PA’s Top 10 Endangered Artifacts

Connecting to Collections
Continuing Conversations Exchange Webinar
Heritage Preservation
June 24, 2013

Selected artifacts had to be:

• Historically significant to the state, the nation, or a Pennsylvania community
• Demonstrably in need of conservation
• Cannot be a building

• How it works:
  – Website: www.patop10artifacts.org
  – Nominations accepted from January 2 - April 15, 2013
  – Independent review panel selects Top 10
  – September announcement of Top 10
  – Artifacts highlighted on campaign website
  – Public can vote for, and donate to, their favorite artifact
  – Organizations receive promotional support
  – Funds raised will be used to conserve the designated artifacts

• Each nominating institution had to be:
  – Located in Pennsylvania
  – A nonprofit organization or a unit of state, local, or county government
  – Have collections that are accessible to the public
  – Have one staff member or volunteer available to coordinate and follow through with marketing and publicity efforts
Ingrid Bogel,
Conservation Center for Art and Historic Artifacts
C2C Continuing Conservation Online Exchange
Top 10 Endangered Artifacts Programs

- Nominations were made through our Top 10 website or could be downloaded and mailed
- Application based on Virginia’s format
- Received 60 Nominations

• Now
  – Developing website content for each object
  – Designing website
  – Meeting in person or via phone with each site and our PR firm for campaign planning

Campaign planning for each institution
  – Website content
  – Designating contact person for media inquiries
  – Developing a press release template
  – Developing press kits for September press conference

Timeline
  • September 19 - Campaign launch, press conference, voting begins
  • November 1 - Voting ends
  • November 4 - People’s Choice Winner announced
Ingrid Bogel,
Conservation Center for Art and Historic Artifacts

Future Media
- Comcast Newsmakers
- Associated Press
- Statewide newspaper coverage – print and online

www.patop10artifacts.org
Virginia’s Top 10 Endangered Artifacts
A Program of the Virginia Collections Initiative
Virginia Association of Museums
Connecting to Collections Online Exchange
July 24, 2013

“Sure, it’s important I guess. But no one really cares.”

“Taking care of old, musty junk – REALLY?? That’s not going to sell papers.”

“It’s a boring topic - there’s no ‘hook’. Give me something sexy.”

Source: Richmond Media Focus Group

How Does the ‘Top 10’ Work?
- Nomination process; museums, libraries, archives submit artifacts to www.vatop10artifacts.org
- Summer and Fall timeline compliments ‘Most Endangered Sites’ announcement in spring
- Online public voting open for one month for extended engagement
- Peer review panel of collections care professionals determines final Top 10 honorees
- VAM manages media relations and works with sites to maximize public relations while institutions manage their own public relations
- Award certificates to honorees following announcement

Behind the Scenes
- Administrative staff: program, public relations, media relations, social media, technology (400 hours staff time)
- Partners/Committee
- Professional review panel
- Survey tools
- Money for public relations and technology (or good DIY)
- Engaged Board

Virginia Collections Initiative is a statewide collaboration to ensure the ongoing safety and stewardship of collections held by Virginia’s museums, libraries, and archives.

Funded by a Connecting to Collections Statewide Implementation Grant from the Institute for Museum and Library Services (IMLS) in partnership with Heritage Preservation.

The VCI is coordinated by the Virginia Association of Museums in partnership with:

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Public voting is an opportunity for institutions to rally supporters, expand community, and promote cause.

Don’t Forget to Reach Out in Person: Be Creative!

- Signage; include a QR code
- Set up a voting kiosk at your site or local community center/library
- Create an insert for your brochures during public voting/August
- Make sure everyone knows you’re participating; educate staff, volunteers, tour guides, board, etc.
- Display your artifact if you can or develop a behind-the-scenes event for current or potential donors
- Talk about your artifact and voting at meetings and at special events
- Use your artifact as a teaching tool for school groups if possible
- Host a Voting Party – vote in person; Charge $10 a vote. Creates opportunity to talk about conservation
- Develop an ‘Adopt an Artifact’ program

Media Relations Plan

- 350 media outlets in Virginia & Washington, DC
  - Print media
  - Broadcast media
  - Online media and bloggers
- 650 national publications
  - Focus on history, culture, and preservation
- Website, Email Marketing, Social Media
  - Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, LinkedIn, Blog,

2011 Success Stories

- **Virginia Museum of Transportation** (Roanoke, VA) received a $10,000 grant from Trains Magazine toward cosmetic restoration of Locomotive #1776 thanks to their People’s Choice honor (and exceeded their fundraising goal!)

