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It's Spring! Have you...

- Changed the air conditioning filters and confirmed the system is working?
- Examined your attic or crawlspace for unwanted inhabitants (birds, bats, or squirrels)?
- Checked the roof for missing or damaged shingles and flashing?

Spotlight on a CAPped Museum Livingston County Historical Society

The past few years have been full of exciting changes for the Livingston County Historical Society (LCHS) in western New York. In the fall of 2008, after 130 years with an all-volunteer staff, the Society hired its first paid staff person, museum administrator Anna Kowalchuk. Soon after, the LCHS received a Get Ready! grant sponsored by the New York State Council on the Arts and Museumwise (www.museumwise.org) to begin an analysis of the strengths, weaknesses, threats, and opportunities that the organization faced. Then came the Society's participation in the Conservation Assessment Program in 2009.



Livingston County Historical Society, Geneseo, NY

The Livingston County Historical Society is headquartered in an 1838 cobblestone schoolhouse and cares for and displays an extensive collection of objects and archival materials that represent over 200 years of history in western New York. Objects in the collection include industrial tools, children's toys, textiles, art, and a coach owned by a prominent local family. The widely varying materials represented in the building and collections present a diverse array of conservation issues, so the Society turned to the Conservation Assessment Program to help it begin to address these issues.

The Livingston County Historical Society's 2009 CAP reports, completed by Clinton Brown of Clinton Brown Company Architecture and collections conservator Barbara Moore, provided guidance and inspiration to the Historical Society. The CAP report prioritized collections and building needs and led the staff to seek an Historic Structures Report for the building and site, which was funded by the state of New York's Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation and Preserve New York. To complete the Historic Structures Report, the LCHS invited its CAP assessors back for a more in-depth study of the Historical Society's history, building, site, and collections. This document has become the basis for the next phase of planned improvements, including recommendations for rehabilitation and room reuse. In addition, since the CAP assessment the LCHS has revised its collections management policy, started a procedural manual for object handling and collections care, and has begun to inventory its collections and update its records in PastPerfect. In 2011, the Historical Society earned an American Heritage Preservation Grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services to purchase equipment to monitor environmental conditions in storage and exhibition areas, as well as archival supplies to re-house important collections.

The LCHS's five year strategic plan is strongly influenced by CAP recommendations. According to Ms. Kowalchuk, the CAP reports "Helped us to not feel overwhelmed by our to-do list. Our comprehensive list includes big ticket items like handicap accessibility and fixing structural problems with the roof, but it also includes smaller and less costly details such as removing documents from acidic mounts or being sure to have two docents on duty instead of one. Month by month, season by season, consultant by consultant, we reach more and more of the short and long range goals prioritized by the CAP report. LCHS is on an upward spiral, which has been greatly assisted by our CAP assessment."

Thanks to Anna Kowalchuk for her help with this article.

One Thing you Can Do: Check out New Conserve O Grams!

By the end of 2010 the National Park Service added four new Conserve O Gram technical leaflet publications to its Web site. The new leaflets are entitled:

- How To Select Gloves: An Overview For Collections Staff
- Care and Identification of Objects Made from Plastic
- Preparing and Storing Geological Drill Cores
- Digital Storage Media

The entire list of Conserve O Grams can be viewed here: http://www.nps.gov/museum/publications/consveogram/cons_toc.html#collectionpreservation. Conserve O Grams, short, instructive leaflets on caring for museum objects, are offered free of charge by the National Park Service's Museum Management Program. For more information, write to National Park Service, Museum Management Program, 1849 C Street, NW, Room NC230, Washington, D.C. 20240.



www.facebook.com/heritagepreservation

Help Keep our Files Current!

Was this newsletter addressed to someone who is no longer with your museum? If so, please let us know! We would like our records to be up-to-date so we can keep in touch with past CAP participants. Please send changes to the contact's name, title, mailing address, or email to cap@heritagepreservation.org. If you would rather receive CAPabilities electronically, drop us an email!

