

## Meeting Notes

COSTEP-CT met Oct. 9, 2012, at Belfor Property Restoration, Wallingford, CT

Present:

Kathy Craughwell-Varda, Conservation  
ConneCTion

Jane Cullinane, Conn. State Library (CSL)

Donia Conn, Northeast Doc. Conservation Center

Mark Jones, CSL

Tara Kennedy, Yale Univ.

Rob Novak, Consultant

Karin Peterson, State Historic Preservation Office

Lizette Pelletier, CSL

Liz Shapiro, Conn. League of History Orgs.

Bill Sullivan, CSL

Guests: Jacqueline Prast, Chris Hindinger, Nile Scala, all of Belfor Property Restoration

Note taker: Jane.

## TOUR OF BELFOR

The regular meeting of COSTEP-CT included a tour of the offices and warehouse of Belfor Property Restoration. There are Belfor facilities in every state and in other countries. They could even bring a trailer and perform restoration work without leaving the site. Each facility has a specialty and Wallingford's specialty is drying buildings. However, specialists from any area could be consulted or brought in to deal with whatever is needed.

Donia Conn, Kathy Craughwell-Varda and Tara Kennedy asked for more information about the training and methods used for restoring fine art pieces. As conservators, they are concerned that the distinction between restoration and conservation be understood by both Belfor's staff and the cultural heritage organizations we work with. They are welcome to visit the New York facility. Meanwhile, Nile Scala will send further information to Donia and Tara.

Belfor is willing to walk through a building to do a site survey and be prepared to be of help in case of a disaster. These site visits are free. They look at the square feet, whether made of plaster or drywall, whether the electrical panel is a fuse box or has breakers with enough electrical power for their equipment, and so on.

On the tour, we saw the ozone room where they use a hydroxide treatment to deodorize and sanitize objects. Donia and Tara asked for the MSDS for this treatment.

For routine projects, such as cleaning residential furnishings, they set up an assembly line in the climate controlled warehouse and Belfor staff will clean, dry, repack and store the materials.

Books and objects from the cultural heritage community are more likely to be treated at the New York facility, which specializes in restoration of fine art, such as historical furnishings or the Philadelphia and San Antonio offices, which do the document treatments, including freeze-drying.

Belfor can also perform electronics and data restoration. Depending on what is needed, Belfor could bring a truck of dehumidifiers and fans to dry out a building, using moisture meters to ensure the walls and floor are dry but not too dry. There is a division that handles hazardous materials such as water contaminated with oil: a certified subcontractor would pump out and properly dispose of the water and the Belfor team would clean up the facility and materials. All Belfor staff are trained and certified for the various jobs they do, using all the proper safety equipment and methods.

## **COSTEP-CT DISCUSSIONS**

At this point, Jackie, Chris and Niles left us to our business meeting.

Lizette Pelletier shared the cover letter that accompanied the Archives Month poster that was sent in late September to fire chiefs around the state. She asked that the poster be shared with each fire house with the hope that it will raise awareness of the importance of cultural heritage organizations. She has not received any feedback as yet.

Lizette spoke about disaster preparedness to the New England Municipal Fiscal Officers Association, with Joe Sastre, Emergency Manager for the Town of Groton and James Grochowski from the state Bureau of Enterprise Technology (formerly the Dept. of Information Technology). Lizette spoke about Continuity of Operations Plans, Essential Records and showed photos of towns' experiences with various kinds of disasters, such as the Salisbury Town Hall fire.

Kathy attended the Connecting to Collections Exchange at the American Assoc. for State and Local History's annual conference last week. Among the news items: Heritage Preservation received a grant to consider how to take the successes of similar initiatives such as COSTEP, and the Alliance for Preservation and make one "brand." We should reach out to Lori Foley to see how COSTEP-CT could be part of this.

This year, the Institute of Museum and Library Services' National Leadership Grants will include up to \$250,000 with no matching funds. Perhaps COSTEP-CT could submit an application for such things as bringing in training to have more people from Connecticut certified for the American Institute for Conservation Collections Emergency Response Team. And/or, perhaps we could offer more disaster planning and response workshops at several levels for beginner, middle and advanced knowledge. While attending our Mutual Aid workshops, Liz Shapiro heard that people want mentors: not just individuals who would help but organizational mentors. Florida organized something like this: it found willing mentors but had trouble finding organizations seeking a mentor. North Carolina hired a fire fighter to be a trainer, taught him about cultural heritage and now he does site visits. Liz has information that would help support some of these ideas if we pursue a Leadership grant.

On Oct. 30<sup>th</sup>, all past and current participants in the Conservation ConneCTion disaster planning workshops will come to Belfor for their own tour. In addition, Belfor is arranging speakers to come in from the New York fine arts restoration facility.

Jackie, Chris and Nile rejoined us. Lizette suggested that vendors have booths at statewide conferences such as the Town Clerk's or Connecticut Library Association conferences. Belfor is already active with the Connecticut Public Risk Management Association (<http://www.ctprima.org/>), the Council of Small Towns ([http://www.ctcost.org/pages/COST\\_about/index](http://www.ctcost.org/pages/COST_about/index)) and the Connecticut Conference of Municipalities (<http://www.ccm-ct.org/Plugs/home.aspx>) .

## **NEXT MEETINGS**

November 5<sup>th</sup> at the State Library's Van Block facility

December 11 at Van Block

January 18<sup>th</sup>, tentatively at Van Block