2011 Survey Results

- Participants provided positive feedback:
  - The program and services provided were beneficial to the participants
  - Audience is more aware of conservation issues at their institution
  - Public Voting was beneficial to getting the word out about their institution
  - Tools provided assisted them with spreading awareness about your artifact and institution

“Sufficient funds were raised to restore our artifact”
C2C Continuing Conservation Online Exchange
Top 10 Endangered Artifacts Programs

Program Outcomes 2011

- 25 diverse nominations from across Virginia
- Almost 100,000 online public votes
- 57 media hits in VA, DC, and across the country
- Associated Press coverage TWICE!
- Increased media coverage and increased awareness of participating institutions and collections care
- Invitation to present at C2C Exchange 2011
- Commonwealth Award of Merit in Community Relations from Virginia Public Relations Awards; Public Relations Society of America Richmond Chapter
- Conservation Center for Art & Historic Artifacts launches Pennsylvania’s 10 Most Endangered Artifacts

2012 Success Stories

- Salem Museum (Roanoke, VA) began oral history program with those included in Georgianna Saunders Midwife Records and received extensive press coverage and new donations. Planning a digitization project.

- Heritage Creek Orchard Museum (Tazewell, VA) uses their Home Drawn Rock Wagon to raise awareness about conservation and plans to use restoration as a woodworking demo. They have also included conservation as an important part of the organization’s strategic plan.

- Alleghany Historical Society (Covington, VA) has partnered with the City of Covington and applied for grant funding for the cosmetic restoration of their Chesapeake & Ohio Railway Locomotive 701 “Merry Widow”.

2012 Survey Results

100% of Collecting Institutions Surveyed Said...

✓ The nomination process was easy
✓ Information and administrative support was helpful
✓ Marketing support and tools provided were helpful
✓ The public voting competition was beneficial

Plus!
✓ 90.9% of participants said that they received press coverage

2012 Survey Comments

- Received an unsolicited grant for artifact preservation.
- Included (artifact and participation) in grant applications, with some successfully awarded.
- Program generated awareness of current fundraising campaign already in progress.
- Published information in our membership newsletters and received funds from new donors for this specific project. Our nomination also brought different interest groups to the museum that had not known about use or this object previously.
- Tailored presentations to potential donors whom we knew to be interested in our artifact.

Program Outcomes 2012

- 21 participants from Virginia and DC
- Over 120,000 public votes, over 111,000 unique surveys
- Across the board voting thanks to improved engagement
- 117 media hits in VA, DC, across the country – 3 hits by API
- Integrating program URL into VAM website helped drive traffic to VAM website and traffic dramatically increased, especially during voting
- Success for participating institutions: increased awareness of sites and collections care, increased engagement internal and out, funds raised for conservation, new volunteers & funders, new programs developed around their artifacts
- Invitation to present at C2C Exchange 2012/AASLH conference
- Program being replicated by Oklahoma Cultural Heritage Trust for the state of Oklahoma

Planning Timeline 2012

January
- Rot member meeting and map-out timeline
- Promote at Virginia Museum Advocacy Day

March
- Review documents and prepare for Review Panel Meeting
- Promotion at VAM annual conference

April
- Review Panel meets to map and review process and application

May
- Preservation Virginia announces Endangered Sites list
- Announce Top 10 program to VAM audience
- Website updates, update timeline

June
- Nominations open
- Media release: program announced

July
- Process applications and website
- Webinar training with honorees
- Media release: Artifacts and voting announced

August
- Voting open
- Media release: public voting ending
- Peer Review Panel meets

September
- Notify Top 10 honorees
- Webinar training with honorees
- Media release: Top 10 announced
- Survey

Christina Newton,
Virginia Association of Museums
**C2C Continuing Conservation Online Exchange**

**Top 10 Endangered Artifacts Programs**

**New in 2013 – Year 3**
- Voting page in Survey Monkey will include ‘Donate’ button directing online traffic to nominees’ websites to encourage donations toward artifact conservation
- Fewer participating institutions
- Good press coverage so far with AP pick up

**Program Benefits for Institutions**
- Promotional opportunities
- Increased media coverage
- Engage constituents and expand audience
- Raises awareness of conservation efforts within the institution and out
- Fundraising and ‘Friendraising’ Potential; can help boost efforts already underway
- Increased support and engagement from VAM

**Program Benefits for VAM**
- Increased awareness within museum community and expanded awareness in library and archives communities
- Increased media attention and new relationships created
- Enhanced programming for membership and an attraction for new institutions to become engaged
- New members and funders and stronger relationships with C2C/VCI partners
- Recognition amongst our peers with the replication of the Top 10 program in other states
- Award from the Virginia Public Relations Society, Public Relations Society of America Richmond Chapter

**Moving Ahead**
- Improve promotion to obtain more participants
- Improve how we track artifacts over the years and promotion of ‘moving off the list’
- Seek to obtain artifact assessments for honorees
- Continue to seek to change perception with those that haven’t participated
- Seek sustainability through sponsorships and grant funding
- Continue to improve technology and ways to fundraise for participant institutions

John Long, Director; Salem Museum
Roanoke Times, Roanoke, VA

"Some yellowed scraps of paper or old tattered textiles seldom garner media attention. You sometimes have to wrap them up in a Top 10 list to get a reminder of the constant threat to the rare and informative items held in public trust."

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Christina Newton,
Virginia Association of Museums
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Visit our website for more information and resources about the  
“Top 10”  
http://www.vamuseums.org/displaycommon.cfm?an=1&subarticlenbr=56