

Closed Caption Transcript for Connecting to Collections Care webinar:  
**A Conservation Primer: Caring for Historic Furniture**

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[Please stand by for realtime captions.]

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>> Hello everybody and welcome to this webinar. Many Mr. 14 it's a pleasure to be here today. Before we get started I just want to take a quick moment of your time to go over a few features of the Adobe connect platform. You will notice along the left of your screen basic questions and comments window, feel free to submit any questions or comments at any time in that panel and we will do our best to respond as quickly as we can. Beneath that on the lower left you will find a download window, to handouts are available and you can feel free to download those at your convenience. Use those as a resource. We will be making the questions and comments window a little larger as we get closer to the start time here in just a moment. You will also notice that we do have closed captioning available today for participants and that is along the bottom of your screen and the transcript will be available as well as part of the recording. Without further delay I would like to pass the audio for today's webinar off to our host Susan Barger. Go ahead.

>> Hello everyone happy new year I just want to remind you that this program connecting to collections care is sponsored by the American Institute for conservation with funding from the Institute of Museum and Library services and technical support from learning times and we provide free training resources and assistance for collections care for small and midsize cultural institutions so we are really happy to be here. We have been running this program for a year and I want to thank you for our successful first year. If you need quick answers about collections care problems, you can listen in the online community forum, there are conservators who pay attention and make sure that those questions get answered. The only thing is you need to be registered to ask a question, registered and have a password. It's really easy you will see it on the website.

>> This is a community website connecting to collections, I'm sorry, we are on Facebook and you can follow us on twitter. You can contact me any time at this email address and coming up we have a webinar on caring for framed objects in February and one on mannequins in March. Today's webinar is on historic furniture so I'm going to turn this over to Tad Fallon .

>> Thank you. The title of our talk today is a conservation primer, caring for historic furniture. I name is Tad Fallon and one of the principal conservators at Fallon & Wilkinson, LLC in Baltic, CT .

>> Welcome all and thank you for loving in this afternoon. I would like to extend thanks to the connections care online community and learning times for this great program opportunity. The neck

>> I will go over briefly the talk outline today and first what I will do is I will introduce our firm which is Fallon & Wilkinson, LLC studio and the work we do, our capabilities and a little bit about our facility. I will briefly discuss what a conservator Dallas, specifically a wooden object conservator how we go about examining objects, what we are looking for and how we go about it. We will talk a little bit about

examining the surface, deciphering patina and recognizing past interventions. I will talk a little bit about reproductions and how they can help in her right of situations. Briefly go over an introduction to what identification, and lastly we will follow up with the do's and don'ts of furniture care and I will extend some practical tips to you all for collections maintenance.

>> As we begin today I will briefly introduce our company Fallon & Wilkinson, LLC . The two principal partners are myself and Randy Wilkinson initially met in graduate school at the Smithsonian Institute conservation analytical laboratory in 2006. As we progressed through the intensive four-year program and learned more about each other's skill set and talents, we began to discuss the possibility of forming a business alliance on graduation. In the fall of 2000 that plant became a reality and Fallon & Wilkinson, LLC was established. With the time the business grew by leaps and bounds. In 2008 we purchased property in the town of Baltic, CT and design and build state-of-the-art conservation facility we now call home. We have three other employees, a Dutch treat conservator, a fellow from the Metropolitan Museum of Art and Mr. Wilkinson's wife. Very talented woodworker and fellow fashion Institute of technology alumni Leslie, and are aspiring young studio assistant Debbie. We are considered conservators and private practice, our studios climate controlled and secure and our clients really have a wide spectrum ranging from small and medium-size museums, insurance companies, private collectors and home owners.

>> Why call a conservator next? Or what do you guys do anyway?

>> There are many things to take into consideration when deciding intervention needs thoughtful consideration. This is valuable Museum levels as a desperate humble chairs personal possessions. This picture which became infamous is echo homeowner behold the man, and he became infamous because it was painted in 1930 by the Spanish painter Elias Garcia Martinez picturing Jesus with thorns and he became famous because I underwent an ill attempt restoration attempt by an untrained amateur in 2012. The only its scene around world on various online but number two just the kind of illustrate the idea that even valuable and important objects can receive damage when things go wrong in the wrong people get involved and well meaning people get involved and are on trained so it's something we need to be diligent even though it's very obvious.

>> Our experience is furniture conservators tell us that things do happen. This is a case where the Butler McCook house which is a beautiful 18 century house located now in downtown Hartford Connecticut, just underwent a \$4 million renovation several years in the making and about two weeks after it opened, and SUV ran a red light late at night and crashed through the main parlor damaging extensive the collection and in the background of that flight you see the SUV parked in the living room and the firefighters taking a beautiful 18 century out of the house. Although this is an extreme example, we do know that things happen and there may be times when small house museums or small to medium to large museums will need to call in trained conservators.

>> I will briefly go over some of the ways in which you can try to find a conservator and the reason I showed this it will help you again the process on a professional level and not just rely on complete word-of-mouth to find the right person. The first thing I would suggest is looking at the American Institute for conservation website, I have listed the website there is also in the handout. They have a find a conservator feature which is in the upper left-hand corner of the hand webpage and you can type by ZIP Code, by proximity to your location, and by specialty group and its a good referral system. The conservators that will be referred in that system are professional Associates or fellows and I think that's a great place to start if you are starting fresh with finding a conservator. One of the things that you

should be looking for if you are hiring or taking the services of a conservator, is that they followed the AIC code of ethics and this is a code that we are bound by as conservators to do the right thing and that code of ethics if you're not familiar with it, it's listed on their website.

