New Instructor Orientation

New CWA instructors met with Program Chair, Pat Dugan for orientation on January 5. Welcome to our new instructors and thank you for your time and dedication to our program!

(Pictured from left to right: William Wemple, Ghassan Aldebs, Ron Shafer, Terry Cox-Joseph, Clayton James, James Boswell, Ann Shalaski, Sandy Menaquale, Bill Glose, and Linda Partee)

Class Cancellation and Schedule Changes

Please note when a class is cancelled or changed unrelated to weather we will send an initial email, followed by a reminder email at a later date. There is no need to reply to those emails. We will call those students without an email.
CWA Board News

We continue to work on budget preparations for the upcoming fiscal year. We have cut $22,000 from our expenses and we are loathe to cut further. Our consensus view is further cuts would threaten our program - something we are not willing to do. We have looked at increased revenue streams but nothing in the short term looks promising. So, it is clear that an increase in tuition is coming if we want to continue the CWA program. I have a team doing some benchmarking of other lifelong learning programs to compare costs.

I have been told by a number of folks that we are very much on the low end of program costs but I want to have the facts in hand. I believe we can put this all together by the end of spring and our increase will likely take effect in the fall semester.

My goal is to get you the facts on how our increased rates compare with other programs as soon as we can. It’s been five years since our last increase and the work we did then is really no longer applicable. We’re working on three questions: How do we compare, how much of an increase do we need to be sure of solvency for the next few years, and do we increase all at once or in increments? It’s a lot of work but I am convinced that the final answer will make sense and be acceptable to the vast majority of our members.

Meanwhile, classes have commenced for the spring semester. We are really excited about the spring line-up, as there are some outstanding offerings by some great instructors. I have been asked by several CWA members if they can register for more classes now that the registration period is over. The answer is YES, up to your eight course limit. Once you are a member, if you want to add a class simply go to the online registration site, select the class, and if it says “Add to cart” you can do so. If it says "Add to waiting list" it's full. Sorry, but know that it may be offered in a future semester.

Spring is coming!

Bill Riffer
Upcoming Special Event Trips

- Monday, March 6 - Come join us on a bus trip to President James Monroe's Highland, Charlottesville. Go online to request a seat now. Click here.
- Saturday, April 1 - You won't want to miss the bus trip to the Cold War Museum and spy sites in Washington, DC, led by Gary Francis Powers, Jr.
- Saturday, April 29 - Plan to attend the bus/boat tour of the Mariner's Museum and the Battle of Hampton Roads, led by historian John Quarstein.
- Wednesday, May 3 - Due to high demand, we are offering another dinner at A Chef's Kitchen with Chef John Gonzales.

Watch your email for fliers and registration information!

Inclement Weather Policy Reminder

CWA will cancel courses/activities/events for weather if the Williamsburg/James City County (WJCC) public schools are closed to students. If WJCC Schools are delayed, CWA will continue as scheduled. A notice will be on the CWA office voice mail (757-221-1506) and on the WJCC website. Please note, you will not be personally contacted.

CWA Students Illuminated About Medieval Manuscripts

As members of the
Christopher Wren Association, we enjoy free borrowing privileges at the Earl Gregg Swem Library at the College of William & Mary. As students in George Greenia’s Christopher Wren class “Medieval Manuscripts: The Physical Book Before Printing,” twenty students this fall had the added bonus of a hands-on experience in the Swem Special Collections Research Center.

Following two afternoons in a classroom learning about manuscript books from the European Middle Ages, including shop practices for making those books, the third class session convened in the stately reading room of Swem’s Special Collections. Students were asked to put their belongings in lockers, then wash their hands before gathering in the elegant conference room.

Jay Gaidmore, McLeod Director of the Center, welcomed the class by first sharing some interesting facts about William & Mary’s Special Collections. In addition to the university archives, Gaidmore is responsible for the oversight of 3,800 collections, including 50,000 rare books. Swem is now home to the papers of former U.S. Secretary of Defense Robert Gates ’65, and the second largest collection on dogs in the country!

Greenia’s students were treated to a treasure trove of original and facsimile medieval books displayed on several tables. Some were 20th century replicas of very early books, including a reproduction of an illustrated Spanish book of Chess, Dice and Backgammon dating from 1283. On an adjacent table, a pair of original volumes of the Quran was open for view. The most recently acquired is a mid-19th century handwritten Quran from northeast Nigeria with lavish illuminations and its stitched and stained leather traveling bag.

