LAUNCHED THIS past May, the much-anticipated first phase of the full-scope Rotunda restoration continues apace, nearing its halfway mark. The work marks the earliest stage of the Rotunda’s most extensive renovation since its rebuilding after the 1895 fire.

This current work focuses on the replacement of the roof and repairs to the Rotunda’s masonry drum, or exterior wall. According to Jody Lahendro, U.Va.’s historic preservation architect and senior project manager for the Rotunda effort, workers began by installing fencing to create a staging area and erecting scaffolding around the building and fitted atop the terrace to protect the main work areas from unauthorized access.

By late July, crews had installed a black, single-ply membrane covering to protect the building from the elements during roof replacement. Workers then began the arduous process of removing bottom sections of the sheet metal roofing and jackhammering and removing the bottom two concrete- and-masonry steps around the base of the Rotunda’s dome. The removal of these steps was necessary to make the required structural repairs.

Once they had demolished the bottom two steps, workers exposed alternating four-foot-wide sections of an 1896 iron tension band that had deteriorated because of the leaking roof. Exposed iron sections had rust and scaling removed before receiving a protective coating. After that, workers encased the band sections with concrete to provide additional structural support.

Workers are currently rebuilding the bottom two masonry steps to re-create the dome form installed as part of the 1976 restoration. At the same time, they’ve installed an upper scaffolding platform to facilitate removal of the dome roofing between the steps and oculus, the central overhead skylight in the Dome Room. Installation of the new copper roofing, which will be painted white as it was in 1976, began in late November.

Lahendro noted that when people speak of the Rotunda roof, they often mean the dome’s underlying form as well as its outer covering. “Replacing the roofing—the protective sheet metal covering—meant that there was the opportunity to change the roof form, but the University decided to keep the shape installed during the 1976 restoration,” he said. “The people who designed that project believed that it more closely resembled the form as it appeared in Jefferson’s time, although neither they nor we have exact documentation of the original construction.”

John G. Waite Associates, Architects, a specialty preservation firm in Albany, N.Y., is providing professional design services for the project. Partnering to construct this major undertaking for the University are Christman Contractors Inc. and Gilbane Building Co. Each firm has extensive experience in preservation projects, including several at U.Va., and they in turn subcontract out components of the project. At any given point, crews of 15 to 20 people are working atop the Rotunda. The current phase is estimated to cost $7.6 million of the total $51.6 million needed and is funded through the Commonwealth of Virginia, private donations and income from the Historic Preservation endowment.

Lahendro said that the first phase of the Rotunda renovation is scheduled for completion in July 2013; however, if weather and hidden conditions cooperate, it is possible that all work can be completed by graduation in May 2013.

Found Objects Trace History of Repairs

IN THE PROCESS OF REPLACING the Rotunda’s deteriorating steel roof, workers uncovered artifacts from past renovations. The debris reflects its history: soda bottles and beer cans from the 1970s renovation intermixed with shards of purple glass and mortar. The shards are from skylights installed as part of the rebuilding of the Rotunda after the 1895 fire.

Now only fragments remain, because workers destroyed them during the 1976 installation of the steel roof. These artifacts demonstrate revisions to the Rotunda’s design through time and illustrate our continual mission to preserve and steward this iconic building.

Workers pause as they ascend the scaffolding beside the Rotunda.
Meet Mary Hughes: U.Va.’s Award-Winning Landscape Architect

As the only United States university designated a World Heritage Site by the United Nations, U.Va. employs a full-time team of talented professionals in the Office of the Architect and in Facilities Management specifically devoted to preserving and advancing the architectural legacy of Thomas Jefferson.

Mary Hughes (Arch ’87), the University’s senior landscape architect, has been a key member of the U.Va. team since 1996. Among her many accomplishments, she was recognized by the American Society of Landscape Architects this past October with one of the most prestigious awards in her field, the LaGasse Medal. “This is an important and much-deserved recognition for Mary,” said Architect for the University David Neuman. “It signifies the high level of care and innovative thinking with which our office approaches and stewards U.Va.’s historical and cultural resources.”

Hughes, together with University colleagues and hired consultants, has tackled numerous projects to conserve and modernize the Grounds—and to understand and communicate more of its history. These projects range from a stormwater management plan at the Dell to an adult education summer institute co-sponsored with Monticello to a team-taught course, Historical Preservation at U.Va. In addition, Hughes helped cast a unified design standard and vision for the Grounds. “For example, we implemented a policy to conduct archaeological study whenever a ground-disturbing project—even utility work—occurs,” she said. “This has yielded tremendous information not found in the written record.”

Additionally, in 1997 the office began surveying the cultural history of the University’s lands. Heritage Landscapes LLC will soon synthesize that information in a comprehensive Cultural Landscape Report, which will document the evolution of the Academical Village landscape and inform future decisions, Hughes said. “Looking ahead, a priority for Hughes is raising funds for an endowment to support the historic pavilion gardens. “The gardens are open to the public and used for special events and spontaneous classes,” she said. “However, they require consistent daily care. Ideally, we would have a full-time gardens curator, a horticultural specialist, to oversee their maintenance.”