>> The first thing that a conservator will do if you procure their services will be to look at an object into an examination and an assessment. At this stage it's important, and this is the part where you can go to great lengths to do your own homework, you can have a discussion of your treatment rules and you can do that among yourselves in the institution first, because it's very important we often get a broad ranging array of questions and I think that the more focused you are on what your own treatment rules for this object are, we can give you better options as conservators. It's something to hone in on and do your homework before the conservator comes into their examination and assessment. The next thing in the process would be that the conservator would issue you a treatment proposal based on a discussion treatment goals and give you a range of potential options that would hone in on what the treatment would look like. That is not always a set point or a fixed point because as a further examination at the studio occurs, often a conservator will find additional things to make you aware of so that can be part of the process.

>> You should expect documentation, and the reason I put level depends is not everything needs a high degree of documentation. Sometimes a written form of documentation for a simple treatment will suffice. High and documentation may involve things like microscopy, photography on a level documenting the steps, and it depends your budget and the amount of time that you're willing to put in to that document. It can vary. The last thing that should be happening they should issue a final treatment report along with their invoice. That outlines to a degree what they did and again, this goes back to the level depends it should be personal with the documentation. Those are the things I think you will find or should expect in hiring and working with a professional conservator.

>> I will talk briefly about this beautiful piece and this is a great example of how our team of conservators will come together with a project that require a great variety of skills that successfully complete. This is a wonderful 18th century possibly bookcase that is been continuing the same family. Originally made for the first senator of Vermont Moses Robinson and it pretty different pass the gold finish and patina but as you see any look at the base it has lost its original height due to loss of two feet. This may have been by a well-intentioned owner at some point who perhaps just did not have the ceiling height because they were very well taken down evenly. Nonetheless the piece was reduced. So the new family member requested that as conservators we add on to the height of it. There is a detail of the base with this wonderful patina and great differential color on the foot and what do we do as conservators to take care of that?

>> We will talk recently here in the next slide about what we're going to do as we are going to add to the feet, but we will not remove any original material in doing that. We are carefully carved our repair elements into the existing outline of the foot and not remove anything original. You see that slide the new piece had been added on and carefully clamped on and there is the new foot, and very flush and even with the ceramic surface but if you look there is no disturbing the original surface underneath that.

>> There is the piece integrated. If one were to shine a black light on it, you can readily tell that the materials were different, but visually it's basically integrates so well that it's hard to tell from standing height that anything was done. We want to make that visual impression but if you put it upside down and looked inside you would see that you are not fooling anyone that this is an intervention and a later edition.

>> There is the piece completed. The finish was just cleaned and waxed and the brasses were cleaned and which I will go later in the talk when we talk about things that you can do in your own practice or your own museum to kind of help preserve the brasses and have ability to polish them.

>> That was an illustration in the previous slides of a structural issue. Next I will talk about coatings and the aspects of finish conservation. This is a beautiful piece here, which is a fantastic writing desk dating from about 18 dating from about 1805 or so that came in with a variety of issues. In addition to repairing losses and structural work, the finish had severely degraded over time and the object was no longer aesthetically pleasing. The grind and weather and overrode the beauty of the rich mahogany veneer.

>> In order to better understand the nature of an existing finish as conservators sometimes we will take with the client's permission, a tiny cross-section of the surface that includes both wooden finish and examine the sample under our research microscope in both visible and ultra violet light. Here you can see the wood cells and that's the lower section in here, and the little middle section is the yellow orange line of original Shellac varnished it was on their. The upper right bluish layers represent later over coatings so we can see does. The other thing that I would notice is when you go down to the cells of the wood and you look in the cellular structure kind of in the middle of the field, you will see that the upper level of the cells are compressed, and as it gets deeper into what they are more circular and oval so that represents to conservator looking at that, is that that probably was a hand scraped surface and that compressed the wood during the finish and it jamming process and scraping process and that surface with the yellow orange and those compressed cells indicates a very undisturbed original surface underneath everything. It kind of shows us yes, this piece has had later finish work done but there is a good deal of original material on there and it's underneath. We can say to the client what is on top is probably obscuring what you are seeing and obscuring the presentation surface. Here this slide we are seeing this be graded surface, which also is what we call very friable, it was not adhering that well and it was flaking off which is a problem for the client. We carefully took off cleaned the surface and we maintained the underlying color and richly colonnaded mahogany surface but brought out for the presentation surface and then we brightened the surface with an additive reversible varnish so you can get an seated. There is never one right way to treat an object so this was all options and given the options and the evidence to the client and then ultimately we will let them make the decision which was at the presentation surface was pound out in this piece that were really needed to show up at the end. So we work to that means any was all documented so if anyone ever wanted to go back they would be able to tell why we made our decision. I think that's sometimes just as important documenting the steps is providing future conservators with a reason why you did it in a synopsis that can be very helpful for future looks and objects.

>> Another aspect that a professional conservator can do sometimes is provide research analysis and treatment. This is a unique piece made by a contemporary studio furniture maker named John Cedarcrest works in California and John is well celebrated in the permanent collections of major institutions such as the Museum of fine arts in Boston, the field of him as you love art, you diversity art gallery and the Smithsonian Institute to name a few. This piece in question we see here on the far left is titled Mr. chips and it was made in 2005 or six Kimono Form Cabinet series that John produced during his period. Their unique constructions combining two-dimensional inlays and three-dimensional furniture forms which cross the boundary of reality into illusion and his inspiration comes from diverse sources and colluding Japanese, Mickey Mouse and Popeye cartoons and popular iconography from East to West. The client purchased this piece at the Cedarcrest show opening night at Franklin Gallery in New York in early 2006. It was installed any grand room with a stunning view of the Connecticut countryside

and here we see the series in John's studio, some of the pieces just before they went out to the gallery show in New York

>> This is the grand room where the piece was established for a number of years and it sat in a tremendous three-story atrium getting hammered by sunlight the whole time. So unfortunately there was not enough UV protection the viewing space and over a relatively short time frame we see severe fading of the brightly colored decorated surface cc the 2006 original on the left, and the 2013 image on the right.

