



# VICTORIAN SOCIETY IN AMERICA SUMMER SCHOOLS ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

November 2008

Dear Fellow Alumni,

The Alumni Association had another banner year on many fronts thanks to the hardworking, all-volunteer board and to very generous alumni.

Board members elected in late 2007 to serve two-year terms are: Nancy Golden, President; Sibyl Groff, Vice President; Mary Miller, Treasurer; Jill Marie Lord, Corresponding Secretary; Bob Chapman, Membership Secretary; John Martine, Director; Tom McGehee, Director; and Gerald (Jerry) Peters, Director. A special welcome is extended to Jerry, who is serving his first term. I'm extremely grateful to the tremendous dedication of the board.

A record 213 households, representing 232 members, renewed their Alumni Association memberships in 2008. What is especially exciting is that an unprecedented \$18,020 was raised: \$11,805 from dues and another \$6,215 from scholarship donations. Kudos go to our Membership Secretary Bob Chapman and his faithful co-envelope stuffer Carole Chapman for continuing to do such an outstanding job on renewals.

The Alumni Association again joined with Pauline Metcalf to co-host the annual reception at her home Philmoney in Exeter, Rhode Island, for the Newport Summer School scholars. Pauline, Gwen Koch, and I greatly enjoyed getting to know more about the students, and the Newport scholars found the reception to be one of the highlights of their Summer School experiences.

Twenty-three alumni attended the 2008 Alumni Association Annual Meeting and Dinner, hosted by alumna Bill Grasse at his splendid home in Sebastopol in Sonoma County, California. Everyone raved about what a special evening it was. As a result of the generosity of Paul Duchscherer and myself, who donated the food, and Bill, who not only opened his home but donated copious bottles of wine, the event raised \$1,350 for Summer Schools scholarships.

Because everyone who attended the 2008 Annual Meeting was so delighted to have the event in a private home, I made it a goal to try to hold subsequent meetings at similar locations. The wonderful news is that alumna Chris Szczesny-Adams, assistant professor of art history at the Milwaukee Institute of Art & Design, and her husband Christopher have kindly agreed to host the next Alumni Association Annual Meeting and Dinner on Friday, May 15, 2009, at their Queen Anne home in Milwaukee during the Annual Meeting of the Victorian Society of America. Do save the date!

Bob Chapman has become the unofficial "official" photographer of VSA and Alumni Association tours. Ever since the Slovenia Study Tour, Bob has created CDs of his amazing, professional-level photographs of tour sites and events. All proceeds from

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## 2009 SUMMER SCHOOLS ALUMNI ASSOCIATION ANNUAL MEETING MILWAUKEE, WISCONSIN

May 15, 2009

The 2009 Annual Meeting and Dinner of the Victorian Society Summer Schools Alumni Association will take place on Friday, May 15, during the Victorian Society of America Annual Meeting in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Summer School alumna Chris Szczesny-Adams, assistant professor of art history at the Milwaukee Institute of Art & Design, and her husband Christopher have generously offered to host the meeting and dinner at their Queen Anne home. Alumni Association members will receive more information about this event with VSA Annual Meeting registration materials.

## 2008 SUMMER SCHOOLS ALUMNI ASSOCIATION ANNUAL MEETING SEBASTOPOL, CALIFORNIA

The 2008 Annual Meeting and Dinner of the Victorian Society Summer Schools Alumni Association took place on May 10 during the VSA Annual Meeting, *Walking Sideways: Wines, Wineries, and Their Victorian Roots*, held May 7-11 in Napa and Sonoma Valleys, California. The event was hosted by Summer School alumnus Bill Grasse at his "gentleman's farm" in Sebastopol. Alumni socialized on Bill's lovely patio overlooking a landscaped garden and roamed the grounds to visit Bill's chickens and goats before sitting down to a feast of roast pork. Bill not only opened his home to the group but also contributed the libations. Thanks to Bill as well as to Nancy Golden, who provided appetizers and dessert, and Paul Duchscherer, who contributed the main course and transported it from San Francisco.

Bob Chapman again prepared a CD-ROM of digital images from the California Annual Meeting. The CD-ROM is available for a \$40 donation to the Victorian Society Scholarship Fund, which will be used exclusively to support the VSA Summer Schools. To order, please contact:

Bob Chapman • 111 S. Mountain Ave., Montclair, NJ 07042-1737  
Telephone: (973) 746-0965 E-mail: [bob\\_chapm@msn.com](mailto:bob_chapm@msn.com)

## 2007 PROFIT & LOSS STATEMENT

1/1/07-12/31/07

### INCOME

Dues	\$ 9,598
Scholarship donation	13,105
Barcelona Study Tour	94,308

### Programs/Events

Metropolitan Museum, Laurelton Hall exhibit event	312
Metropolitan Museum, Barcelona Modernism exhibit event	660
2007 Alumni Association Dinner Meeting, Mobile, AL	1,675
Bard, Brass Menagerie exhibit event	230

### Other

CD-ROM, VSA Annual Meeting, Mobile, AL	995
CD-ROM, Connecticut River Valley Study Tour	360
CD-ROM, Barcelona Study Tour	360

### TOTAL INCOME

**\$121,603**

### EXPENSES

VSA dues	\$100
2008 Summer Schools scholarships	9,365
Newsletter	0 <sup>1</sup>

### Summer Schools

Recruitment events	750
Newport Summer School reception	581
Barcelona Study Tour	67,641 <sup>2</sup>

### Programs/Events

Metropolitan Museum, Laurelton Hall exhibit event	312
2007 Alumni Association Dinner Meeting, Mobile, AL	1,374

Membership renewal	845
Operating expenses	844
Website	382
Insurance	255
Gifts	231
Entertaining	51
Mobile CD-ROM	29

### TOTAL EXPENSES

**\$ 82,760**

### CLOSING BALANCE

**\$ 38,843**

1. The 2007 Alumni Association newsletter expenses of \$1280 were paid in 2008.
2. The Alumni Association had outstanding bills related to the Barcelona Study Tour totaling \$13,260 as of 12/31/07.