Resources for Disaster Preparedness

Having an up-to-date disaster preparedness and emergency response plan in place at your institution is an important aspect of preventive conservation. But are you unsure where to begin in writing or updating your institution's disaster plan? Here are three suggestions to get the "preparedness" ball rolling:

1. Register for a disaster planning workshop! Regional Conservation Centers (www.preservecollections.org) are a great resource for such workshops. The Midwest Art Conservation Center, for example, is offering a disaster plan writing workshop in several different Midwestern cities in the summer and Fall of 2011 (www.preserveart.org/workshops.html).
2. Can't travel? Register for a disaster planning webinar! The Northeast Document Conservation Center is offering "Disaster Planning with dPlan™ Lite" on May 17 (<http://www.nedcc.org/education/training/calendar.php>).
3. Want to assess your potential risks in-house before attending a webinar or workshop? Check out Heritage Preservation's Risk Evaluation and Planning Program (REPP) free downloadable tools at <http://www.heritagepreservation.org/repp/index.html>. The REPP risk prioritization worksheet and walk-through checklist give museum staff the opportunity to see for themselves what possible disasters they may face, which helps them prioritize which risks to address first in their disaster preparedness plan.

Tell Us Your Story!

We are interested in learning about your efforts in implementing recommendations from your CAP report, long-range planning, fund-raising, or community outreach. Please email your comments to cap@heritagepreservation.org.

Focus on Fundraising

Conservation Project Support Grants

There are several funding options that museums can explore to fund the recommendations from their CAP reports. Among the options are local funding, foundation funding, state grants, or federal grants. A common “next-step” grant for many CAP participants is federal Conservation Project Support grants offered through the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS).

Conservation Project Support (CPS) grants are offered to museums once annually, with a deadline of October 1. The grant amount can be up to \$150,000, and museums may take up to two years to finish the grant-funded project. CPS grants can fund a number of conservation-related projects, including treatments, improvements of environmental conditions in storage or exhibition areas, and staff training in preventive conservation practices. CPS can fund an assessment of collections conditions for a specific collection such as textiles or photographs. CPS can also fund general conservation assessments; in fact, CPS is recommended for museums that have been assessed seven or more years ago through CAP, but that have added a significant number of collections items or buildings to their institutions, making them too large to be assessed within ReCAP’s two-day assessment limit.

CPS applicants must apply through Grants.gov, the Federal government’s official grant application Web site. IMLS offers many resources to help applicants through the process, such as sample applications on their website (<http://www.imls.gov/applicants/sample.shtm>), webinars with the CPS grant staff, and friendly program officers who are available to answer questions at any time via phone or email.

Be on the Lookout for: Museums Count!

In the Fall of 2010, IMLS announced that it was partnering with the American Association of Museums and the White Oak Institute to plan the most comprehensive survey yet of United States museums. It is intended to identify every museum in the U.S. and store a record for each one in a public, searchable, and annually updated database. The goals are to allow museum professionals to find peers and potential partners and to compare best practices across institutions. Another important outcome will be the formation of a base of knowledge about all U.S. museums to allow for more accurate research about museums and the role they play in the social and economic lives of their cities, regions and nation.

The project partners are currently in the stages of developing data definitions and refining survey questions. See IMLS’ press release about the project here: <http://www.imls.gov/news/2010/092310.shtm>, and stay tuned for further developments!

Become a Member

Heritage Preservation provides its members with timely, useful information and represents them before decision-makers in the cultural heritage arena.

For information on how to join please visit us at www.heritagepreservation.org or call us toll-free at 888-388-6789.



Do’s and Don’ts: Parcels, Packs, Purses, Coats

While in the Museum storage areas, DO NOT wear or carry anything that might damage the artifacts. This includes backpacks, purses, briefcases, coats and umbrellas. Most storage areas are crowded, and large objects may protrude into the aisles. For this reason, when you are planning to enter a storage room, you must leave parcels, packs, purses, coats, etc. in a separate area, such as an office.

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Staff Changes

Teresa Martinez has joined the CAP staff as Program Assistant. Teresa has a BA in history from Williams College and an MA in museum studies from the George Washington University. She has interned and worked at a wide variety of museums and historic sites, from the Library of Congress to the Carlyle House Historic Park in Alexandria, Virginia. She will be a great addition to the CAP team.



Dates and Deadlines

Below is a list of upcoming grant deadlines and national conference dates. For a complete list of preservation workshops, including ones near you, visit www.heritagepreservation.org/calendar.htm.

- May 19-21** Collections Camp: Costumes and Textiles. American Association of State and Local History. Carson City, NV. <http://www.aaslh.org/CollectionsCampTextiles.htm>.
- May 21** Annual Conference, Association of Academic Museums and Galleries. Houston, TX. <http://www.aamg-us.org/conference11.php>.
- May 23-28** Annual Meeting, Society for the Preservation of Natural History Collections. San Francisco, CA. <http://research.calacademy.org/spnhc>

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