



# Newsletter

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## President's Letter

Scott Carrlee

Dear Membership,

Now that the annual meeting in Juneau is over, I am writing my final president's letter. I am sure you will all be excited to know that Carson turned two on the first day of the conference. We had to wait until a few days afterwards to celebrate.

The conference went swimmingly. Literally! There was lots of water. The Monday that people started arriving from the ferry ride and for the angels' project set a record for rainfall on that day. As ten WAAC members gathered at the St. Nicholas Russian Orthodox Church to start the angels' project, I got a call that the state archives' building had flooded. The plastic bubble that was protecting the roof during repairs failed and over one thousand

cubic feet of documents were wet. Fortunately the conservators who had arrived early pitched right in. Paper conservators Karen Zukor and Janice Schopfer were the first on the scene but many would follow.

As more WAAC members arrived and became aware of the situation their first question was "how can we help?" Throughout the critical 48 hour period following the disaster, conservators regardless of specialty lent their hands and their expertise to the process. People just kept showing up and pitching in to help. Some gave up their vacation time and their tours, and some even worked during some of the talks. All in all about half of the conference attendees participated in the disaster mitigation in some way. The risk management officer for the state was quoted in the local paper as saying "it was like having a heart attack at a cardiologists' convention." The lasting impression that the conservators left on Juneau was of hardworking, competent, can-do professionals. It made the profession look good that so many were so generous with their time and expertise, and it made me look good that I had planned a meeting of conservators to coincide with the worst disaster in the state archives' history. For that I am grateful to everyone who helped out.

Despite all the activity surrounding the flooded archives, we still managed to pull off a very successful angels' project. We had three teams working on different church materials. There was a metals team headed up by Dave Harvey that polished the brass candelabras; a paintings team led by Carmen Bria that surveyed and did some light surface cleanings; and a banners' team guided by Dana Senge that wrote condition reports and re-housed several beautiful old textile banners. Hays Shoop, Carmilla VanVoren, Catalina Fernandez, Ellen Carrlee, Yoonjo Lee, Anne Turner Gunnison were all part of the team who often rotated through the various projects during the two days. The small, mostly Native Alaskan congregation was grateful for the work of the conservators and thanked the group with a delicious salmon dinner and a traditional Tlingit dance group in full regalia. It was very impressive.

The conference itself went off pretty much without a hitch. We had a lovely opening reception at the Alaska State Museum followed by a public lecture by Yosi Pozeilov on his pinhole camera work. The papers given reflected the wonderful diversity of our profession. There were talks about waterlogged stuff, and frozen stuff, and things that go bump the night. There were talks about mounts that wouldn't cooperate and epoxy fills that would. There were talks about painting treatments that benefit from a rich debate and about paper treatments that could not be discussed at all. Photo conservation, dry ice blasting, inventing snow, you know, the typical eclectic mix of our meetings. For those of you who could not attend the meeting I encourage you to visit Ellen Carrlee's conservation blog to read her thoughts about the meeting and the talks. A second reception at the Juneau Douglas City Museum provided another opportunity to enjoy traditional dancing. The conference was capped off by a salmon bake at the Thane Ore house with a wonderful bluegrass band and a chance to witness the mysterious lifecycle of the salmon who were spawning in a stream nearby. With the conference over, I too have ended my five year journey with the WAAC board. It has been a good run, and I encourage all of you to test these waters before you finish your conservation journey.

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**President's letter, continued**

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I wish our incoming president Maria Laibinis Craft all the best. WAAC can look forward to a great meeting in Portland next fall. Congratulations also, to our new vice president Dana Senge, and new Members at Large Bev Perkins and Ria German Carter. And welcome back to continuing MALs Albrecht Gumlich and Marie Svoboda.

As this letter comes to a close, I struggle to find some way to mention cheese. Finding none, I turn to Carson who says "the cheese stands alone."

Scott