

## DRAFT MINUTES OF THE SEMI-ANNUAL MEETING

### Board of Regents of Gunston Hall Plantation

April 10-12, 2010

### OPENING SESSION

The Opening Session of the 2010 Semi-Annual Meeting of the Board of Regents of Gunston Hall was held on Saturday, April 10, 2010. The meeting was called to order at 9:00 a.m. by Wylie Raab, First Regent.

Roll was called. Present were:

Mrs. Price Gripekoven, President, NSCDA  
 Mrs. Rayfield Weedon, President of the Virginia Society, NSCDA  
 Mrs. Henry R. Raab, First Regent  
 Ms. Priscilla Brewster, Advisor to the First Regent

Mrs. James Irby Barganier	Mrs. Walker Kennedy, Jr.
Mrs. Anderton Lewis Bentley, Jr.	Mrs. Tood Liebow
Mrs. William B. Blaylock	Mrs. Marshall G. Linn, III
Mrs. William Allan Blodgett	Mrs. David Castello Loughlin
Mrs. Roger H. Box	Mrs. Phillip Jewett Markert
Mrs. William H. Buchanan, Jr.	Mrs. Frederick W. Martin
Mrs. Theodore Jack Craddock	Mrs. Thomas Hooke McCallie, III
Mrs. George Crockett	Mrs. Hugh A. Merrill
Mrs. Bruce E. Dines	Mrs. Charles E. Millard, Jr.
Mrs. Steven Wayne Duff	Mrs. Donald James Nalty
Mrs. David Wendel Foerster	Mrs. James T. Norman
Mrs. Raymond Dale Hardesty	Mrs. Richard Marshall Norton
Mrs. Harry Leonard Hatton	Mrs. Steele Bartley Osborn
Mrs. Harry R. Hill, Jr.	Mrs. James Lee Osborne
Mrs. Steven A. Holland	Mrs. William Anthony Peters, III
Mrs. Rodney R. Ingham	Mrs. Ronald Albert Snider
Mrs. John A. Jenkins	Mrs. Hugh McMaster Tarbutton
Ms. Winafrid Avery Jenkins	Mrs. John Van Allen
Mrs. John P. Kennedy	

Active Former Regents present were:

Mrs. V. Cassel Adamson, Jr.  
 Mrs. Roland Boatner Howell  
 Mrs. James Martin Macnish, Jr.

Absent and excused from the meeting for various reasons were:

Mrs. Timothy George Dargan  
Dr. Jamia Jasper Jacobsen  
Mrs. Chris Smith  
Mrs. John Lane Wood

There were two resignations:

Dr. Elizabeth Hughes Locke  
Ms. Beatrice Stephens Vann

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The minutes of the 2009 Annual Meeting were approved as distributed

### **REPORT OF THE FIRST REGENT Mrs. Henry R. Raab**

One can only speculate how often George Mason had the pleasure of saying, "Welcome back to Gunston Hall!" Today it is truly a joy to be here with you, as we continue our work and eagerly await updates from our hard-working staff.

And it is the staff I would like to salute today. As we soldier on from meeting to meeting, it is difficult to get to know everyone in our employ, or understand the considerable loads they carry.

By now, we are all aware that our Director, **David Reese**, is quite the Renaissance Man . . . as effective in the role of Jeremiah Johnson, showing no deference to the elements, as he is in suit and tie, showing great deference to the board he serves. In the few months since October, I have pondered repeatedly how David manages to juggle so many circumstances, requests, demands on his time, and challenges, not to mention successes. One needs pliers to extract the successes from his conversation.

'Complex' is not an overstatement in describing the finances of Gunston Hall. There is the Regents Fund and the Managers Fund; there is the Foundation, and there is the Commonwealth of Virginia. Some staff members are paid by us, others by the Commonwealth; this pencil belongs to us, that computer to the Commonwealth. That **Lena McAllister** keeps it all straight, pays the bills on time, tussles boldly with Richmond on our behalf, accommodates surprise audits, and keeps track of what money is coming from where and going to whom, is truly extraordinary.