>> Sintering with contemporary art there are a number of complex ethical and market value considerations to ponder before undertaking treatment. We decided to contact the artist in this case and see if his input could be part of any proposed treatment. To my great delight that John was very forthcoming and invited us out to a studio to develop a treatment strategy. John was very generous work with me to map out the precise detail the color formulas, airbrush application techniques, and specific varnish as he uses in his fabrications and approved the restoration of the piece. I presented this resurgent treatment at the AIC meeting which was held in San Francisco . Last year.

>> Here is a piece with the color restored and this shows you after John's intervention what was done, it wasn't additive and artists involved restoration of the piece according to his original specification. It's kind of a rare opportunity as conservator to work along those lines sort of as a guided student assistant to restorative peace to its original specs. I illustrated because it's very different process and thinking then dealing with Pitino, and 18 and 19 century furniture which has a history of use. We're talking about something that has a very pacific presentation surface and needed a very specific type of research and treatment to have a successful intervention.

>> Now we will talk a little bit about when we are examining surfaces deciphering patina and past interventions. This is important because as you are making the decisions to how a piece should look, for exhibit, what's been done to it, something the little tips can help and will help you to start looking at furniture in a new way. This is an 18th century Russian seat side chair from new England, and this is just a wonderful piece. Most of the pieces, this piece exhibits this Spanish brown color that we see and originally came into this to you because the Russian seat was degraded, and the client was feeling that the piece was a little bit dingy and dark in there asking us what we can do to clean it. As we began looking at it, we began to realize that this piece was a Spanish brown color, and it had a wonderful old patina -- hold on one second, I'm sorry.

>> So what happened with this piece if you look carefully at the striations you can start to realize that this piece had undisturbed original surface so when we are dealing with the client about deciphering patina, we are explaining that yes, it does look dirty and it looks old, but essentially it had never been scraped or refinished and that paint was well adhered and represented an early this temper finish, which was glue animal protein glue mixed with pigment to create the Spanish brown. Let's retain this surface and everything we can to preserve it, this is a very rare survivor.

>> With a cross-section analysis, and we determined that the original layer of this temper protein binder was intact on the surface and it was discontinuous but it was certainly worth retaining. Again, a really rare survivor from the 18th century. Here we see a beautiful drawing chest made in Guilford Connecticut, 1705 two, 17 052-1725, it's oak tulip poplar pine and paint. This was exhibited at the Florence Griswold Museum in this wonderful exhibition the painted chest of the Connecticut shore and had a wonderful ex edition by Ben Coleman the curator at the time. We are going to take a deeper look

at this section of the drawer right here where the arrow is pointing. Illustrate a little bit about how we go. We were deciphering past interventions in this case. We are looking at the painted surface and we're trying to decipher what original decoration, and what potentially has been actively done to the piece or the years. Here is a more magnified shot and if we look very carefully the varnish is fairly well over the repair or the damage dented area. As we start examining the piece we realize it's been over varnished at one point but we will go a little deeper and we will use a different light sources and oftentimes raking light, and we will see that that patina has been crushed a little bit right in here and the what has been crushed and there's a little bit of red oxide paint that went with it. Here is another shot magnified where we see this white line, and if you look carefully you see the brown varnish under the middle of the field and then there is wrong with areas that still have a right over it. As we start examining this closely we realize that probably goes white lines for actively in later. Perhaps there was an existing outline but they are lightly a later campaign of restoration or sprucing up at one point. Here you see the same thing again. This is what good magnification or a stereo microscope can tell you, in this case we are using a Dino light which is a small handheld microscope can magnify about 25 times and give you much greater detail. This is where a conservator can help you determine the state of the piece and were past interventions were.

>> Here is this little upper section of the drawer were going to now and we will take a closer look. Again, this is with a Dino light, so we go from looking at it with our eyes and then were going to go into handheld microscopy to get a deeper look and here we see the varnish and the very magnified surface of this wonderful paint underneath here, in this tulip decoration. And then we see the piece has in this different light which is more of her raking light, we can see that the varnish is over the top of the paint, so it's likely that this piece has been over varnished at some point in its light but the varnish was well adhered and was opposing any visual problems for the piece so we would opt to not disturb it at that point.

>> Now we will talk a little bit about reproductions why they make sense for a variety of reasons and talk a little bit about requesting or wanting a replica or reproduction.

>> So this was a series of pieces that we were commissioned to do, by Hamilton in New York which is Alexander Hemel Hamilton's home which is turned into a national Park site in 2009 or 2010. They had the original furniture's for the house but they had none of the original pieces, which were scattered in museums throughout the country. We were commissioned to make exact copies that really would be called replicas as opposed to reproductions because they were as faithfully executed as possible. If there was a dimensional change in what from one side of the case to the other, it was executed that way. All the wood was matched microscopy was done so we knew the original words used and they were using the reproductions for the replica. The reason I show you this is there are times when as a small house museum or Museum in general would benefit from getting a reproduction made. Sometimes it's because a donor is leaving the piece and they would like a replace for their own collection. It can be something they wish they had but it's in another collection but it might be interpretively important to their collection so it's a variety of reasons and it really can run the gamut from a semi-faithful copy to an exact copy as we see here. This scope of work was 26 pieces of federal furniture which are built over two year process, so you can see a mix of the old and new chairs and sweet. It was a wonderful project. This was a sofa that was not in a collection but they needed it to go with the parlor suite, so it was built to match and this is a case where the finishes were carefully watched with an existing surfaces, so we were not making a reproduction that looked new, we were making reproductions that blended into an old collection which was another consideration. We were meeting and toning and taking the surface but again, if you look inside you would see that this is indeed new, we were not trying to fool anyone. Here

is a sideboard beautiful New York sideboard, and again this beautiful old mellow patina was put on the piece. Here is a fun story. This was a piece that was in the collection of the White House during the Bush administration, it was given by a donor who requested that it eventually go to the Reagan library and upon President. Reagan's death, the White House was specified to return to peace to the Reagan library. At that time it was in the State dining room in the Bush administration wanted the podium copy because it was used at state functions often and I guess they were fond of it. They were commissioned Fallon & Wilkinson, LLC was commissioned to do a copy so Randy went down to Washington and faithfully copied castings of the piece and dimensions and then brought the work back to the studio leaving the original in place and executed it. The final phase was to get the two pieces side-by-side, in an off-site location outside of the White House and tone and guild the Eagle and then it was delivered and it still resides to this date in the State dining room. You can sometimes see it on C-SPAN or state functions when the show the State dining room. Here is our current president toasting our wonderful work for this podium.