## SAVE THE DATES!

2009 Victorian Society in  
America Annual Meeting,  
Milwaukee, Wisconsin:  
May 13-17, 2009

Alumni Association  
Annual Meeting and Dinner:  
May 15, 2009

## REMEMBER TO RENEW YOUR ALUMNI ASSOCIATION MEMBERSHIP

In early January 2009, Alumni Association membership renewal notices for 2009 will be sent by e-mail to members with e-mail addresses and "snail mailed" to members who do not use e-mail. Please renew quickly to save the association the cost of sending reminder notices—and make more funds available for scholarships. Remember, only active members are eligible to register for the Argentina Study Tour scheduled for fall 2009 and to attend the Annual Meeting and Dinner in Milwaukee. You can conveniently renew now or join the Alumni Association by using the form on page 19. Your membership will extend through December 31, 2009.

## STAYING IN TOUCH

Please help us to maximize our funding of Summer School scholarships! To reduce the cost of mailings, the Alumni Association will communicate with members by e-mail as much as possible. To make sure that you receive our e-mails, please adjust your browser(s) so that they do not block the following address: bob\_chapm@msn.com. Please make sure that Bob Chapman has your current e-mail address.

## SHARING INFORMATION

From time to time we allow other worthy organizations we think you would be interested in knowing about to use our mailing list. These exchange arrangements mutually benefit both organizations. However, should you prefer not to receive information about other organizations, please contact Bob Chapman at bob\_chapm@msn.com and he will see that your name is not included in the future.

the sales of these CDs benefit the Alumni Association Scholarship Fund. In 2007, Bob's CDs of the VSA Annual Meeting in Mobile, the VSA Connecticut River Study Tour, and the Alumni Association Barcelona Study Tour generated \$1,715 for scholarships!

John Martine, our superb tour organizer, is busy at work on the next Alumni Association Study Tour, a trip to Argentina in fall 2009. If you are interested in this tour, please let John know at jmartine@stradallc.com. Brochures will be sent only to those who express interest in the trip, which will be limited to 28 people and will sell out quickly.

The Alumni Association again co-hosted successful recruiting events in Boston, thanks to the efforts of Ed Gordon, President of the New England Chapter, and in San Francisco, thanks to alumni Dick Reutlinger, who hosted the event in his amazing home, and Hank Dunlop, who donated the food and drinks. Chicago alumni took a new approach, distributing information on the Summer Schools to local universities and colleges with programs in preservation, art and architectural history, and the decorative arts and offering to speak about the Summer Schools during classes and informal student gatherings.

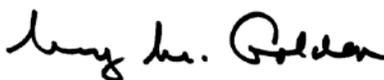
There is a real need to spread the word about the Summer Schools. While applications remain steady, I'm convinced that the Summer Schools are an unknown to way too many individuals with an interest in preservation, architecture, and the decorative arts. I urge you to share your experiences with as many potential students as possible. Please let me know if you would like a supply of 2009 brochures to distribute or post.

The Alumni Association will again help underwrite recruiting events, which are planned for early 2009 in Boston, Chicago, San Francisco, Washington, D.C. and Norfolk, Virginia. I'm eager to arrange events in other locations. If you are willing to host such a recruiting event, please contact me at goldendirect@aol.com. Just a reminder, the Alumni Association will provide \$250 to help underwrite the costs of these events and will send you a list of alumni in your area for the invitation.

Thank you again for renewing your 2008 Alumni Association membership. It was great having you beside us for such a successful year. I hope you'll renew your support as soon as you receive your renewal notice in January 2009. Quick action on your part will save the cost of reminder notices, which means more dollars for scholarships. Another incentive to renew quickly is the Argentina Study Tour, which will be open only to members who have paid their 2009 dues.

I wish you and yours a glorious holiday season and a happy, healthy 2009. I look forward to seeing you in Milwaukee in May and in Argentina in the fall.

All best,



Nancy McAleer Golden  
President  
Alumni Association of the VSA Summer Schools

# 2008 SUMMER SCHOOL SCHOLARSHIPS

The generosity of Victorian Society Summer Schools supporters provided \$71,970 in funding for 2008 Summer Schools scholarships. Their donations made it possible to award scholarships to 18 Newport and 13 London scholars. The VSA Alumni Association funded seven of these scholarships, including one through the Sibyl McCormac Groff Scholarship. Thank you to the following donors for their generous contributions to the Summer Schools:

## Anonymous

Bob Chapman (CD-ROM sales)	VSA Eloise Hunter Chapter
William Dane	VSA Metropolitan Chapter
Keepers Preservation Education Fund	VSA Northern New Jersey Chapter
Roger Redden Memorial	VSA Ohio River Valley Chapter
John Simonelli	VSA Philadelphia Chapter
Sallie Wadsworth	VSA Washington DC Chapter
VSA Alumni Association	Victorian Society Scholarship Fund

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## THE SIBYL MCCORMAC GROFF SCHOLARSHIP

Two years ago, a group of Summer Schools alumni established the Sibyl McCormac Groff scholarship in recognition of Sibyl's many years of contributions to the Summer Schools and the Alumni Association. The first scholarship was awarded in 2007.

This past February, Sibyl learned of the illness of both Ferenc Bor and Ferenc Veda, architectural historians and alumni of the Newport and London Summer Schools who had helped to arrange the Alumni Association Study Tour to Hungary ten years ago. She recommended that this year's Sibyl McCormac Groff Scholarship be used to support a Summer School student from Hungary in honor of the "Ferencs." The recipient was Peter Rostas, the curator of furniture at the Budapest History Museum, who attended the 2008 London Summer School.

Sibyl was also pleased when friends who toured Rockefeller Center with her this past winter chose to show their appreciation with a donation to Sibyl's favorite charity. Her choice? The VSA Alumni Association. Sibyl found this "a lovely way to say thank you."

# 2008 SUMMER SCHOOLS SCHEDULES

Newport, R.I.,  
May 29 - June 7, 2009

London  
July 11-25, 2009

VSA Summer Schools alumni are among the best recruiters of Summer Schools applicants. Please encourage your colleagues, friends, students, or fellow classmates to apply for the 2009 sessions and consider posting Summer Schools brochures at your institution.