Imagine my delight on discovering that **Dana Ross** is secretly the First Regent! I studied all the responsibilities associated with this job, and came to the happy realization that Dana does it all. Most weeks I call her and ask, "Have I done such and such?" "Why, yes!" she cheerfully replies, "You did that last week!" Every detail associated with organizing these four days was handled by or with Dana.

**Brenda Doboga, Geri Dorough, and Patricia Nyland** rotate front desk duty. Like church secretaries, they always know more than anyone about who is where and what is going on. Their delicious personalities are crucial, since they are the first impression of every guest. The combination of discretion, graciousness and riotous humor going on behind that counter is invaluable to Gunston Hall.

**Caroline Riley** sure has great taste in shoes! As a bonus, she is also a brilliant curator. In addition to understanding George Mason, Gunston Hall, and the period in which it was built, Caroline discovers what's lurking in the marketplace, and has formed pivotal relationships with specialists, analysts, and craftsmen. In addition, she works closely with the education department and the docents, balancing their teaching effort with the delicate protection of our priceless collections.

It is a travesty that the times we meet cannot accommodate an entire day with **Denise McHugh**. Not that any of us could keep up. Denise's role here is so vital; she is the force behind our mission to educate the public about George Mason and Gunston Hall. Denise never stops exploring new ways to attract teachers, students, young, old, energetic and infirm; she coordinates countless docent, guide, Gunstonian and Young Gunstonian volunteers, and has an indomitable spirit. Denise truly deserves the thanks and support of every regent!

And who can even WAIT for the next reader-friendly *Grapevine*, thanks to **Frank Barker**. The layout is fabulous, his humor is priceless, and there isn't an issue that doesn't teach us something. Frank's talents go well beyond that, as anyone who's heard him spin a yarn will agree. He is a master at making learning fun.

On Michele Lee's departure, **Mona Chandan** raced up to the plate and has done a wonderful job continuing the improvement of our library and archival collection. Her English accent is as lovely as she, and I know she is of great assistance to **Caryl Wisler**, our devoted archivist, who has been serving Gunston Hall for 35 years.

**Susan Blankenship** may have fled Gunston during the big snow storm, but can that girl speed date! I will leave it to her to teach you the delicate art of attracting bus drivers. But make no mistake, Susan works tirelessly on our behalf to raise money, doing all she can to replace the funds we have lost in Commonwealth support. In addition to that, Susan is the force behind all of our public relations and advertising, an extremely time-consuming responsibility upon which we rely so heavily.

I'll bet many of you have no idea who **Mary Pikrallidas** is! Talk about a modest, behind-the-scenes worker bee. Mary's office is next to Susan's, and it is she who

processes every gift and sends you your monthly reports of Friends contributions. So if you see someone with gorgeous hair and a quiet voice, who doesn't look remotely Irish, say hello and thank you to Mary P!

**Karen Bazzle** has done so much to enhance our gift shop, which even has a Facebook page! Karen's taste and creativity in adapting the shop to each season is marvelous; she can remember individual regents and seamlessly accommodate our varying shipping requests. Karen has invaluable support in **Lori Dahnert** and **Amy King**, so go spend money.

David Reese's vision of returning Gunston Hall as accurately as possible to the plantation George Mason created would be impossible without the support and expertise of **Dave Shonyo**. When there was no money to continue an archaeology program, Dave stayed, and dug, and searched. Ever mindful of the priorities of the regents, Dave works tirelessly here. His collaborative efforts with Caroline make his discoveries even more meaningful. We owe the integrity of our research to the devoted work of Dave Shonyo.

Apparently no one ever told **Berto Delfi-Hernandez** that he doesn't own this plantation, because he sure cares for every inch of it as tenderly as if it were his own. He, Pansy, and their son Cory have moved back to Gunston, so you'll have a better chance of seeing him hard at work than you did in October. It is impossible to thank Berto enough for all he does here, and his work ethic is an inspiration to us all.

I hope in the next few days you have 18 opportunities to say "Thank you!"

### **REPORT OF THE TREASURER Mrs. Frederick W. Martin**

The budget is developed by our Executive Director, Mr. David Reese and his assistant, Lena McAllister. The Regents responsibility is to approve the budget. The Audit/Finance Committee reviewed the budget line by line and they will be recommending it to the Regents for approval. Mrs. Martin presented the budget for July 2010-June 2011 to be voted on at the Closing Session of the Semi-Annual Meeting, Monday April 12, 2010.

**REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR**  
**Mr. David Reese**

Mr. Reese welcomed the Regents and brought them up to date on these topics:

1. The winter was very harsh. Lots of snow, wind and ice. Any plantings with foliage experienced damage. The gutters were torn off buildings due to the large amount of ice. The fire suppression system was triggered when electricity was restored.
2. A water main break has been repaired in the courtyard. Valve and pipe repairs have been made in the outdoor restroom. Drain lines in the Director's house have been repaired.
3. Attendance is down from this time last year. The extreme weather is expected to be the reason. Attendance for July – December of 2009 was 10,840 visitors and that yielded \$59,124 in admission receipts.
4. Special events have been a success. The Decorative Arts Fall Symposium focusing on William Buckland was very well attended. Plantation Christmas attracted 750 people and this was a slightly lower rate than last year. It is such an excellent event that it will be held next year. School groups struggled to make their visits in the snow. The Liberty Lecture Series and Seeds of Independence drew good audiences. Kite day dawned clear and warm, one of the first spring days of the season and the attendance reflected the beautiful day. Over 1000 people came to Gunston Hall for the event.
5. The Chinese Room has been repainted according to a paint analysis that was done in the room. Two upstairs chambers have been opened for the first time in thirty years. It has been discovered that the mantel piece now installed in the Hertle Library originated in the SW chamber, to which it will be returned.
6. Before Michele Lee left for her new position at Mt. Vernon, she was successful in acquiring an original letter written by John Mason. This letter describes the creation of the portraits of his mother and father; George Mason, IV and Ann E. Mason. It reveals that there were three sets of copies made. We have one set here at Gunston Hall and it is on loan from The Virginia Museum of Fine Arts.
7. Caroline Riley and David Reese were thrilled that the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts gifted to Gunston Hall the portraits.
8. Auditors from the Commonwealth (APA) are currently reviewing Gunston Hall's financial records from July 2007 to June 2009.
9. Public Relations activity included placement of Gunston Hall advertisements in the magazines; Smithsonian, AAA World, Preservation, and Southern Living. There have been other ads placed in local publications. Gunston Hall staff

members were delegates to the American Bus Marketplace 2010 in January. They met with tour operators in an effort to increase visitation.

10. Future activity: Architects Mesick, Cohen, Wilson, Baker, LLP have drafted a design for a handicapped access lift for review by the Commonwealth's Bureau of Capital Outlay Management. The lift will be constructed on the eastern elevation of Gunston Hall. The plan has already been approved by the Commonwealth's Department of Historic Resources and the State's Board of Art and Architectural Review. Construction will be funded by Gunston's Maintenance Reserve Fund.
11. Mr. Reese closed his report by sharing images of the newly constructed Red Gate at Gunston's entrance. He invited Regents to join him and the staff for a tour of the Mansion and grounds to inspect recent progress.

### **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

First Regent, Wylie Raab, reminded us that the Board of Visitors and Board of Advisors will be having their meeting and then joining us for dinner.

Hilary Gripekoven, National President of the NSCDA, announced that the Biennial attendees are invited to come to Gunston Hall for a tour and dinner following their October 2010 meeting. The Biennial is scheduled for October 14-18, 2010. Biennial will take place at the Ritz Carlton in Arlington. They will have the whole hotel for the meeting.

Cissy Loughlin reported that Gunston Hall's request for two additional Regents at Large has been approved by the National Board of NSCDA.

There being no further business the meeting was recessed until 9:45 a.m. on Monday, April 12, 2010.

## CLOSING SESSION

The Semi-Annual Meeting of the Board of Regents of Gunston Hall reconvened at 9:10 a.m. on Monday, April 12, 2010.