>> Now I'm going to go into an area admittedly a little bit outside of my will house but introduction to what identification. Randy Wilkinson with the other partner in the firm is a resident wood expert in teaches that subject across the country. I have borrowed some of his slides here and I'm going to go through sort of a unique approach he is integrating how is conservator as we approach identifying with which I think a contrast to how wood has been taught in the past were its clinical and outside of the craft tradition. What Randy has developed and is teaching is how we can integrate what we know as conservators and as woodworkers into the field studying what and make better sense and better decisions about how we go about identifying what on objects. A brief set to look at a conservator approaches identifying what with a keen sense of pattern recognition. It started low magnification often just a hand loop or higher magnification with a Dino light which is the handheld plug-in microscope that attaches to a computer. Or big picture stuff and then go find lastly going towards high edification microscopy which will be the last step.

>> Looking at the decision process that's gone through is looking on the left hand is what wood is it? What is your first impression? Is it a hard wood or a softwood? What you feel the color of the wood is. Think about its density, how heavy this piece feels. Hazard a guess what is it seem like based on your past knowledge looking at what. And lastly we do the cellular features support your gas. The other important considerations this is where this blending of the skills comes into place, does it follow craft tradition? If one starts to follow cabinetmaking tradition there will be certain what choices and wood uses that make sense or don't make sense and sometimes that can give you some information, for instance is what you are looking at original or is it replaced? Given the geographic origin of the object is it possible? Did the trade routes even the history of the peace and where it should be placed in time, due to trade routes support that conclusion? wood It's really taking idea and looking at a much more holistic way to come up with the process of identifying what's happening.

>> We illustrate that, we will go back to chest of drawers from the exhibition and again this is a piece dating from Saybrook or Guilford, CT . The chest of drawers again 17 oh fine to 1725 Saybrook or Guilford, CT and its oak tulip poplar and pine. These records are by there's no microscopy records for the piece. When we look a little closer, we can look on the inside of the piece and we can start determining that in this case yes, this is original serial -- material, and looking at it it's easy to discern that this is oak on the inside unvarnished and unpainted and that we are looking at Pine on the inside. A conservator at that point should be able to tell really without microscopy positively identified no services because there is no oxidation, that is obscuring anything and no surface decoration in the way.

>> If we go a little deeper and look at the end grain of the dove tail, there is a wonderful burnished surface on the end grain of the dove tail that gives us a complete transverse cross-section which means that it's the end grain of the piece which exposes some cellular features that we can use to identify the wood. This can happen in this case without microscopy so we don't need to do any destructive examination to determine the grain of the wood and the species of the wood. Here it is magnified 25 times on the right and again, we see the ferocity of the wood, we see the grain line intersecting here. We go a little higher magnification to 50 and we see as cellular feature noted raise we can see that they match. And then the conclusion is that the oak styles were not needed any microscopy to make positive identification or the pine panels and the drawer sides were poplar, which we did with a simple magnification process and no cross sections were needed to be taken. It shows you that if you are looking for wood ID a good trained conservator can go to great lengths to positively identify that for catalog or other reasons.

>> I will mention here that on a yearly bases in the fall Randy teaches a wood identification workshop, it's always held with Yale University study collection and the first day of the workshop will be at our studio Fallon & Wilkinson, LLC wood to positively identify and on the second day Randy takes you to the furniture study center and has a great day of looking at pieces and what's important here is because were looking at pieces in the field, on-site, what are you looking for, how do you examine a piece, which is taking a piece and looking at it and things like that. It's as Ashley learned to the site for wood that is under a varnished surface which is often what we are dealing with. There's some great coursework to be had here keep an eye out for our website which I have given in the contact info and keep an eye for that in the fall of 2016 if you are interested. It feels up very quick in our past experience.

>> I'm going to go into a little bit of practical information now for you. About the do's and don'ts of furniture care. This will hopefully hone in on things that you can do, what you can do, on your own. One of the real simple things in this I think when you're dealing with a small house is you more small institution, and you have areas of storage that you are concerned with humidity, it's simple digital hydrometer pictured on the left they are readily available you can find them online and it will give you a day-to-day readout, it's not a data logger, it's something very simple to keep an eye on the temperature and the relative humidity. The big thing that you want to keep an eye out for his spikes in humidity, and spikes in temperature. You want to try to keep the relative humidity as close to 50%, certainly no lower than 30 and not much about 60. If you can do that you're going to great lengths to keeping the objects in your collection stable. On the right is pictured a pretty simple Sears 5 gallon humidifier and sometimes in the winter heating environment low humidity is the big concern. In order to honor very grassroots easy level integrate more humidity into the room, one of these drum unit of fires although they are limited in maintenance issue because any to be failed daily, we in our early studio use one for many years with great success and it can be a very low-tech cost effective way to ensure that you have enough unification in your house and you're not driving down the moisture too much. So hand in hand these two items can go a long way.

>> This graph illustrates the winter and summer seasons and essentially what we see is that in the winter we are down in the low part of the trough, where moisture content to dangerously low levels in an unmitigated environment. In the high peak of that graph you see the summer humidity which is moisture content above 12%. It's not up and down, the peaks and the lows that's what damages wood object the most. If you can through your modification of the environment avoid those spikes in humidity during the summer months and ride the low humidity in the winter to make that middle ground which you see that line that goes across, make those spikes less, you can go a great way towards having your objects stabilized.

