

## Report on AIC-CERT contacts from Texas following Hurricane Ike September 17, 2008

The AIC-CERT number received a call on Tuesday, September 16, at about 3:30 PM ET from Matt Farragher representing the Galveston Historical Foundation. He reported that the Foundation has headquarters and historic houses on Galveston Island including Ashton Villa and Bishop's Palace.

Matt told me that he is still in Austen as no one has yet been allowed on Galveston Island, but they have received word that Ashton Villa had windows blown in on the second floor. Much water entered through these windows, and was said to have run down into the first floor. He told me that they had moved everything they could to the second floor, and he thinks these objects may not have gotten too wet. However, the larger furniture that was left on the first floor is said to be very wet, and they are very concerned about it.

The Bishop's Palace was under renovation and had no collections. This building seems to be of less concern to the Foundation, but has not been visited yet.

I believe there is a third house, but Matt did not give me any information about it.

The Foundation headquarters, which contains collections records, is said to be in poor condition.

Later the afternoon of September 16 we were contacted by Jodi Wright-Gidley who told me she is Director of the Galveston County Historical Museum. She says that although no one has yet been able to visit the Museum, reports indicate that there was no direct water damage, but she is concerned about mold in the humid, closed-up conditions. (I advised.)

Matt and Jodi hoped to be allowed on the island on 17 September.

I spoke to Matt again late in the day on 17 September and no one had yet been allowed on Galveston. He hopes to go tomorrow (18 Sept.)

Matt is interested in anything AIC-CERT can do to assess damage and advise them. I note that Pamela Rosser has offered to assist with architectural damage assessment, and Matt would be very interested in that assistance also.

Matt says that he will be all over the place from now on, and best contact information for us to use in future is Beth Shriner, Director of Historic Properties (409) 599-0639 and Jodi Wright-Gidley (409) 502-0635. Matt Farragher's number is (409) 539-8880 and his email is [mattfarragher@gmail.com](mailto:mattfarragher@gmail.com). I gave him Aimee's numbers, and we agreed to keep in contact after the sites have been visited and more information is available.

## AIC-CERT ASSESSMENT REPORT

September 30, 2008

### **Assessment Team:**

Steven Pine

### **Sites:**

Ashton Villa  
2328 Broadway  
Galveston, TX 77550

Rosenberg Library  
2310 Sealy St  
Galveston, TX 77550

Moody Mansion  
2618 Broadway St  
Galveston, TX 77550

University of Texas Medical Branch (UTMB)

### **Contacts:**

- Dwayne Jones, Executive Director, Galveston Historical Foundation
- Beth Shriner, Asst. Executive Director, Galveston Historical Foundation
- Betty Massey, Director, The Moody Mansion
- John Augelli, Executive Director, The Rosenberg Library, Galveston
- Carol Wood, Archivist, The Rosenberg Library and The Galveston and Texas History Center
- Judy Loney, Director, Special Use Facilities, Office of the President UTMB

### **Update**

Contact continued with staff of collections in Galveston through phone calls and a second site visit. On Thursday, September 25<sup>th</sup> a team of volunteers composed of conservation and registrar's staff from the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston traveled to Ashton Villa. The team primarily worked on the second floor to reposition collection objects and safely pack paintings and other framed objects in order to make room for the temporary air handling equipment and associated electric cables and drain hoses that had been placed in each room by the salvage contractor. Damaged architectural components, large pier mirrors and a piano still remaining on the first floor were secured for eventual removal by art handlers to off-site storage.

Phone contact continued with Judy Loney at UTMB to address two sets of needs. She was encouraged to contact the AIC hotline number to engage the AIC-CERT team. She requested assistance in finding a safe storage solution in Houston for water damaged furniture and other artifacts that she was removing from two historic homes managed by UTMB, The Sealy Home and The Rosenberg Home. Collection objects were damaged at each. Ms Loney's role was to organize the disaster response. She works out of the office of the UTMB President. Her background is Conference Organizing. The homes though historic are primarily used by the university as conference buildings. The Registrar's group of the South Eastern Texas Museum Association (SETMA) is coordinating another visit to Galveston to assist Ms Loney in recording and assessment of the remaining materials at the two homes.

Betty Massey at the Moody Mansion was elusive. She made contact with AIC-CERT indirectly and often without follow up. I received a call from a Gallery owner in Texas City that handles Southwest Art who had been sent Moody collection materials (baskets, jewelry, ceramics, and Russian Icon paintings) that were water damaged. Ms Massey was encouraged to maintain contact with AIC-CERT. I agreed to direct her to other local support for her collection care. Her background was previously as Director of the Galveston Historical Foundation. Her only curatorial support was a part time position that had become vacant during the summer.

The Rosenberg Library and The Galveston & Texas History Center had not maintained contact with external support systems but had initiated salvage and focused the majority of its resources on protecting the archives and special collections housed on the third floor of the building. An attempt was made to contact the staff and encourage them to call AIC-CERT for assistance if needed. While on site I interviewed the staff, answered their questions about strategies for maintaining safe conditions in the archives, inspected their archives for unnoticed signs of mold, spoke with their engineers and salvage contractors about their progress and plans for the next weeks work, and helped move painting from offices to within the relatively safer confines of the archives.

