance: A.D. 681 and Following," and "Security in Byzantium: Sealings in Wax." The exhibitions will continue through the spring.

Gary Vikan is conducting a museum seminar entitled "Byzantine Art and Society: The Dumbarton Oaks Collection." The twelve-week course, which meets each Tuesday from 5:00-6:45, includes sixteen students--both undergraduates and graduates--from Washington area universities. Field trips are planned to the Walters Art Gallery in Baltimore and the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts in Richmond.

* * * *

Garden Library News:

The most interesting recent acquisition is an important addition to our Herbal collection, Rembert Dodoens' Florum et Coronarium odoratarumque..., Antwerp, 1569. Handsome velvet roping has recently been purchased for the Rare Book Room, which will enable us to open the room to museum visitors on weekends, hopefully by the end of March.

There is a new exhibition in the case in the Garden Library wing on Botanical Manuscripts.

Diane K. McGuire spent five days in California in early February doing research on Beatrix Farrand. She made arrangements to borrow material from Berkeley to include in an exhibition which will accompany our 1980 symposium on Mrs. Farrand. Betty MacDougall returned to the U.S. from Florence for several weeks during and after the Christmas holidays. She spent ten days at Dumbarton Oaks in early January. Marcia Hudson has become engaged to a professor of political science. The wedding has been set for June 28. Anna Siney resigned at the end of January. Mary Shahid has taken her place.

* * * *

Pre-Columbian News:

There were several staff changes during the past few months. The most important of these was the resignation of Elizabeth Benson, which was announced in mid-October but which did not become effective until January 1, 1980. At the annual Christmas party on December 19th, she was honored with a short ceremony and presented with a trip to Egypt as a farewell gift. She is planning to take

the trip in late April. We wish her "Bon Voyage." However, this is not the last we will see of her, for she will continue on as a consultant to the publications program for a time. Her successor will be chosen in March by the Advisory Committee.

The other staff change was the departure of Frances Nordbye, who left in late November for a full-time position with a law firm. She was replaced on December 3rd by Blenda Femenias, formerly a part-time curatorial assistant at the Textile Museum. Blenda is finishing up her M.A. in Textiles and Clothing from Syracuse University.

The collection received as a gift from Mrs. Gardner Palmer of Georgetown a Moche III-IV stirrup-spout pot, dating from about 350-650 A.D. The modelled pot shows a seated man stroking a small feline.

The elaborately-carved Classic Central Veracruz yoke that has been off exhibit since August 1975, when it broke while being photographed, is now being repaired. It should be back on exhibit in the galleries by mid-February.

The long-awaited volume, The Junius B. Bird Pre-Columbian Textile Conference, published jointly with the Textile Museum, should be out in early March. It was edited by Ann Pollard Rowe (of the Textile Museum) and Elizabeth Benson and Anne-Louise Schaffer. The conference took place May 19-20, 1973, in honor of Dr. Junius Bird, a member of the original Pre-Columbian Advisory Committee and a pioneer in Peruvian archaeological textiles. All but one of the fifteen papers in the volume deal with this subject. It is destined to be a best-seller.

The slide collection is currently being enlarged by the addition of over 2,000 slides of Paracas textiles, duplicates of Anne Paul's slides. Hers is the most complete slide collection of this material known.

The staff and fellows have been active in their various fields. In mid-November, Mary Miller gave a lecture at Princeton University on the murals of Bonampak, Chiapas, and taught two discussion sections on Maya glyphs to a class of Pre-Columbian art history students there. Elizabeth Benson and Anne Paul both gave papers at the 20th Annual Meeting of The Institute of Andean Studies in Berkeley, January 4-5, 1980. Betty's paper was entitled "A Variant Moche Presentation Theme in Bremen," and Anne's "Re-establishing Provenience: A Paracas Mantle Finds Its Mummy." Anne Schaffer gave three specially conducted tours of the collection to Smithsonian Associates in February, and Anne also led a full-day tour to the American Museum of Natural History in New York on February 15th to see the "Gold of El Dorado: The Heritage of Colombia" exhibit, also for the Smithsonian Associates.

* * * *

Friends of Music News:

On March 20 and 21, The Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra, under the direction of Dennis Russell Davies, will perform among other works the Dumbarton Oaks Concerto and Septet, music composed especially for Dumbarton Oaks by Igor Stravinsky in 1937 when Stravinsky received a commission from Mr. and Mrs. Bliss to write a concerto for chamber orchestra to celebrate their thirtieth wedding anniversary (April 14, 1938). The Concerto in E flat, the result of that commission, was first performed at Dumbarton Oaks on May 8, 1938, under the direction of the late Nadia Boulanger. The Septet for violin, viola, cello, clarinet, horn, bassoon, and piano was composed between July 1952 and February 1953, and like the earlier score of the Concerto in E flat of 1938, was dedicated to the organization which sponsored its first performance--Dumbarton Oaks.

House Collection News:

Restoration work on the pair of Chinese red and gold lacquer cabinets (16th century) in the main hall is now virtually completed. The broken pieces at the base of each cabinet have been repaired and several cracks in the lacquer have been secured. The cleaning of the exterior will be done during the next fiscal year.

The large oil painting entitled "Pastorale" by J. B. Huet (French, 18th century) which hung in the dining room of the Fellows Building, now hangs outside the Director's office opposite the Oval Room. The hand-carved frame (also 18th century) has been completely restored and regilded to tone with the soft hues of the painting itself. The restorer has found under the spline at the back of the frame what he thinks may be the signature of the frame-maker. Photographs were taken and a report will be received shortly.