>> That low-tech method would be modifying your placement of humidification system throughout the house by portable method can go a great lengths to helping things out. Again, we see this relative humidity content were at 75% relative humidity you are at 14% moisture content in the summer. If you drive down to 20% relative humidity, which is low but not the lowest I have seen, you are down to 4.5% and that's what will crack objects when they observe a great deal of moisture in an unmitigated environment in the summer and then in the first season of heating, you are driving down that moisture content and that's what would react and will split and crack especially if it has what we call inherent Risa restricted movement, it will be at risk for cracking. Keeping an eye in understanding a little bit about those fluctuations will help keep an eye on things for you.

>> This is a very common thing that we get asked here at the studio and furniture conservators deal with and certainly as a maintenance item for houses with collections is that people want to clean the brass and I would say that in general, the decision to clean brasses are not is very personal, and probably curatorial about whether it's appropriate to do it or not. I think that the big thing you want to avoid is cleaning with products in place that will create a residue like we see in this. It cleaning product knocks on that has ammonia, and pumice stone particles in it will do a lot of damage the surface, it will etch to finish and is often builds up over time underneath so this is a drawer from it often block from chest which has caught we took the little backplate off, and you are seeing the corrosion underneath that plate. That was over many years of having polishing compounds embedded behind the surface. So you really don't want to do that. If you need to clean the piece in place, good to give you some tips about doing that but effectively, we are moving them and considering what we call removable coatings program for your brasses. This is an illustration were on the left we see a slightly cleaned and unvarnished surface and on the right we see a cleaned and varnished surface and the varnish we use is called. That's a coding for brass after you clean the brass and then coded which is brushing it onto the piece, you will have the ability to have a much greater length in between cleanings and hardware. If you can do that, and you want your brasses of bright it's a great way to have your conservator or have staff with conservators approval looking at the piece, is it appropriate to use it a removable coatings program for your brass cost something to ask him something to consider.

>> Think when you need to call a conservator is when you see obvious damage that is getting worse like on the left, you see water damage or delaminating or buckling the near that has potential to be snagged on cleaning cloths,. If you have on the right a painted surface that's flaky and friable, we see things that don't look right, then I think it's time perhaps the call a conservator and consult. Often times that conversation can be initiated with a phone call and with an email, with it carefully outlined set of questions and photographs. Often that goes to great length to getting answers out of the way in the beginning and I think these days it's easy to shoot pictures and send them either with your phone or camera and get them to a conservator. That's when I would say it's time to call a conservator. It's surprising how many clients will have plans even in small houses or for holiday decoration and will water them and even with well intentioned plastic or glass on the table, water can seep under. We really recommend, but it's probably an obvious thing, but it's surprising how often pieces get damaged by that type of water. It can also be something as simple as coming in on a rainy day and having somebody put the wet umbrella or wet mail down in something like that on a piece and that can cause an increment weather with a crowded room of visitors that can happen just from people coming in wet.

>> Another thing that we could ask often and I think is an interesting concept to pursue is considered minimally intrusive upholstery treatment for upholstery projects. If you going to the length that there's a reinterpretation of redoing of upholstery in a collection, work with your conservator to develop the concept of is this a candidate for a nonintrusive or minimally intrusive'. Because it's surprising the

amount of wear and tear of the interior surfaces that happen with upholstery interventions and a knowledgeable conservator can go to great lengths to mitigate that damage with every upholstery by some simple techniques such as additive rails, milling surfaces, tacking strips, that can really help.

>> Go into these, sorry, it's also surprising that illustrate this does is kind of an obvious thing. It's surprising how many times especially in small library collections or small house museums they will have a docent or somebody on staff or friend that wants to tighten up a piece or fix a chair and kind of uses inappropriate methods. We were just called into a library to look at some furniture was donated by patron, it was good historical furniture and because they lacked the budget to call a conservator, somebody well-meaning individual tried to strengthen up the chairs and drove all these sheetrock's gross -- screws and add that failed they called us in as conservators and at that point it was too late where as if we had been called earlier we could've offered a simpler and less intrusive intervention.

>> At this stage I will go into a little bit of care and maintenance tips practical easy things you can do.

>> Basic housekeeping. Things need to be dusted, and we find it best to use clean white cotton cloth and sometimes artist brushes. If you're going to use soft artist brushes that have metal ferrules on them, it's a good idea to put some blue tape around them just so that they won't scratch anything. We want to avoid friable surfaces, which are things that are either flaky or unstable varnishes that are not well adhered. Waxing once a year on well varnished furniture meaning that has a good clear and obvious varnish on it is okay. I will talk a little bit later in the next slide about what waxes we recommend. And again what I earlier considered this idea of implanting a removable coatings program for your metal hardware. That goes for brass as well as other metals and you can consult with a conservator about that. It's very effective maintenance issue that it's hard to initiate once but once you get it done, it's well worth it.

>> The select waxes that we use our really just natural paste furniture waxes is our first go to source. If you're going to use a product picture that it's as natural paste beeswax as possible. There's also micro Crystal and Renaissance wax, I think the main issue with that could potentially be a conservation issue with natural beeswax polish is is that they have a slightly high pH but they are really pretty neutral. If pH is on any concern especially on metals it's okay to use Renaissance wax but I would avoid waxes that have a heavy tiling, opponent -- component. You want to stick with the most basic wax you can, I think you will be safe. The waxes that we recommend are on your handheld list as well.