**For additional copies of brochures and applications, please contact:**

Susan McCallum

Phone: (908) 522-0656

e-mail:

*vsasummerschools@comcast.net*

Information on the summer schools can also be found on-line at:

*<http://www.victoriansociety.org/summerschools.html>*

# HARBOR HILL: A VICTORIAN TRAGEDY

Richard Guy Wilson, Director, VSA Newport Summer School



*Richard Guy Wilson*

*Richard Guy Wilson, Commonwealth Professor of Architectural History and Chair of the Department of Architectural History at the University of Virginia, has been serving as director of the Newport Summer School for more than two decades. In this year's article, Richard discusses his longstanding interest in McKim, Mead and White, designers of several buildings featured on the Newport Summer School itinerary and of Harbor Hill, the Roslyn, Long Island, mansion of Clarence and Katherine Mackay and the subject of his latest book.*

The Victorian Society in America Newport Summer School exposes students to some of the most significant examples of the architecture and decorative arts of the Gilded Age, from the mansions of Richard Morris Hunt and Peabody and Stearns to the elegant interiors of Ogden Codman and Jules Allard. But I must confess to a decided fondness for the work of the architecture firm of McKim, Mead and White, which has been one of my professional interests for several decades.

I became familiar with McKim, Mead and White in 1964 when, as a young naval officer, I was assigned to a destroyer based in Newport. Newport abounded with such icons of the firm's work as the Isaac Bell House and the Newport Casino. When my naval service ended, I enrolled in graduate school at the University of Michigan, where my advisor, Leonard Eaton, encouraged me to pursue my interest in McKim, Mead and White, which became the topic of my doctoral dissertation and the subject of several subsequent publications. And my interest has not waned with the passage of time. This year I realized the culmination of more than 30 years of research with the publication of *Harbor Hill: Portrait of a House*. The book tells the story of the Clarence Mackays and their 1901 Stanford White-designed mansion, Harbor Hill, which once stood on a 650-acre site overlooking Hempstead Harbor in the village of Roslyn on New York's Long Island. It is a tale filled with class distinctions, religious prejudice, scandal, and tragedy.

The story of my fascination with Harbor Hill began in the early 1970s at the New York Historical Society where I was digging into the archives during research for my dissertation. It was there that I discovered a treasure trove of information about Harbor Hill, including a cache of personal letters from client Katherine Mackay to Stanford White.

In 1973, I met Robert Mackay (no relation to Katherine or her husband Clarence), the Director of the Society for the Preservation of Long Island Antiquities, or SPLIA, at a meeting of the National Trust held in Cleveland, Ohio. Many years later, Bob asked me to contribute to a book he was planning on Long Island country homes. I wrote entries on the firm of Delano & Aldrich, Louis C. Tiffany and his country house, Laurelton Hall, and of course a very long chapter on McKim, Mead and White, which included some information on Harbor Hill.

My curiosity about Harbor Hill and its owners continued to grow. I learned that Katherine Duer Mackay, the author of those letters I first found at the New York Historical Society, was from a prominent New York family, but her husband Clarence was from a far different social background. His father, John Mackay, was born in Ireland and immigrated to the United States at a young age during the potato famine. The Gold Rush took him to California, but when he failed to make his fortune in gold, he moved on to Virginia City, Nevada. John had more success in Virginia City, where he

became involved with a silver mining operation and hit it big in the early 1870s. At one time, his annual income was said to be \$100 million a year.

It was in Virginia City that John met the woman who would become his wife. Like John, New York-born Louise Hungerford was also from humble beginnings. Her mother was a seamstress and her father was a barber. After their marriage, Clarence and Louise moved in San Francisco where Clarence established the Commercial Cable Postal Telegraph, a competitor to Western Union.

The Mackays now had plenty of money, but Louise wanted more than money. She wanted social acceptance. In 1876 the family returned to New York City with their two-year-old son Clarence. They purchased a house on fashionable Fifth Avenue and waited for the invitations to come. But they never did. New York ostracized the Mackays, partly due to their lack of pedigree and partly because of their Catholic faith.

So John and Louise fled to Europe. Their first stop was Paris where they took an apartment on the Champs Elysees. Then on to London, where they resided at Carlton House Terrace. In Europe, the Mackays found the social acceptance that had eluded them in New York. European society embraced them. They were received by Queen Victoria, attended the coronation of Alexander IV of Russia, and traveled to the Vatican for an audience with the Pope.

In the mid-1890s, John sent son Clarence, now age 21, back to New York to serve as the vice president for the Postal Telegraph Company. There he met 18-year-old Katherine Duer, the daughter of an Episcopalian family listed in the Social Register. Katherine was known for her good

looks, fiery temper, and extravagant habits. Clarence was smitten and took Katherine as his bride. In honor of the wedding, her husband and father-in-law presented her with more than 600 acres of land in Roslyn and the money to build a spectacular home. She selected society architect Stanford White as the designer, and by the age of 19, Katherine was living in one of the largest houses in the United States at the time, the extravagant Harbor Hill. The estate included an indoor tennis court, swimming pool, and elaborate gardens, and the staff numbered over 150.

But by 1912, rumor had it that Katherine and Clarence were no longer happy. Katherine, an independent spirit who was heavily involved in the women's suffrage movement, abandoned her three children and moved to Paris with a physician who had been treating her husband for throat cancer, giving up her right to Harbor Hill. The Mackays eventually divorced, but Clarence, a staunch Catholic, refused to remarry while his wife remained alive. He focused his energy on the social and artistic life of New York, serving as a member of the board of the Metropolitan Opera and the New York Philharmonic and as a trustee of the Metropolitan Museum.

Katherine died in 1930, giving Clarence the freedom to marry. He wed Anna Case, a soprano with the Metropolitan Opera, but the good fortune that now smiled on his personal life did not extend to his business interests. The depression had begun, and Clarence was hit hard. It was rumored that his losses on Black Thursday exceeded those of any other investor. He was forced to move from Harbor Hill and died in 1937. Harbor Hill was used by the military during World War II and then sold by Clarence's son when the war ended.

The magnificent house was razed, and today the grounds of the former estate are covered by more than 400 tract houses.

Long Island's Harbor Hill may be gone, but due largely to the strong preservation spirit that exists in Newport today, Newport Summer School attendees can still see many of the commissions awarded to McKim, Mead and White by Newport's elite—Beacon Rock, the Taylor and Tilton Houses, and the addition to Kingscote, as well as the beautifully restored Isaac Bell House and the Newport Casino. Although the focus of the Summer School is the nineteenth century, I cannot overlook Newport's long and rich architectural and social history, which dates back to the seventeenth century. In between our visits to the Newport "cottages," we see the Brick Market, Hunter House, and the Redwood Library. We also venture outside of Newport. In the past, North Easton, Providence, New Bedford, Fairhaven, and Pawtucket have been among our destinations.