Greenia described his study of medieval manuscript illustrations as “visual archeology.” Gaidmore considers books as invaluable cultural artifacts. Both hope CWA students have come
away from the class with a new appreciation for the physical history of books.

Anne Willis, not only a student, but also an instructor for Christopher Wren, spoke for many when she declared, “This course has been just fabulous!”

By Lisa Brickey

Memories & Learning Bridge Miles

An article in a newspaper published some 3,000 miles from Williamsburg and memories of a first visit to Colonial Williamsburg 41 years ago (and others since) prompted a couple who live in Port Angeles, Washington, to join the Christopher Wren Association.

“We read about the Christopher Wren Association and it’s course offerings in the Peninsula Daily News, our local paper here. The article was a reprint of one that appeared in November in the New York Times. Reading about the CWA courses only heightened our enthusiasm for returning to Williamsburg this spring,” said Bob Flood in a recent interview with his wife, Susan.

“Both of us joined CWA and signed-up for some of its courses via the Internet. We also volunteered to serve as hosts/class assistants,” Bob said. “A few days later we received a kind and helpful phone call from a staff member. Our course selections.” Susan added, “were determined, in part, by the timing of our upcoming one-month house rental in Williamsburg.”

Bob said, “The course offerings are an affordable way to satisfy our lifelong desire to grow in our knowledge of history. Some of our most rewarding experiences in our retirement years have been learning opportunities that enrich our lives.”

Bob’s parents encouraged the couple’s first visit to Colonial Williamsburg in the spring of 1976. He had just completed a masters degree (MAT) program in American history at Rutgers University where he frequently read articles in the William and Mary Quarterly. That initial visit was but one of many to Williamsburg in subsequent years.
“Stepping back into the eighteenth century and walking in the footsteps of the likes of George Wythe and Thomas Jefferson was remarkable in and of itself,” said Bob, “but Susan and I are also extremely impressed with the thorough interpretations and careful restorative work that has been done at Colonial Williamsburg over the years.”

Bob taught 8th grade American history in East Brunswick, New Jersey. He said, “I felt a compelling need to take my history classes to Williamsburg. Annually I took as many as seven busloads of students to Williamsburg to enrich their study of colonial American history.” In the 1980s Bob moved into administrative and supervisory positions, taking him away from teaching American history, but he and Susan kept Colonial Williamsburg in their travels. “This past autumn,” Bob said, “we visited Williamsburg and the sites of the Revolutionary War Battle of Cowpens and the Civil War Battle of Franklin.”

Bob retired as the K-12 Supervisor of Social Studies/Library Media from the “Blue Ribbon” East Brunswick Public School District and Susan retired from her position as a service representative with Verizon. They enjoy reading, travel, pickle ball, puzzle solving, collecting old postcards, and church choir singing.

By Gordon Bratz

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**Botticelli Comes to William & Mary**
Wow! We have a Director in Aaron DeGroft who is the soul of William & Mary and the Muscarelle Museum. Maybe you thought the Muscarelle was a quaint little museum, but that is instantly blown away when you sit across from DeGroft in his office and see and hear the enthusiasm he has for Muscarelle.

We were there to discuss the upcoming Botticelli Show, which opens February 11. But that was just the beginning; this will not only be the biggest event of its kind for William & Mary, but it will be the largest and most important Botticelli exhibition ever in the United States.

And in that regard, it is significant to note that only two universities in the U.S. were formed in the 17th century, those being Harvard and William & Mary. Interestingly, these same institutions will be the only two to share the Botticelli Exhibition before it moves to Boston’s Museum of Art on April 18.

*Botticelli and the Search for the Divine: Florentine Painting between the Medici and the Bonfires of the Vanities* will be at the Muscarelle for seven weeks, from February 11 to April 8. It will
contain sixteen of his paintings, most with life size features, from major museums and churches in six Italian cities, including Florence, Milan, and Venice. The show will also contain paintings by Botticelli’s great master Filippo Lippi and his son Filippino Lippi, Botticelli’s most important student. This is one of the most opportune times to see these works, and all Christopher Wren members should take advantage!

By Fred Eddowes