>> This is often a subject. There are many products that people will pull out when they are explaining to us their maintenance techniques. This really goes for private clients mostly but it does happen also in museums is that people will use old English polish, Murphy's oil soap, various sprays, and they are really problematic in many ways. Anything that contains oils like the old English in the middle, has a non-drying oil component which I think the concept is that it's initially very gratifying because it alters the sheen of the Pisan seems to saturated but inevitably because it's a non-drying oil, it will attract dust and moisture and he will All-Star seep into in the varnish or the finish that can cause problems and staining in the underlying wood over time and it just really is a nightmare, especially over many years. The old English is the same way, it contains rosin and heavily pigmented pigments in it that your over time and as it builds up it just kind of gets this sort of opaqueness to the surface that is really program problematic. On the right to that spray product those are mostly problematic because they often contain silicones and they are notoriously difficult especially when you are doing retouching, or re-varnishing the piece because they cost adhesion issues down the road and it shows up as a thing called fish I on surfaces so that is very the most problematic. It is very surprising how much at one point or

another and it objects life that has been used. That goes for pledge and things like that. Probably the most basic thing that we recommend is old-fashioned beeswax, polish, for the most part is safe on almost anything. If you do have a question, certainly consult a conservator but that generally safe.

>> Another thing and here is a little tip, recognizing easy fixes that one can do on their own. This is a very common thing that everybody has a small parts drawer with little bits and pieces that have popped off objects. If you catch it early enough, surprising how many times they fit directly back in. If that's the case where you can clearly see that that's easy little piece to stick back on, the next question is what the we put it on with? Here's something you can do very easily you can purchase Fish Glue. We value these large containers, you certainly would not use that in a lifetime if you were doing occasional work. We sell it Fallon & Wilkinson, LLC we have a small online store for supplies we sell very small containers of the Fish Glue. The reason this is very good use is that it has a very high initial attack, you can immediately stick something back on with minimal clamping often needed. It is liquid at room temperature, so it can be stored in a dark and cool environment. It doesn't have to be refrigerated, it doesn't have to be heated to be used, it just stays liquid at room temperature. It has a very long up to 1 1/2 years shelf life, and it does not smell, it's Fish Glue but it does not smell. The beauty of it all is that as conservators it is continuously reversible in water. You can always retreated and that's the big awkward in conservation, is retreat ability and reversibility and it has both of those things. It's good to keep handy you can keep a small container of it in the store room and when you do get that little piece, see how we put it back on and we tape it on with very low tack painters tape. You want to test that because that can pull off finish but in the right you can tape it on and on the right you have the piece back on. If that's not possible, what we recommend is tape immediately upon finding it, label it in an envelope and put it in a drawer and that was somebody in the future can no. Because it's surprising how many people will keep a box of parts somewhere and a different location in the building, and then if you're dealing with the whole collection you have no idea where they go. I think we would rather see immediately that the piece was kept with the pieces if it ever goes out for conservation, it is immediately apparent where the piece is.

>> At the conclusion of this talk we all know that wood began as a tree and was eventually fabricated into beautiful objects. I hope I have imparted on use some tips and things you can do on your own and certainly has given you a resource to call on a conservator if you ever need to and hopefully we have done that successfully. Many thanks 2-D AIC for all they do and glad to the entire team FAIC was conservation is a group effort. Thanks to Rachel Perkins for inviting me to speak and for setting all this in motion. Thank you for Susan for keeping me on track and for all the hard work setting up this webinar.

>> Thank you all. I see that there are lots of questions and perhaps Susan can help me guide through. It occurs to me that I did not answer them as we went, I think it would have taken too long but I am happy to do this now so we can do that.

>> If there is safe six when the seats fall out of the chairs and couches?

>> I just missed the beginning.

>> Is in a historic is there any safe six when the seats fall out of chairs and couches?

>> I think that's a complex question. I think there can be methods to prop things up. It a complex enough subject that you would need on a case-by-case basis to consult with either an upholstery conservator or a wooden object conservator but I would say that there are ways we can do it, it just

depends on the subject. Often you can prop things up underneath, there is a way but it's hard to say offhand.

>> Okay. This question I have a conservator's quote for oil painting from 1994, is there a rule of thumb for interpreting in today's dollars and then someone said I will get a new quote.

>> Two things come to mind. Certainly our own fees in my studio certainly increased since 1994, was it? And the other big thing is I think it's going to be that fees have gone up but more important is the condition of the object could have changed. That's an awful long time and I would say all bets are off at this point you need a new quote.

>> I would share the quote with the conservator though because it may help get a leg up on what we're dealing with but you need a new quote I think.

>> When you were talking about wood id there was a question that came in about should you state exactly which Oak pine poplar or does it matter, can you just say it's oak pine poplar?

>> This is certainly out of my wheelhouse but I think what Randy would probably say to that why you need to know? And then he would be able to guide you to what it would take to get that answer. It always has to go back to a reason and yes, I think it's possible to tell things like it's white oak or red Oak or red pine or yellow Pine, other times when it's harder and on a case-by-case basis which it just matters how important it was. I do think it's a deeper look often to get that answer.

>> We have a bunch of Russians about unification. When what options you have for unification if you're dealing with historic rooms modern appliances would not be appropriate.

>> That's why show that drum humidifier, because those portable ones especially if they are monitored by a digital hydrometer I showed was battery-powered that the not need electric, you need electric for your emitted fire but if you have an electric source you can put that in an inconspicuous area, and that's going to get you a lot further along. Especially in this microclimates that can be within rooms and in a single place. It's a lot more flexible to integrated but that would be the answer is what size humidifier can you put in there and how can you monitor it and keep an eye on it.

>> Is a small discussion on what about taking a piece that's never been in a stable regulated environment and placing it into one, can that have a negative effect on the piece? There'll sever answers to that but we would like your answers.