But the benefits of attending the Victorian Society in America Summer Schools go beyond the educational opportunities they provide. Summer Schools students forge strong personal friendships, discover shared professional interests that can lead to future collaborations, and establish contacts that may help in guiding research.

I hope you'll consider joining me in Newport this year. We may even encounter the specter of Katherine Duer Mackay. Katherine's family summered in cottages along Newport's Narragansett Avenue, and Katherine visited Marble House, the family home of her good friend Consuelo Vanderbilt, and Belcourt Castle, where Consuelo's mother lived with her second husband.

# NEWPORT HERE WE CAME! THE NEWPORT SUMMER SCHOOL

Margaret R. Laster, *Newport, 2008*

It was a deeply fulfilling and enjoyable nine days in Newport, Rhode Island, this past June at the Victorian Society Summer School directed by Professor Richard Guy Wilson, Commonwealth Professor of Architectural History at the University of Virginia. The Newport Summer School was a stimulating counterpart to my experience on the Victorian Society's London program two years earlier. In fact, my introduction to the Newport program came before I stepped on the shores of Aquidneck Island in Newport County. In February 2008, when speaking at the Forbes Gallery in New York about the 2006 London program to prospective summer school participants, I was able to strike up a conversation with Professor Wilson, the keynote speaker of the evening. I told him about research I was pursuing on a late nineteenth-century art patron who had engaged the services of William Morris & Company to decorate her Newport home. By the end of our conversation, I found myself armed with a wealth of new information and the suggestion of additional scholars and resources to contact.

Professor Wilson's generosity and expertise at the Victorian Society gathering at the Forbes Gallery that evening were crucial components of the rapport he created with each of the twenty-two students enrolled in the Newport program. A diverse group of art and architectural historians, architects, city planners, historic preservation consultants, designers,



*The Gilded Age interior of the Breakers.* (Photo by Margaret Laster)

and managers of historic properties traveled to Newport from all over the country, as well as from England, to attend the summer school. We were linked by a profound interest in Victorian art, architecture, and culture. Everyone had the chance to present a voluntary student report as a formal introduction to the group at large; later we agreed that these presentations should be mandatory! To be sure, we were all stimulated by the collective energy of the group. Common interests and illuminating exchanges of ideas sparked professional liaisons and new friendships.

It is no exaggeration to say that Professor Wilson triggered our enthusiasm from the moment of his introductory

lecture, before the first evening's buffet of Newport's "finest pizza." In a manner somewhat reminiscent of Newport's nine cities established by Thornton Wilder's narrator in his iconic work *Theophilus North*, Professor Wilson mapped out the various stages of Newport's historical trajectory from its seventeenth-century discovery and early existence as a trading colony to its most recent incarnation as a tourist destination, following the construction of the Newport Bridge. Two crucial periods served as bookends for our particular focus: Newport's rise as a colonial port in the eighteenth century and its glorious golden age in the Victorian era as an intellectual and social center and the site of elaborate cottages.



*The Newport Cliffwalk.* (Photo by Margaret Laster)

Our itinerary led us through this history as we balanced lively classroom lectures and discussion with visits to civic and religious sites, museums, private collections, historic homes, the great estates lining Bellevue Avenue, and other buildings maintained by Newport's great preservation and historical societies. We relied on *Architectural Tour Notes*, our Newport encyclopedia; although most of the course took place in Newport, we also embarked on excursions to other locations, including Providence, Rhode Island, and North Easton, Massachusetts.

As was the case at the London program, we were fortunate to have access to many of Newport's leading authorities, scholars, and practitioners in the fields of architecture and historic preservation—Paul Miller and John Tschirch of the Preservation Society of Newport County, Bert Lippincott of the Newport Historical Society, and historian Pauline Metcalf—among other generous contributors. The specialties of the experts we met mirrored the interests and occupations of those who came to learn. Summer School participants were able to photograph interiors of many of the homes we visited, including the large mansions, venues which customarily do not grant such privileges.

In rare quiet moments, excitement was never far from the surface. We

stayed together in a dormitory on the campus of Salve Regina University, a stone's throw from the Breakers, one of Newport's celebrated landmarks, and the famous Cliffwalk. The Cliffwalk provided a source of early morning cardiac exercise for the fit-minded, as well as a panorama of beautiful scenery. We dined in a variety of styles: on food we prepared in our communal kitchen as well as seafood specialties offered by Newport restaurants. A group of us discovered an inexpensive Chinese restaurant in one of the shopping areas, quite a good find and one that will be added to the list of recommended dining spots for future Newport students.

In the evenings, we were guests at receptions in private homes, art galleries and, on the last night, at a vineyard where we sampled and purchased local wine as souvenirs. One night following a behind-the-scenes tour of the servants' quarters

at the Elms, we were given a cocktail reception in its premier rooms, which allowed us to imagine what it must have felt like to have dined there in the height of Newport's Gilded Age.

The Summer School concluded with a fete organized by the students. Each year there is a special theme with the specific goal of topping the finales of previous groups. The musical talent of some of our participants—myself not included—inspired our extravaganza, "Live from Newport—it's Saturday Night!", chronicling in song and dance the prestigious pedigree and career of our leader, Professor Wilson, and the evolution of the Newport Summer School. Although we may not have been quite ready for a prime time debut, I am confident that the cabaret performed by members the 2008 Victorian Society program will be remembered for years to come, especially since a recording of the event was made by aficionados of the occasion.



*William Watts Sherman house, Newport, Rhode Island.* (Henry Hobson Richardson with Stanford White, 1874-76, remodeling, McKim, Mead & White, 1880-81, c. 1900 addition by Dudley Newton). (Photo by Richard Guy Wilson)

# VICTORIAN FELLOWSHIP: THE LONDON SUMMER SCHOOL

Deirdre Pontbriand, *London, 2008*

When I think about the thirty-fourth Victorian Society in America London Summer School, one word comes to mind: *camaraderie*. Over the course of two weeks, sixteen students of varied ages and backgrounds not only experienced this intense and stimulating program as a group, but also roomed, dined, wine, laughed, and bonded in a way that made bidding farewell a heartfelt affair. As we gathered for the first time in the lobby of the Methodist International Centre (MIC) on the afternoon of July 12, I was pleasantly surprised to see five familiar faces. Our small group was quite a contrast from the VSA Newport program I had attended the year before, where thirty-seven students endlessly tried to keep up with trusted leader Professor Richard Guy Wilson.