**AIC-CERT Assessment Team  
Hurricane Ike Deployment Report  
Galveston, Texas  
October 7 – 10, 2008**

**AIC-CERT members:**

Susan Blakney  
Hitoshi Kimura  
Gina Minks

**Recommendations for Future Deployments:**

**General information needed before deployment:**

- State of water supply: When we arrived in Galveston, the “boil all water” dictum had been lifted. If it had not, we would have needed to bring bottled water for not only drinking but for general hygiene issues such as brushing teeth.
- State of food supply: Information about what restaurants (if any) are open and if there is a grocery store open. This is also important for team members that might have special dietary needs.
- Location of hardware store /discount store: Knowing where team members might be able to find local supplies such as drop clothes, additional gloves, brushes, cotton, fans, shelves and racks is important as team assesses what work can happen on site and what needs to be moved to be treated.
- Curfew: Knowledge of any curfew.
- Wet or Dry Salvage: Knowing if any of the places team members are to visit are still under water or have items that need to be salvaged from water. This information will assist team members in preparing for their deployment as they can choose whether or not to bring rubber boots, waders, splash goggles, etc.
- Salvage or Survey: Is the team going to be doing any actual salvage or will they be assisting the various sites with actions that need to be taken. If it is a survey, perhaps a single team member could be deployed, dependant upon collection size and specialty needs.
- Responsibilities: Specific information on the responsibilities of all team members and AIC contacts. Specifically – who can make decisions?
- A central contact at the deployment site. Having a central contact would assist in many of the above items and would allow team members to coordinate their work on a local level and not have to rely on long distance coordination. This would also simplify the role of the AIC Coordinator as they would also have one person to work with to collect information.

**Lodging:**

- If available, team members should be housed in hotels. The ability for team members to return in the evening to a single area where air conditioning/heat, hot water, basic amenities are located is important to keeping team members comfortable. Although the Menard House in Galveston was very nice and provided individual bedrooms and bathrooms for the team members, no hot water was available, no air was moving through the structure, and the neighborhood was questionable. While waiting for the

Galveston Historical Commission to let us into the house, Hitoshi was approached by two men selling drugs (crack specifically) on the street corner across from Menard House. Hopefully a hotel would be more secure and safer for future deployments. In addition, a fan that had been flown in with Hitoshi was misplaced by the airline. When the airline located the fan and contacted us of where to deliver it, we ended up having the fan delivered while we were at a local restaurant because the Menard House could not be found by the airport delivery driver. A hotel would have allowed us to have the driver make the delivery to the front desk instead of negotiating a place to meet.

#### **Transportation:**

- A mini-van was rented for this deployment and we would recommend for future deployments. There was space for our go-packs, our luggage, and salvage supplies. We were able to easily access our supplies during our work and we used the van as an office space for making phone calls, storing waters, snacks, and a place to rest.

#### **Internet:**

- If possible, internet access is very important for team members. In our case, internet was needed to access information on textiles, jewelry, and companies that could assist with the removal and storage of items. We also used the internet to provide information on equipment and supplies that the sites should be ordering.
- Another reason for having internet access if possible is that team members are taking leave from their day jobs and may use the evenings to catch up on email and other work.

#### **Recommendations for Future Supplies sent:**

- A standard set of handouts on basic information such as:
  - Contact info for companies such as BMS Cat, Belfor, & Munters.
  - Information on basic equipment to be used for salvage, etc.
  - Information on recommended HEPA vacuums capable of running all day.
  - Information about the importance of using safety equipment.
    - Team members spent time explaining to volunteers the importance of wearing gloves & masks/respirators
- AIC Directory
  - Will allow team members to find local conservators to assist sites.
- Nitrile gloves were appreciated and used by team members and staff at the deployment sites.
- Dust masks were appreciated and used by team members and staff at the deployment sites.

#### **Useful items for team members:**

- Smart phone
  - The ability to receive email was exceedingly helpful as team members contacted other conservators for information.
  - Ability to pull up websites with specific information on supplies to be purchased was very helpful.
- GPS

- We had maps of Houston and Galveston but it was still difficult to navigate sometimes because street signs had been blown away.
- Camera
  - The ability to take pictures and download them to a computer was very useful.
  - The ability to capture parts of tours or explanations with a video camera was useful for documentation of disaster.
- A Flickr or other online site where team members could mount pictures online for others to consult.
- Soft paint brushes for removal of surface debris
- Cotton swabs
- “Caution” or other tape for creating work areas or securing areas
- Hat
  - Useful when working outside.
- Thermometer and instrument to measure relative humidity (RH).
- Light meter
- Measuring Tape
  - For assessing water depth as well as measurements of rooms, items, etc.

### **Use of Database:**

- Battery life of computer an issue. Important because sites lacked electricity to computer could not be plugged in.
- Regular laptop computer is unwieldy. Difficult to hold laptop and survey collections. Perhaps a tablet computer might be easier to manage.
  - During West Virginia AIC training, our group tried using a tablet computer. It was still unwieldy because of the weight of the machine but worked much better than a laptop.
- If using the database, it would be helpful to have the sections “Site/Institutions” and “Contacts” provided to team members by either AIC coordinator or Deployment Site Contact.
- Easier to work from paper and then enter data in evening.

**Respectfully Submitted,  
Gina Minks  
Team Leader**