

Art Conservation *and the preservation of time*



Time passes without help, but tracking its passage requires effort. Early in the 19th century, some people accomplished this through an unusual paper calendar with moveable parts titled *Perpetual Almanack*.

Now archived in the Winterthur Library, the *Almanack* recently became a project for Winterthur/University of Delaware Program in Art Conservation (WUDPAC) second-year Fellow Kimi Taira, a paper major with a library/archive minor.

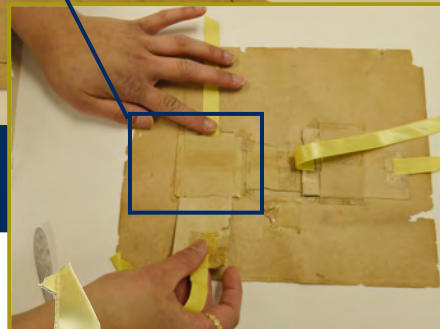
Kimi had asked for a project with moveable parts and was pleased to receive the *Almanack*. It is constructed so that users can note the year, month, date, and day of the week by viewing four moveable paper tabs as they slide back and forth behind windows cut into a fixed facing page, almost 8 x 10 inches in size. Yellow ribbons that serve as handles are attached to the ends of

the paper tabs, and the tabs are held in position by backing paper attached to the facing page. The year and date tabs move horizontally, while the month and day-of-the-week tabs move vertically.

Information on the tabs would allow the *Almanack* to be used between 1809 and 1813. As a result of her analysis, Kimi believes the *Almanack's* current synthetic yellow ribbons and pressure-sensitive tapes are more recent replacements of the original silk ribbons and animal hide glue. The paper was made by Delaware's first paper mill, the Gilpin Mill, and the engravings were done by P.R. Maverick, whose shop was on Liberty Street in New York City. Kimi is less sure about how the *Almanack* was used and is still working to understand the full meaning of some of the engravings, such as the head of an angel on the facing page. She theorizes that because the *Almanack* is an early republic piece engraved with patriotic artwork rather than more traditional astrological symbols such as the sun and the moon, some of

the iconography might have been signaling the young country's transition from its colonial past. Though the *Almanack* came to her in a frame, she also believes that when new, it was more likely to have been displayed on a table than hung on a wall.

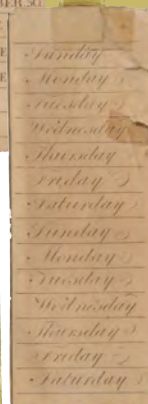
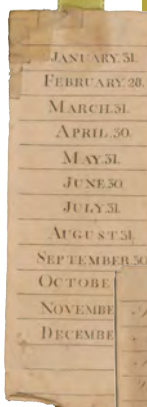
When she completes her analysis, Kimi will prepare a suggested treatment protocol. Because the *Almanack's* primary value lies in its use by researchers, she will consult Senior Librarian Richard McKinstry before making recommendations for possible treatment by a future art conservation student.



ARTC Spotlight—May 2014

The University of Delaware's Art Conservation Department educates and trains professional conservators who are well versed in the treatment, analysis, documentation, and preventive conservation of individual artifacts and entire collections. Our students are powerful public spokespersons for cultural heritage and its preservation. For more news about our students and other department activities visit our web site at www.artcons.udel.edu.

Top and inset: WUDPAC Fellow Kimi Taira carefully removing each of the tabs from the Almanack prior to documentation and rehousing. Left: Kimi measuring each component during examination for the condition report. (Photos: Ronel Namde and Kimi Taira.) Ribbons: Month, day, and year inserts from folio 59 of the



Perpetual Almanack: Dedicated to the citizens of the United States, [1809 to 1811], engraved by P.R. Maverick; the Joseph Downs Collection of Manuscripts and Printed Ephemera at Winterthur Library.