A typical day in London started early with a wink from MIC staffer Alexis and a communal eggs-and-bacon-



*Coalbrookdale Bridge.* (Photo by Deirdre Pontbriand)

laden breakfast compliments of our dorm away from home. Under the helpful guidance of the resourceful Liz Leckie, we were then off to the first of many daily appointments all across London. Fumbling with our Oyster cards, the sixteen of us attempted to keep stride upon meeting up with our patrician guide, the knowledgeable and clever Kit Wedd (pity the person last in line for the WC!). Explaining to those we met along the way that the Victorian Society had nothing to do with lace doilies, dolls, or white wicker, we took in a vast amount of architecture, interiors, and decorative arts in the form of public buildings, churches, private homes, historic sites, more churches, gardens, town halls, museums, and finally, even more churches.

Despite the fast pace, tea and scones with cream and jam luckily awaited around almost every bend! There was always tea and, thankfully, rest for our weary legs at the Art Workers Guild, where we were engaged by many lectures, including “Artists’ Houses,” “Great Exhibitions,” “The Iron Revolution,” and “The Garden City Movement.” After pinching pence on Marks & Spencer sandwiches and crisps for lunch, dinner was more often than not had at the MIC, where the price was right for the enticing nightly selections (note: avoid the cake). Highlights of touring in London included an exhilarating ride on the London Eye, the Sir John Soane Museum (if we could have only seen it by candlelight...), the vibrant



*Detail of Watts Chapel.* (Photo by Deirdre Pontbriand)

Columbia flower market, a peek into the vast halls of the Victoria and Albert Museum, a tour of three of London’s private clubs, and the magnificent jewel-box Leighton House.

Day trips outside of the city to Oxford, Surrey, and Brighton and our five-day excursion to the Midlands and Northwest England rounded out the overall experience. The journey north was led by the esteemed Gavin Stamp, who refused to let a “horrible tub” (i.e., a cruise ship) get in the way of a look at Liverpool’s “Three Graces” from the decks of the Mersey Ferry. He led us with equal gusto around a “brisk circuit” of Manchester and Birmingham, where we enjoyed a nineteenth century pub feast of lamb chops at the Waterloo’s Grill Room.

Such trips required unspecified time aboard a bus piloted by beloved driver John Cook; to pass the time a few of us frequently resorted to a game of 20 Questions. The answers—Bea Arthur, Blanket Jackson—often left us in tears. More fun was had at the Premier Inn, Wirral, where lack of telephone communication with the outside world led us to come up with our own novel forms of entertainment, namely the infamous “Club 19” (secret password: Prince Albert). Highlights outside of London included Mackintosh’s extraordinary

78 Derngate, the Stoke-on-Trent Potteries Museum, the dense and exotic Biddulph Grange Gardens (where a plaid wool Welsh blanket was to be had for a mere £10 in the gift shop), the extensive Lady Lever Art gallery, and the first cast-iron bridge in the world.

Our tour came to an end on July 26 as Kit took us for a “big gulp of sea air” and a farewell fish supper in Brighton and Hove (actually), where we were awarded accolades and souvenir mints (alas, the diplomas

had been forgotten!). Over the course of the trip we had learned to navigate ANY site in an hour, complete with all the requisite stops (gift shop, tea room, WC). While I particularly enjoyed seeing the things I had learned about in graduate school before my eyes—the breadth of William Morris, the didactic decoration of Augustus Welby Northmore Pugin, the fanciful ornament of Owen Jones, the spiritedness of Mackintosh—what made the experience truly memorable was the constant companionship of my fellow travelers.

Photos (L to R):  
*Brighton Pavilion.*  
(Photo by Deirdre Pontbriand); *The Palace of Westminster as seen from the London Eye.* (Photo by Deirdre Pontbriand)



(L to R): *Biddulph Grange Gardens.* (Photo by Deirdre Pontbriand); *The author, Deirdre Pontbriand, relaxing in Oxford.* (Photo by Monica Obniski); *St. Pancras Station.* (Photo by Deirdre Pontbriand)



## ALUMNI NEWS

**Richard Guy Wilson** (London '76 and Newport Summer School Director) was among the guests of President George W. Bush and First Lady Laura Bush at the official White House observance of Thomas Jefferson's 265<sup>th</sup> birthday. Joining Richard at the celebration, which took place on April 14, 2008, was University of Virginia President John T. Casteen III and his wife Betsy Foote Casteen and the Virginia Gentlemen, a student a capella group. As Richard pointed out in remarks delivered at the event, Jefferson was the first full-time resident of the White House and later worked with Benjamin Henry Latrobe to design the north and south porticos.

**Richard Guy Wilson** and **Karen Zukowski** (Philadelphia '86) were among the speakers who participated in "At the Vanguard: The Arts and Crafts Movement in Cincinnati and Environs," a conference hosted by the Cincinnati Art Museum in June 2008 that examined Cincinnati's role in the Arts & Crafts movement in America.

**John A. Martine**, AIA (London '79, Newport '07, Alumni Association Board Member, Past President, and former Corresponding Secretary, organizer of Alumni Association Study Tours) has been appointed by the Governor of Pennsylvania to the State Architects Licensure Board.

**Hank Dunlop** (London '81), Associate Professor in Interior Design and Visual Studies at the California College of the Arts and a principal at Hank Dunlop and Associates, a consulting firm that specializes in interior and architectural history, restoration, and property development, received the Leadership Award for Excellence from the International Interior Design Association (IIDA) in September 2008. Hank was honored for his many contributions to IIDA and for elevating the profession through his leadership in design and education. Hank has been working in the field of design preservation and restoration since the 1960s and has been involved as a historic interiors consultant on the restoration of the Leland Stanford Mansion in Sacramento, the Sanchez Adobe in Pacifica, the Bidwell Mansion in Chico, and the James Johnson House in Half Moon Bay and is currently working on the Larkin House in Monterey and the David Glass House in San Ramon.