Two more gold frames have gone to be restored, that of "La Répétition de Chant" by Edgar Degas (1834-1917) which hangs in the Rare Book Room of the Garden Library, and that of the "L'Embarquement pour Cythère" thought to be by Antoine Watteau (1684-1721), but which Professor Carl Nordenfalk, who examined it this year, thinks is an artist's copy of the painting in the Louvre. This painting has not been on exhibition lately because of the very bad condition of the frame. When finished, the painting will be hung opposite the Huet to the right of the elevator next to the Oval Room.

* * * *

Photograph Collection News:

After nearly ten and a half years in the Photograph Collection, Judy O'Neill will leave Dumbarton Oaks on February 22 to begin a career in archaeology. She will work with her husband, Tony Wilkinson, for the Essex County Council in England.

Maria Fisher left the Photograph Collection, January 4, 1980, after completing her M.A. in Speech Pathology. Over Christmas, she married Dr. Dwight Carson.

Claudia Vess has had three pieces accepted in a juried art show, "Feminist Art," at the Washington Women's Art Center beginning February 28.

* * * *

Garden News:

The schedule of blooms for March is Jasmine, Star Magnolia, Weeping Cherries, Cornus Mas, and Winter Honeysuckle. The early bulbs to look for are Galanthus (Snowdrops), Chionodoxa (Glory of the Snow), Crocus, Iris Reticulata, Iris Danfordiae, Scillas (Siberian Squill), and Puschkinia (Striped Squill).

The swimming pool will be filled with water on April 1 for those brave enough.

* * * *

Additional News of Interest:

A big WELCOME BACK to Mike Diedzic, who is working on a part-time basis. Along with the already-mentioned new additions to Dumbarton Oaks, we want to welcome Maria Cliser, our telephone operator. Farewell to Lucy Baglia and Zery Mingo and best wishes to both of them in their new endeavors. We are sorry to report that James Peck, night guard at Dumbarton Oaks, died suddenly on February 27th.

Hans Belting arrived on February 23 and will be staying through April 5, Professor Kidson will be in residence on weekends through March, Mlle. D'Alverny arrives March 27 and will be staying through April 6, and Professor Grierson will be staying from April 19 through June 14.

* * * *

What do you do with your spare time??? Astor D. Moore mixes the pleasure of knowing his neighbors with political action to assure that his community can and will influence the process of governing our city--the District of Columbia. A native Washingtonian and resident of his community for more than fourteen years, Astor Moore volunteered to be the catch-all for individual and neighborhood problems of the residents of his community. He took the time to make the appropriate calls to get forgotten and abandoned cars removed from very limited parking spaces or to complain about stray dogs running throughout the neighborhood terrorizing the residents, or even to get citizen impact on governmental decision-making. What began as a concerned citizen helping his neighbors turned into that concerned citizen being elected as an Advisory Neighborhood Commissioner in the Ward One quadrant of the city.

Advisory Neighborhood Commissions were created to permit citizens of the District of Columbia to maintain an active role in determining the nature of services to be delivered to their communities. Elected Commissioners represent their respective communities in advising the District Government on public policy matters which affect the delivery of services in their areas. They are given timely notice of and an opportunity to review and make recommendations on all planning and development projects.

Not only is Astor an elected Commissioner but also the Chairman of ANC-1A, with a budget of more than $19,600 annually to hire staff and conduct programs for residents of this area of 21,000 people.

* * * *

Alex DeBoeck is involved in two art shows. One in which his work will be shown is a selection from gallery artists at Georgetown Art Gallery, 2611 P Street, N.W., March 4-22. The other is a show of six Belgian artists living in the United States. This will run from April 21-May 17 and is also at the Georgetown Art Gallery.

* * * *

The review of Fellowships for the 1980-81 academic year has taken place by the Advisory Committees for Studies in the History of Landscape Architecture, Pre-Columbian Studies, and the Senior Fellows Committee. A notice listing new fellows both for the academic year and for the summer 1980 will be posted in early March.

* * * *

A symposium in honor of the 15th Century of Saint Benedict's Birth: 480-1980 is being held at Yale, National Gallery, Catholic University, and Dumbarton Oaks. The Washington, D. C., portion dates are March 21-23. The two-part symposium is to study the relationship between organized religious life and the art forms this has fostered. The bulletin board gives further details.

* * * *

Registration information for the Garden and Byzantine Symposia is expected to be out by mid-March. Watch the bulletin board for details.

* * * *

In case you are not aware, postage stamps are now available in denominations of 10¢, 15¢, 21¢, and 31¢ from the Museum Sales desk during museum hours.

* * * *

If you have any news for future newsletters, please let Ann Wiedman know.

MARCH

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
Hans Belting here through 4/5	Prof. Kidson in residence weekends in March					1
2	3	4	5 5-J. Lowden talk	6	7	8
9	10	11	12 Sherry	13 5-C. Norden-falk - talk	14	15
16	17 5-R. Etlin talk	18	19 P.L.-Deno Geanakoplos	20 Concert	21 Symposium - 15th Century St. Benedict's Concert	22 Birth
23 30	24 31	25	26 Sherry	27 Mlle. D'Alverny through 4/6	28	29

APRIL

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		1	2 5-M. E. Miller-talk	3	4	5
6	7 5-A. Paul talk	8 5-Velimirovic talk Concert	9 Sherry	10	11	12
13	14	15 5-P. Speck talk	16	17	18	19 Prof. Grierson through 6/14
20	21	22	23 Administ. Com. Meeting Sherry	24	25	26
27	28	29 5-T. Parker talk	30 5-A. Carr talk			

MAY

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2 Garden Symposium-------	3
4	5	6 5-U. Peschlow talk	7 Sherry	8	9 Byzantine Symposium-------	10
11 -------	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20 Concert	21 Sherry Concert	22 Concert	23	24
25	26	27 5-J. Forsyth talk	28 P. L.-Giles Constable	29 Harvard Bus. School Club meeting & reception	30	31