>> Yes and no. I think the pieces that I have seen, that have undergone the most damage, usually have lived in an unmitigated environment their entire life or a great portion of the current life of the object. And then they are moved into a heated and cooled environment. More often is the huge part of the environment that drives down the humidity and will crack the piece. For example something that lived in Europe or something that lived in England in a high humidity Stonehouse, and then came to a New York City apartment with steam heat in the middle of the winter, and it just blows up the first winter. That's an export extreme case. Going from an unmitigated environment to a carefully controlled museum environment where you have stable humidity and you have alleviated the spikes in the drops I think you are fine

>> We have one suggestion you have for stabilizing historic and are 1886 Victorian mansion as original shutters built into. From what I can tell they have not been seriously look that for a long time wood.

>> You're talking about stabilizing the?

>> I think so.

>> That's a tough thing. The first thing you want to look at is of the coatings, if there are painted with exterior paintings flaking. We had a case not too long ago are we treated some historically important painted exterior doors that were flaking and in that case we recommended that some storm type doors were put on the outside. They were glass so they did not completely obscure the pain. And then we consolidated the paint on site, using some consolidation methods and keep tacking to lay down the flaking paint. That's for make coding standpoint stabilizing. From the wood standpoint I guess it would really depend on its current structural stability and is it rotted or not, if it's rotted there are some wood consolidate that can be used. It does Meyer -- matter what environment if it's interior or exterior side of the house. Effectively you're talking about coatings issues, and consolidation of wood issues and what in that range can be done. I think that would be a conservator question that would have to be looked at.

>> Some questions about waxing and cleaning. Go to do the first one and then were going to move down through a couple. Is it best to clean furniture with out any polish? I know pledges frowned upon because of chemical reasons.

>> Yes. Again, if the surface is not friable and if the surface seems like it can accept it, just a slightly damp cloth sometimes and what we personally use here is again on your sheets, we use these big boxes of white T-shirt rags that come in 50 pine -- pound boxes and hours are cut so they don't have the ends of the sleeves of the callers. We will often clean with those. Very lightly damp cloth to get tossed off sometimes. Some of the microfiber cloth and this sort of so much to feather duster's but there are a couple of products that are okay but they so very these days in their manufacture and there such a moving target because they are always changing, I never really recommend anyone. I think it's on a case-by-case basis but I would say you want smooth surfaces, and you want as little chemical impregnation in that surface as possible. I don't like things that have oil or stuff sticks to them or any of these fancy chemical treatments. I think it's better the most basic thing a white T-shirt rag.

>> This is going back to the -- one of the recommendations is if you move something into a museum stable environment, maybe you should acclimated gradually so doesn't have one last big fluctuation. What you think about that?

>> I don't know if that's going to make an enormous amount of difference picked the only thing that would come to mind is that in the case of a high humidity event, and I think the one case where there was in a home a historic house and effectively it rain water on the pieces and completely water locked them while the place was closed for the winter and then they froze. So they essentially came in the studio completely waterlogged, in that case a conservator would go to great lengths to slowly, very very slowly dried piece out, not do it fast. That would be one case where acclimation was part of the process but that was an extreme event. If you're talking about just bringing the piece in from another house or the auction for the trade, and is looking fairly stable, I don't think in it while regulated museum environment you're going to have to much problems.

>> Here we have in regard to later talk about Murphy's oil, Murphy's oil you a or nay?

>> Nay. It has a very problematic pH if you read the bottle, it has a dilution ratio that it recommends and what happens people will make it too strong often times and that pH issue will soften and the great varnishes of various types a common symptom of that degradation on things like interior handrails were backs toward backs of chairs were you touch them and they feel sticky and it's because often times people will continuously over many years clean with this solution of two strong Murphy's oil, and the varnish undergoes a process called saponification where the pH changes the nature of the surface and makes it a little more prone to be water soluble. Then it becomes Dickey as it gets and oils embedded into it. In general I make a practice to just avoid Murphy's oil for any cleaning related to wooden objects.

>> We have a question about microfiber dust cloth like dust bunnies.

>> Again, I think you just have to use your own, look at them in your gut feeling. I would safe they are soft and as least chemically charged with fancy, there are some things that are impregnated with things that I would avoid. If you feel like it's just simply a soft fancy duster that has no abrasion ability, I think it's fine. When in doubt just over the simplest thing.

>> You need to make sure you keep them clean.

>> Exactly. That's a good point because if you overuse it, the embedded grind is in it is very abrasive again that's why we use those white T-shirt cloth and they work fine.

>> There was also a brief discussion about appropriate oils for cleaning linseed oil. Use olive oil in my home. Do you have any -- to clean wood.

>> I would say olive oil would not be my first choice because again it is a non-drying oil. If you showed me a piece that perhaps a craft piece of some kind that had originally been oiled, there are some things one can put on it but just in general, as a broad topical application, I would say no, I would not use olive oil. If you have a piece that -- there's always this common misconception that you are feeding the wood. You need to discern about saturation of the surface, visually, and what's going on with your humidification in your environment. And what the visual presentation surface is supposed to look like. When in doubt, you can always should one of us an email here but in general, I would not put new oil on it without really knowing what's going on.

>> There was a question about how would you remove stickers from what surfaces?

>> wood If you have a surface that's well adhered and has finish on it and it does not appear friable, you can cast an area but often a little bit of odorless mineral spirit can take a little bit of polish residue off. Our rule of thumb is not the ore mineral spirit that can take it off. Sometimes there are a little bit water soluble and if that's the case, you can experiment with if you have a 8 ounce glass of water with a couple of drops of dish detergent in it, I would like to use Dawn dish detergent, you might be able to clean it off if there's any water soluble components. You want to watch not to get mechanical with your scrubbing, not over aggressively scrub but those methods can successfully take off sticker residue.

>> There's a question are safer clots without any sense safe to use for dusting? And then another related question that says what do you recommend we replace microfiber cloth with?

>> I do want to wholesale microfiber cloth people out of business. I think they can be fine. I think that this was her that I have seen, they can be quite good. I don't necessarily have a replacement for them. I

think if you get that ones with no additives on it, I'm not as familiar with the exact product they are talking about but if it looks like it's okay, it's very soft and it's microfiber it's probably fine.