**William J. Dane** (London '82, Philadelphia '84) was featured in the December 18, 2007, issue of *The New York Times* in an article entitled "Keeper of an Unlikely Trove, Gutenberg to Warhol." The article chronicled Bill's 60-year career at the Newark Public Library where, as "keeper of the prints" he supervises the library's impressive collection of prints,

posters, autographs, and rare books.

**Sibyl McCormac Groff** (London '82) will speak on "Gothamtime—New York's Contribution to Creating the Victorian Christmas" at the December 9, 2008, meeting of the Metropolitan Chapter of the VSA, New York Church, 114 East 35<sup>th</sup> Street. Sibyl's lecture will focus on secular and universal holiday traditions associated with New York in the 19<sup>th</sup> century that continue today and will address such topics as department stores, cards, gifts, music, charity, Santa Claus, the Tree at Rockefeller Center, and festive family activities. From November 28 through January 3, Sibyl will also be conducting a Christmas walking tour of Rockefeller Center and Fifth Avenue that will examine the role that New York has played in shaping today's Christmas culture.

**Kay Heller** (London '83) continues her work as an art consultant and appraiser in Florida and Washington, DC. She serves on the Boards of Old Salem, Inc., in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, and The John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art in Sarasota, Florida.

**Donna Ann Harris** (London '87) recently returned to Philadelphia after living in Chicago for ten years. In 2004, Donna opened Heritage Consulting Inc., a consulting firm that specializes in the areas of historic preservation, downtown and commercial district revitalization, and nonprofit organizational development. Donna is the author of *New Solutions for*

*House Museums: Ensuring the Long-Term Preservation of America's Historic Houses*, published by AltaMira Press in 2007, and "Is a BID Feasible in Your Town? Ten Questions to Ponder," which was published in the April 2007 issue of *Main Street News*, the monthly journal of the National Trust Main Street Center.

**Ellen M. Snyder-Grenier** (London '90) recently curated the 4,300-square foot permanent exhibition *Musical Machines & Living Dolls: The Murtoogh D. Guinness Collection*, which opened at the Morris Museum, Morristown, New Jersey, in November 2007. Ellen is also the author of an article about the Guinness Collection that appeared in the March 2008 issue of *The Magazine Antiques*.

**Sergei Troubetzkoy** (Newport '90) has accepted a new position as Director of Tourism for Bedford, Virginia. Sergei previously served for over eighteen years as the first Director of Tourism for Staunton, Virginia. He spoke on the topic of Heritage Tourism at the annual Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities (APVA) Preservation Conference in September 2007.

**Peter Trippi**, (London '92, Newport '05) is a guest curator for the upcoming exhibition *J. W. Waterhouse (1849-1917). The Modern Pre-Raphaelite*, which will open at the Groninger Museum in Groningen, The Netherlands on December 14, 2008. The exhibition is the first to examine Waterhouse's entire career and

demonstrates his engagement with contemporary trends ranging from antiquarianism to mystical spirituality. After the exhibition closes on May 3, 2009, it will travel to the Royal Academy of Arts in London (June 23-September 13, 2009) and to the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts (October 1, 2009-February 7, 2010).

**Chris Szczesny-Adams** (London '96, Newport '02), Assistant Professor of Art History at the Milwaukee Institute of Art & Design, is the author of a chapter entitled "Edward Townsend Mix: Books and the Professional Architect in Nineteenth-Century Milwaukee," which was included in the anthology *American Architects & Their Books, 1840-1914*, published by the University of Massachusetts Press in 2007. Her contribution highlighted one aspect of her University of Virginia dissertation, "Cosmopolitan Design in the Upper Midwest: The Nineteenth Century Architecture of E. Townsend Mix." Chris also curated an exhibition on Mix's work that was featured this summer at the Monroe Arts Center in Monroe, Wisconsin.

After 14 years with the National Park Service in the San Francisco Bay area, **David Blackburn** (Newport '98, London '99) has accepted the position of Curator of Collections and Exhibits at Lowell National Historical Park in Lowell, Massachusetts. David also serves as the director of the park's cultural programming. This unique National Park Service site preserves buildings, power canals, and landscapes that

tell the story of the establishment, expansion, and decline of New England's textile industry. Centered in Lowell, this complex story of technology, immigration, natural resources, and capital is told in the context of one of the first planned industrial cities in the United States. Since the city's nadir in the early 1970s, the historic park has played a critical role in the renaissance of Lowell. David is also

excited to be back in an area of the nation with a strong chapter of the Victorian Society.

**Hannah Sigur** (Newport '08) is the author of *The Influence of Japanese Art on Design*, which was published in 2008 by Gibbs Smith. The book juxtaposes examples of glass, silver, metal arts, ceramics, textiles, furniture, jewelry, advertising, and packaging with a spectrum of

Japanese materials ranging from expensive one-of-a-kind art crafts to mass-produced ephemera. The book's jacket design is based on wallpaper in the 1882 Stick-style Cohen-Bray House in the Oakland, California, neighborhood known as Fruitvale. President of the Board of the Cohen-Bray House is alumnus **Hank Dunlop** who encouraged Hannah to attend the VSA Summer School.

## IN MEMORY OF . . .

The Alumni Association mourns the loss of two long-time, dedicated supporters.

On September 26, 2008, **Margot Gayle** passed away in New York, aged 100. Margot was co-founder of the Victorian Society in America in 1966 and was active in preservation for more than a half a century. Margot worked to raise awareness of cast iron buildings around the country, founded the Friends of Cast Iron Architecture in 1970, and was instrumental in establishing the SoHo Cast Iron Historic District in New York. This May Margot was honored at a Centennial Celebration hosted by the Metropolitan Chapter of the VSA.

One June 27, 2008, **Richard Evans** of Washington, DC, passed away. Dick was active in the VSA since the 1980s and served on the board of the Washington, DC VSA Chapter. He attended the Newport Summer School in 1991.

Both Margot and Dick will be greatly missed.



**Gwen Koch**, long-time supporter of the Summer Schools, celebrated her 87th birthday in September in New York at a surprise dinner hosted by Summer Schools Committee Chair Kathleen Bennett and her husband Vincent LaPaglia.

