



# QUESTIONS

for Mary Anne Manherz

**CCAHA Director of Administration and Operations / Education:** Associate in Business Administration, Philadelphia School of Office Technologies, Philadelphia, PA / **Years at CCAHA:** 25

## **As Director of Administration and Operations, you work on the business side of conservation. What does your job involve?**

I am a liaison to clients regarding services and billing. I love listening to the stories our clients tell about their artifacts. Their passion for saving their treasures makes what we do worthwhile.

I also maintain the internal tracking system for the treatment projects and monitor monthly productivity. Internally, I maintain the employee benefits, process payroll, and supervise the office staff.

## **You've been at the Center for almost 25 years. How has it changed since you first started working here?**

In terms of the administrative side of the organization, we've evolved from a slow-moving, typewriter- and paper-driven environment to one that is computerized, paperless, and more efficient. When I started working here, it took so much time to type handwritten reports and surveys—and sometimes I would have to totally redo them after the conservator's edits. I quickly became a master with the typewriter correction tape. Not fun!

One thing I have to mention is the Center's expansion—we've grown considerably in the past 25 years. We went from occupying just one condo to doubling the size of the paper section, adding another condo that now holds the book section, expanding the vault, and leasing another unit in the building to house our archives. These were major changes for us.

Another change that comes to mind is staff involvement and ownership. In the earlier days, businesses were run mainly by the

administrative staff, and financial issues and decision making were rarely shared with the employees. I believe this type of management placed a wedge between staff and administration. Today everyone is informed and involved, which is essential to the Center's success.

This feeling of ownership came to me when Glen Ruzicka became Acting Executive Director in 1997 and encouraged me to become more involved in the Center's daily operations. Before that, my job was basically a nine-to-five clerical position that I never thought about after hours. I consider myself lucky and honored to have worked with Glen for 22 years, learning about conservation from the master. But the biggest change for me came when Ingrid Bogel became Executive Director in 1998. Ingrid constantly challenged me by delegating responsibilities, which helped me grow within the organization. She recognized skills I never knew I possessed and became my mentor. For this I am eternally grateful.

## **What's the best thing about working here?**

This can be summed up in two words: the staff. Before working at the Center, I had been a stay-at-home mom for 16 years, which is equal to earning a degree in Sociology. When I decided to go back to work, I first interviewed at several for-profit businesses with highly competitive employees working in cold little cubicles, and I quickly realized that I belonged in the nonprofit world. I must admit that I felt a bit intimidated by the Center staff's knowledge and skills and was afraid I wouldn't fit in. But from the first day I set foot in the Center for my initial interview, which took at least three hours, I met the most amazing, talented, and friendliest group of people that I've encountered upon entering the working world. The Center's

staff members possess extraordinary skills and talent, and they are hard-working, generous, and dedicated. I truly appreciate working with people I admire and who are not only my co-workers but my friends.

The Center is also lucky to have our Board of Directors. I'm grateful for their dedication to the field of conservation and for how they generously donate their time, professional skills, and financial support.

## **Of all the projects that you've seen pass through the lab, which one was your favorite?**

The Bruce Springsteen lyric books and scrapbooks, of course! I'm a huge Springsteen fan, and seeing his actual thoughts, lyrics, and family photos was like an Elvis fan's first time in Graceland—no words can describe it.

## **You're a life-long Philadelphian. What's your favorite thing about the city? How does the Center fit into Philadelphia culture?**

I love the diversity of Philadelphia. We have a little bit of everything: historic sites, amazing museums, theater, different cultures in our neighborhoods, dog-friendly parks, great restaurants, exciting nightlife, devoted sports fans, and, above all, the friendliness of city people. The Center fits into this culture because it protects and conserves everything the city holds dear. And the Center's staff is personally connected to all of these things. We serve the historic sites, libraries, and museums, live in the neighborhoods, eat lunch in the parks and restaurants, and support the sports teams. We're all Philadelphians at heart.

—KATHERINE MAGAZINER