Roll was called. Present were:

Mrs. Price Gripekoven, President of the NSCDA  
 Mrs. Rayfield Weedon, President of the Virginia Society, NSCDA  
 Mrs. Henry R. Raab, First Regent

Mrs. James Irby Barganier  
 Mrs. Anderton Lewis Bentley, Jr.  
 Mrs. William B. Blaylock  
 Mrs. William Allan Blodgett  
 Mrs. Roger H. Box  
 Mrs. William H. Buchanan, Jr.  
 Mrs. Theodore Jack Craddock  
 Mrs. George Crockett  
 Mrs. Bruce E. Dines  
 Mrs. Steven Wayne Duff  
 Mrs. David Wendel Foerster  
 Mrs. Raymond Dale Hardesty  
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 Mrs. Harry R. Hill, Jr.  
 Mrs. Steven A. Holland  
 Mrs. Rodney R. Ingham  
 Mrs. John A. Jenkins  
 Ms. Winafriid Avery Jenkins

Mrs. John P. Kennedy  
 Mrs. Walker Kennedy, Jr.  
 Mrs. Todd Liebow  
 Mrs. Marshall G. Linn, III  
 Mrs. David Castello Loughlin  
 Mrs. Phillip Jewett Markert  
 Mrs. Frederick W. Martin  
 Mrs. Thomas Hooke McCallie, III  
 Mrs. Hugh A. Merrill  
 Mrs. Charles E. Millard, Jr.  
 Mrs. James T. Norman  
 Mrs. Richard Marshall Norton  
 Mrs. Steele Bartley Osborn  
 Mrs. William Anthony Peters, III  
 Mrs. Ronald Albert Snider  
 Mrs. Hugh McMaster Tarbutton  
 Mrs. John Van Allen

Active Former Regents present were:

Mrs. Roland Boatner Howell  
 Mrs. James Martin Macnish, Jr.

Absent and excused from the meeting for various reasons were:

Mrs. V. Cassel Adamson, Jr.  
Ms. Priscilla Brewster  
Mrs. Timothy George Dargan  
Dr. Jamia Jasper Jacobsen  
Dr. Elizabeth Hughes Locke (resigned)  
Mrs. Donald James Nalty  
Mrs. James Lee Osborne  
Mrs. Chris Smith  
Ms. Beatrice Stephens Vann (resigned)  
Mrs. John Lane Wood

**REPORT OF THE AUDIT/FINANCE COMMITTEE**  
**Mrs. Frederick W. Martin**

It was moved and seconded that the Board approve the 2010-2011 budget as presented during the Opening Session. The motion carried.

**REPORT OF THE CORRESPONDING SECRETARY**  
**Mrs. Steven Wayne Duff**

Since the Annual Meeting in October, sympathy or get-well cards were mailed to five Regents who were ill or who had a death in the family. Christmas cards were sent to the fourteen retiring Regents. A note of thanks and congratulations was sent to our wonderful librarian, Michele Lee, for the stellar job executed at Gunston Hall and wishing her well in her new position at Mount Vernon.

**REPORT OF THE NOMINATING COMMITTEE**  
**Mrs. Harry Leonard Hatton**

The committee is working on the slate and it will be put in the mail at the appropriate time.



**REPORT OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE COUNCIL**  
**Mrs. Anderton Lewis Bentley, Jr.**

The Administrative Council convened on April 12, 2010 in the Ann Mason Room. Following committee meetings, the council reconvened to hear committee reports. The following is a summary of committee activity.

The Arrangements Committee has planned a tour of Baltimore for October 10, 2010. The trip will include a visit to the Maryland Dames house, Mt. Chase, the fabulous Chippendale furniture collection of Dame Dorothy Scott at the Baltimore Museum of Art, and a tour of Hampton House. The house was built in 1780 and occupied by the same family until 1946. The National Park Service bought the house and contents.

The Governance Committee took no action. The First Regent requested a Parliamentarian, with no result. The request was sent to the Administrative Council.

The Long Range Planning Committee had a lively discussion to redefine and simplify the terms of the long range planning spread sheet to help the chairmen of the committees. Suggestions were discussed that the committee thought may be helpful.

The New Regents Training Committee unanimously agreed that each New Regent or Observer should be paired with a “mentor” when she attends the October Session. The mentoring duties will include attending the New Regents Friday evening dinner, having lunch with the New Regent/Observer on Saturday and making friendly contact with the Observer once or twice a day during the remainder of the session.

I would like to compliment all of my committees. The three new chairmen did such a good job in their first year as chairs.