*Bill Dane, Sibyl Groff (seated), Mary Miller, Pauline Metcalf, Gwen Koch (seated), Vincent LaPaglia, Genevieve LaPaglia, and Kathleen Bennett*

# 2009 ALUMNI ASSOCIATION STUDY TOUR BUENOS AIRES, ARGENTINA

Among the benefits of membership in the Summer Schools Alumni Association is the opportunity to participate in Alumni Study Tours, which are scheduled every two years. In the past, Alumni Association members have explored the artistic and architectural heritage of the Netherlands, Poland, Slovenia, and, in 2007, Barcelona. Study

Tour organizer extraordinaire John Martine is already planning the Fall 2009 Study Tour, which will take Alumni Association travelers to Buenos Aires, Argentina. As in the past, John is working with local contacts to assure access to sites generally not open to the public.

Alumni Association members who are interested in receiving

information about the Study Tour when it becomes available should contact John at [jmartine@stradallc.com](mailto:jmartine@stradallc.com). Brochures will be sent only on request. Space is limited and the tour is expected to be very popular. Remember, only Alumni Association members in good standing will be eligible to participate in the Study Tour.

## KIT WEDD, LONDON SUMMER SCHOOL DIRECTOR

In 2008, Kit Wedd will once again be leading London Summer School scholars through Victorian-era treasures in London and beyond. Kit was named Director of the London Summer School in 2007 after serving initially as Co-Director with Ian Cox and then as Acting Director for two years.

Kit brings a long history of involvement with the Victorian Society and an extensive knowledge of Victorian architecture and culture to her position as London Summer School director. She has served as the first Education Officer for the Victorian Society in London and held the position of Deputy Director of the Society from 1993 to 1995. She was also chairman of

the committee responsible for the care of the former home of Punch cartoonist Linley Sambourne. This Kensington house museum with its perfectly preserved late nineteenth century interiors, is among the more than 70 sites and monuments on the itinerary for the two-week London Summer School. And Kit is herself a Summer Schools alumna, having attended the London School in 1992.

Kit worked for 10 years as a freelance writer and editor specializing in architectural conservation and historic interior decoration before accepting her current position as a planning consultant in London. She is the author of *The Victorian Society Book of the Victorian House*, published in 2002.

In her book, Kit addresses the architecture, design, maintenance, and preservation of Victorian and Edwardian houses.



*London Summer School Director Kit Wedd.*  
(Photo by Diane Kane)

## SUMMER SCHOOL ALUMS ARE THE BEST RECRUITERS



Membership in the Alumni Association is not the only way to support the VSA Summer Schools. Alumni can also contribute by recruiting students for the Newport and London programs.

### You can help by:

- Encouraging friends, colleagues, and students to apply
- Posting brochures
- Mailing information to universities and house museums in your area
- Hosting a recruitment event

For brochures and applications, please contact: Susan McCallum, (908) 522-0656, [vsasummer-schools@comcast.net](mailto:vsasummer-schools@comcast.net)

For information on hosting recruitment events, please contact: Nancy Golden, (805) 563-2315, [goldendirect@aol.com](mailto:goldendirect@aol.com)

*Richard Guy Wilson atop the moon gate at Chateau-sur-Mer. (Photo by Eleanor Dew)*

## JOIN THE VICTORIAN SOCIETY IN AMERICA

Join the Victorian Society in America and receive subscriptions to the society's semi-annual journal, *Nineteenth Century* and the newsletter, *The Victorian*; as well as invitations to educational symposia; exclusive, members-only tours; and many other benefits.

Membership in the national organization is separate from membership in the Alumni Association and local chapters. Your membership in each organization is greatly appreciated as it helps support a wealth of programs.

For further information on membership, publications, upcoming events, preservation resources, and local VSA chapters, contact: **Victorian Society in America** 1634 Sansom Street, Philadelphia, PA 19103  
Phone: 215-636-9872 • Fax: 215-636-9873 • E-mail: [info@victoriansociety.org](mailto:info@victoriansociety.org) • Web: [www.victoriansociety.org](http://www.victoriansociety.org)

# LONDON SUMMER SCHOOL SCHOLARS 2008

**Charles Brownell**  
Richmond, VA  
Architectural Historian

**Laura Camerlengo**  
Staten Island, NY  
Graduate Student, History  
of Decorative Arts  
Parsons, The New School  
for Design

**Gibson Craig**  
Pleasantville, NY  
Student, Architectural  
Engineering  
Drexel University

**Stephanie Evans**  
Llanderlo, United Kingdom  
Curator for South Wales,  
National Trust

**Allison Krier**  
New York, NY  
Graduate Student,  
History of Decorative Arts  
Parsons, The New School  
for Design

**Larry Lesperance**  
Chicago, IL  
Retired Teacher

**Robert Metzger**  
Reading, PA  
Retired Museum Director

**Thomas Nickel**  
Chicago, IL  
Retired

**Monica Obniski**  
Chicago, IL  
PhD Candidate, Art History  
University of Illinois at  
Chicago

**Deirdre Pontbriand**  
New York, NY  
Graduate Student,  
History of Decorative Arts  
Parsons School of  
Design/Cooper- Hewitt