>> What do you recommend to use care for a studio on objects that are used for demonstrations like spinning wheel?

>> I think a good paste wax can go a long way. Just burnishing up the surface I think that can be a good way to go. If it gets into anything deeper than that, I think you would have to consult with a conservator about are you talking about do you want to protect it from hand oils and more of a varnish or it's just like a spruce up maintenance in which case I think wax would be my go to source initially.

>> Do you have any feedback on cleaning supplies?

>> I think they did have a wonderful wax but there was a time not too long ago where we ordered some. This was probably three years ago and we because we used to use it, and we have not in many years I think it simply ran out of the studio. We have some new Godard's wax and he came in three bottles and we felt it was convenient at the time because of its application on dining table tops where it was easy to spritz it. As I started to use it I got a little bit concerned about how well it worked and I started looking into it and we actually consulted with a manufacturer and dug into it a little bit and they finally admitted back to us that they had silicone in it so we completely stopped using it after that. The only one that I did use to use they made a hard cake on marble wax which is a wonderful little tin of product. I'm not certain if they still have that. But any of those furniture creams polishes, waxes, that I'm aware of would be suspect in my thinking.

>> You have any recommendations for cleaning a hardwood floor that's varnished or on varnished?

>> I think I like to go to -- out always looked at the website for water locks, it's that have this water base finished it I have used in various things here. They recommend just a little bit damp run out of water on a soft mop with maybe a tiny bit of vinegar in the surface and no other cleaners, soaps, anything. The reason that they say to use that is because if the floor ever does need a another coat down the road, that will be the best way to ensure that you won't have future adhesion or delamination issues. I've taken that to my own personal house which I have hardwood oak floors which have water locks on them. If it's a polyurethane I think the same thing could apply and that's where I would start.

>> What about Bona products?

>> That's a pretty wide range of products. They have a a lot of different things in I'm semi-aware of them. I think that I don't know if they would be appropriate for historic house stuff or historic floors or anything of that nature. I would think of them more in terms of a contemporary house maintenance type thing if you knew you had new oak floors that would polyurethane or something. I think that some wonderful products actually and it makes them great finishes if you're talking new construction. I don't know where their place would be in historic house, and that range.

>> What's the best way to remove a water stain from a dark piece of furniture?

>> Repeat that. It's a white thing on a dark piece of furniture? The rule of thumb if it's a light mark and the piece has what you describe as it's finished, I would say there is a potential that that white markets in the upper layers or whatever finish is on their. If it is a dark ring on the furniture, it often indicates that water or liquid has penetrated through the finish and gotten to the what -- to the wood and created

some oxidation. Those are the two most commonly seen issues. If it is indeed hopefully the best case scenario where it's in the upper layers of the finish, a really quick little tip is that you can use a little tube of the most very basic white toothpaste, and you can put a little bit of any toothpaste on a soft white cloth, and you can buff that little ring out. You need to be careful but then micro-abrasive so better are in the toothpaste can be a very effective way of reducing and making that ring less visible. There are parameters to that so you have to be careful but that is often a way you can do it. If it is not working, it may be because the stain of the piece was activated by whatever liquid there was and the humidity around that ring actually removed when the table was or the piece was wiped that you removed color in which case some retouching by conservator would be necessary with some type of additive retouching media to replace that color. If it is a black ring and is in the surface, sometimes what we have been successful is using oxalic acid crystals which will bleach out the oxidation that's in the wood. But that again gets into much a can of worms that would have to be done by a conservator but those are the two sides of a coin in a very brief way.

>> What's the best way to clean a filthy piece of furniture which it has been stored in it granary for many years

>> The first things to understand what you are dealing with underneath, you're dealing with a varnished or painted surface, how fragile is that surface? Often times grime and grit are on the top surface and sometimes can be gently vacuumed away with a very soft tipped vacuum. That would probably be my first course and then I would assume that you don't have any friable flaking paint or varnish or anything that you're going to sock away, after that I might think of trying to test and see something like Napster or mineral spirits will not harm the surface and can that come away to take any oily residue that's on their. Lastly, I might think of is there any cleaning that can be done possibly modified by a little detergent to get something off. All of it keeping in mind not to ever be abrasive for mechanical were scrubbing by you may be able to gently coax the grinder off the object and see if you can recover it that way. We did that -- we were a part of the process doing that within 18 century. Paneled room that was stored in a chicken coop for many years and came out and basically had to be heavily cleaned but it was a painted fairly well adhered painted surface on wood so that was the method we used on there.

>> I want to ask a question Tad if I give you some of these final questions, will you write answers to them?

>> Sure. Would one be able to email them to me?

>> Yes. I will send them to you. We still have a few more questions and you heard what Tad I will pass them on with the recordings, that where will get everybody's questions answered.

>> Going to ask you one thing. You mentioned several products during your presentation is there a basic tool cleaners and waxes that you would recommend having on hand?

>> I think you certainly want to have some waxes, we shall we want to have the Fish Glue, you certainly want to have very low tech tapes around, you want to have I like to have a variety of Ziploc type bags and some Japanese tissue to wrap things up and put them in bags. And I would like to have sharpie magic markers to write a label on the outside of the bag, of what we are talking about. I like to have little string tags that I can put on keys and put things of that nature on missing parts and so on the can be labeled. Certainly the soft T-shirt cloth, and after that it becomes how much gear you need on a case-by-case basis. I would possibly directly to our website which is listed in the handout, which does have

some more in-depth products that you may benefit from and I'm always glad to answer questions if someone wants to email.

>> We are going to answer the questions by writing and I will put them in with the recording. Please do the evaluation and they are very important, we really use these. Thank you very much and we will see you next month for frames objects.

>> Thank you all for attending today.

>> Tad Thank you and thank you Mike.

>> [Event concluded]