**REPORT OF THE PROGRAM COUNCIL**  
**Mrs. William Allan Blodgett**

The Program Council committees met Sunday, April 11, 2010, with all their usual energy and infectious enthusiasm.

Each year brings new challenges and new accomplishments, and 2010 is no exception, so I will try to briefly touch on the high points from each report – my version of “The Minute Waltz:”

Archaeology has upgraded its database, finished excavation of the “colored school,” and continues to search for a third post hole along the north boundary, as well as the carriage circle on the landfront side of the mansion.

Collections spent approximately \$95,000 on an assortment of new items, from a pickling tray to a superb pair of silver candelabra, as well as conservation of several pieces already owned by Gunston Hall, notably the tall case clock and a desk. As always, the divine Carolyn Riley led us in these endeavors with her perfect eye for quality and appropriateness with regard to the collection.

Education: Since funding is no longer available for the Teachers' Institute, the Education Department plans a "Teachers' Day Out" this summer, as well as regular electronic newsletters to teachers.

School tours will now start with pre-kindergarten age groups, as well as high school students and guides from George Mason University who wish to learn more about the man himself.

Historic Gardens and Grounds heard from Mr. Reese that we have been advised to prune back the original boxwood and get rid of the volunteer bushes that have grown in the hedge. Beyond that, "relax . . . they will do what they will do."

The winter was brutal to so much of the vegetation but slowly we are clearing out the dead wood and cleaning up the debris.

The Library and Archives Committee hopes to finish a brief history of the Hertle family to post on the web site and has finished the Founding Fathers Consortium in partnership with Mount Vernon.

Restoration basks in the glory of the Palladian Dining Room, finished except for the gilt filet on the walls. The Chinese Parlor is newly painted, and the mantle in the Hertle library is believed to belong in the upstairs southwest bedroom. So, again, the divine Miss Riley hopes to have it installed soon.

This house and this plantation continue to evolve, sometimes in grand ways, sometimes in small ways – but it is all progress, and every six months, we see that the effort that might seem tedious is definitely worth it.

Thanks to all of you.

### **REPORT OF THE SUPPORT COUNCIL Mrs. Rodney R. Ingham**

The Support Council was called to order at 1:30 p.m. on April 10, 2010. The meeting was suspended, and committees met immediately after.

The Development Committee announced that the Friends fundraising materials will be ready for pick-up and shipping at our October meeting. Future fundraising ideas include

using You-Tube and Facebook and a film or television series about George Mason and Gunston Hall.

The Non-historic Buildings, Grounds, and Farm Committee reported that the new front entry gate installation has been completed and is painted "Gunston Hall Red." Estimates for construction of a post and rail fence are being obtained. A plan to make the mansion handicapped-accessible is being reviewed by the Commonwealth's Bureau of Capital Outlay Management. Repairs to the three residences on the property were discussed.

The Public Relations Committee said increasing visitation to Gunston Hall and its educational opportunities is of utmost importance to this committee. A new rack card is near completion. It was recommended that the "Grapevine" be placed on the NSCDA web site. To help increase visitation, Gunston Hall representatives attended the five-day American Bus Association market. The event shows great promise for advertising Gunston Hall as a visitation site.

### **REPORT OF THE FORMER REGENTS ADVISORY COMMITTEE Mrs. Roland Boatner Howell**

The Former Regents Advisory Committee met in the Swan Garden on April 10, 2010 at 3:30 p.m. and would like to commend Gunston Hall and all of its people on the following:

The Council System is functioning well and efficiently. We have noticed an openness in communication between members of the Board of Regents and Committee members and a willingness to exchange information. The new improvements to the mansion are beautiful. The presence of the tall case clock in the hall passage is a lovely and appropriate addition to this gorgeous house. The addition of the new discrete handicap lift will be a long-needed expansion for our visitors.

We thank David Reese and the Board for their hard work and diligent oversight and David for his passionate dedication to Gunston. His education and scholarship have led us to heights we have not reached before. This has not been accomplished alone. He has the support of a staff which has intelligence, background, education, grace, and enthusiasm.

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, First Regent Wylie Raab adjourned the meeting until the Annual Meeting, October 12, 2010.

Respectfully submitted,

Julie Linn  
Recording Secretary