**Judy Preston**  
Bristol, England  
HR professional

**Peter Rostas**  
Budapest, Hungary  
Museum Curator,  
Budapest History Museum

**Matt Rowe**  
Evansville, IN  
Evansville Public Library

**Joanna Thomas**  
Barcelona, Spain  
Department Head, Catalan  
Institute of Architects

**Whitney Thompson**  
New York, NY  
Graduate Student,  
Art History  
CUNY

**Alla Vronskaya**  
Boston, MA  
PhD Candidate, History  
MIT

# NEWPORT SUMMER SCHOOL SCHOLARS 2008

**Charlene Albanese**  
Larkspur, CA  
Real Estate Agent

**Ruth Barnish**  
Lexington, KY  
Graduate Student,  
Historic Preservation  
University of Kentucky

**Chris Broadwell**  
Roxbury, NY  
Deputy Director, NYC

**Jennifer Carlquist**  
Brooklyn, NY  
Graduate Student,  
Decorative Arts & Design  
Cooper-Hewitt

**Merle Easton**  
San Francisco, CA  
Architect

**Sarah Eissler**  
Charlottesville, VA  
Graduate Student,  
Historic Preservation  
University of Virginia

**Elizabeth (Betsy) Flint**  
Charlottesville, VA  
Graduate Student,  
Architectural History  
University of Virginia

**Meghan Gordon**  
New York, NY  
Artist

**Kristin Hagar**  
Brooklyn, NY  
Development Assistant &  
Executive Assistant  
The Royal Oak Foundation

**Gale Harris**  
Brooklyn, NY  
Landmarks Preservationist  
New York City

**Marissa Hershon**  
Washington, DC  
Graduate Student,  
History of Decorative Arts  
Smithsonian/Corcoran, DC

**Margaret Laster**  
New York, NY  
PhD Candidate, Art History  
CUNY

**Kelly Little**  
Chicago, IL  
Graduate Student, Historic  
Preservation, School of the  
Art Institute of Chicago

**Amanda Loughlin**  
Lexington, KY  
Graduate Student, Historic  
Preservation  
University of Kentucky

**Duane Myers**  
Evansville, IN  
Reitz Home Preservation  
Society

**Anna Nau**  
Charlottesville, VA  
Graduate Student,  
Architectural History  
University of Virginia

**Natillie Rauch**  
Washington, DC  
Graduate Student,  
History of Decorative Arts  
Smithsonian/Corcoran, DC

**Cathleen Sage**  
Manasquan, NJ  
Project Specialist  
Georgian Court University

**Lisbeth (Lissa) Schwab**  
Bronx, NY  
Landmarks Preservationist,  
New York City

**Hannah Sigur**  
Berkeley, CA  
Art Historian

**Nino Strachey**  
London, United Kingdom  
Historic Properties Adviser &  
Senior Curator for S. England  
The National Trust

**Sarah Woodward**  
Lexington, KY  
Graduate Student, Historic  
Preservation  
University of Kentucky

*The name of Stephen Wohleber of Britt, Ontario, Canada, was regrettably and inadvertently omitted from the roster of 2007 Newport scholars in the Winter 2008 Alumni Newsletter. Stephen is an artist who has also been involved in preservation in Ontario.*

# 2008 SUMMER SCHOOLS RECRUITMENT EVENTS

Nancy Golden

It has long been thought that the Summer Schools are too much of a best kept secret; that the word is just not getting out about just how fabulous they are. The Alumni Association decided a year ago to address this challenge by co-hosting recruitment events around the country by offering \$250 to help underwrite the costs of these events.

For the second year in a row, alumnus Dick Reutlinger graciously offered his glorious Queen Anne house in San Francisco for a recruitment event. On February 1, 2008, over 25 alumni and prospective students enjoyed hearing Stephen Haigh share his experiences at the Newport Summer School in 2007. Alumni also enjoyed connecting with one



*2007 Newport Scholar Stephen Haigh sharing his experiences.*  
(Photo by Fred Golden)



*Hosts Dick Reutlinger & Hank Dunlop; Nancy Golden & Roger Scharmer.*  
(Photos by Fred Golden)

another, having the opportunity to explore every nook and cranny of Dick's house, and to enjoy the wine and hearty nibbles provided by alumnus Hank Dunlop. Dick was kind enough to refuse the \$250 the Alumni offered for the event. Thank you Dick and Hank for such a splendid evening.

VSA board member and president of the VSA New England Chapter Ed Gordon arranged for Roger Howell, of the Childs Gallery on Newberry Street in Boston, to host a fabulous evening at the gallery on February 7, 2008. Roger even donated champagne and shrimp for the occasion. Alumni and prospective students enjoyed the exhibition on display at the gallery: *A Medieval Tapestry: The Ancestral Quest of Betty Herbert*. This is the second such event that Ed Gordon has arranged. Thank you Ed and Roger.

Chicago alumni focused on recruiting Summer Schools participants from local universities

by distributing brochures and newsletters to institutions with programs in architecture, the history of art, architecture, and the decorative arts, and preservation. Alumni also spoke to students in the preservation program at the Art Institute of Chicago.

The Alumni Association is eager to expand recruiting events, which need to occur in January or February so that prospective students have time to apply before the March deadline. Dick and Ed have agreed to host events in 2009 and 2009 alumna Anne-Taylor Cahill has agreed to arrange an event in Norfolk, VA, and Jerry Peters reports that alumni are planning an event in Washington, DC. If you are interested in hosting a recruiting event, contact Nancy Golden at [goldendirect@aol.com](mailto:goldendirect@aol.com) or (805) 563-2315. We'll again offer \$250 to help offset the costs and Bob Chapman will supply names and addresses of alumni in your area. Nancy will also help with developing the copy for the event.

# RENEW YOUR ALUMNI ASSOCIATION MEMBERSHIP TODAY!

**J**oin or renew today and receive invitations to exclusive events, seminars, study tours and more ... and to help provide scholarships to deserving students! Your membership will extend through to December 31, 2009.

## Alumni Association of the Victorian Society Summer Schools

### Membership enrollment:

- Renewal
- New membership

### Dues:

- \$25 Student/Young Professional (*under age 35*)
- \$45 Individual
- \$75 Household
- \$100 Supporter
- \$250 Sponsor
- \$500 Benefactor

### Scholarship Donations:

I would like to provide a full or partial scholarship of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ to:

- London
- Newport

I would like to make a donation to the Sibyl McCormac Groff Scholarship Fund, which recognizes her many contributions to the Summer Schools. \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Enclosed is my check for \$ \_\_\_\_\_ made payable to *Alumni Association of the Victorian Society Summer Schools*.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Company \_\_\_\_\_

Company Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Fax \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Home Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Fax \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

**Please return this form with your check to:**

ALUMNI ASSOCIATION OF THE VICTORIAN SOCIETY SUMMER SCHOOLS  
*Bob Chapman, Membership Secretary, 111 S. Mountain Ave., Montclair, NJ 07042-1737*



# ALUMNI ASSOCIATION OF THE VICTORIAN SOCIETY SUMMER SCHOOLS



*Ceiling of the Watts Memorial Chapel, Compton.*  
(Photo by Bruce Davies)

## ALUMNI ASSOCIATION OF THE VICTORIAN SOCIETY SUMMER SCHOOLS

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## VICTORIAN SOCIETY IN AMERICA SUMMER SCHOOLS ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

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