Thanks to Hughes’ capable hands, the revered historic Grounds have a bright future ahead.

Garrett Hall Renovation Twice Lauded

In August the Virginia Society of the American Institute of Architects announced that U.Va. would receive an Award of Merit in the historic preservation category for the Garrett Hall project. Then, on Sept. 24, Preservation Virginia, a private nonprofit organization and statewide historic preservation leader, honored U.Va. with an Outstanding Preservation Project Award for the renovation.

Kathleen Frazier, AIA, a member of the design team for the renovation, said, “The Garrett Hall project was hailed for its exemplary use of preservation standards in restoring the building’s architectural integrity. From a design standpoint, the project was unique in its dual commitment to historic preservation and to green building, resulting in a successful melding of restored historic spaces and sustainable new construction to meet program requirements.”

The 18-month renovation entailed preserving the historic great hall as a multipurpose work and gathering space, restoring the original two-story lobby and providing more administrative and faculty offices, student work rooms and offices. The project also addressed structural issues in the main building and included replacing HVAC and electrical and plumbing systems and implementing fire code and ADA compliance requirements. Finally, the project entailed exterior repairs, restoration of the original main dining room and two-story entry, reconfiguration of other interior spaces to accommodate the new program and a new elevator, and refurbishment of the below grade annex’s interior.

Designed by McKim, Mead & White and completed in 1908, the historic three-story building served as U.Va.’s first large dining hall. It remained in use as such until the completion of Newcomb Hall in 1958, at which time the University converted Garrett Hall to office use.

Preservation Virginia is dedicated to perpetuating and revitalizing Virginia’s cultural, architectural and historic heritage, thereby ensuring that historic places remain integral parts of the lives of present and future generations.
Initiatives from Students, Alumni and Community Members Come Together to Support the Rotunda Challenge

Stand2Gether

This past July an enterprising group of students approached the Alumni Association and the Office of Engagement with a bold idea to come together after a rocky month to support the Rotunda renovation. Alumni and friends of the University can show their support for the University through Stand2Gether by making an online gift in multiples of $2, such as $22 or $222, or any amount they choose above a $5 minimum. Why the $2 figure? Because Thomas Jefferson’s face appears on the $2 bill. Visit www.alumni.virginia.edu/give-volunteer/stand2gether to learn more about Stand2Gether and show your support.

Renovation Auction

The Restoration Auction offers historical items and exceptional experiences donated by generous alumni and community members. This online auction continues throughout the year, with all proceeds benefiting the Rotunda restoration. Items recently won include a sheepskin diploma from the Class of 1852, an original 1895 edition of Corks and Carols, dinner with President Teresa Sullivan and an afternoon of golfing with Dean Allen Groves. The student organizers (see page 4) hope to find a sponsor and obtain new items so they can continue their work throughout the multiyear restoration effort. Find more information at www.restoreuva.com.

1819 Collection

Thomas Jefferson deemed wine a necessity of life. An alumna who owns boutique wineries around the world initiated the 1819 Collection for “neophiles,” or lovers of wine. The collection will release the series of 12 wines over the next seven years, culminating in 2019 with the celebration of the University’s 200th anniversary. A brochure that includes historical insights by Richard Gay Wilson, from the department of architectural history, accompanies each bottle. Order your own collection and learn more at www.1819wine.com.

Keep the Fires Burning

Using the historic, working fireplaces in the Lawn and Range rooms of the Academical Village is a special tradition at U.Va. Due to safety concerns, the University had to ban use of these fireplaces temporarily while it repaired 106 fireplaces and installed a fire-suppression system. Keep the Fires Burning, initiated by a $1 million match from the Alumni Association in conjunction with the Office of Student Affairs, is very near its goal, but a shortfall of $245,000 remains. You can make a donation at www.keepthefiresburning.org.

Cultural Responsibility

In a recent alumni meeting in Charlottesville, VA 22904.

2012–13 Report
Houston Alumna Fuels Rotunda Restoration

For most of her adult life, Phoebe Tudor (Col ’83) has lived more than a thousand miles from Charlottesville, in Houston. Yet distance has not prevented U.Va.’s historic Grounds—especially the Rotunda—from remaining vividly etched in her mind and heart.

When Tudor, an art history major, recently learned that the University’s “temple of knowledge” was in desperate need of repair, she and her husband, Bobby Tudor, were the first to step forward with a generous $250,000 commitment to the U200 campaign. U200 is a $25 million endeavor to enlist 200 donors to give at least $100,000 each to the Rotunda restoration by March 2013—enabling the University to leverage a match from the Commonwealth. (See The University Two Hundred, page 3.)

“No other college or university has a building as iconic as we do at U.Va,” Tudor said. “The Rotunda has tremendous significance for the school, yet—like any old building—requires a lot of TLC to remain intact and functioning.”

She would know. Tudor holds a master’s degree in historic preservation from Columbia University’s school of architecture and has spent her lifetime cultivating her passions for history and architecture. She is a leading force in Houston’s preservation, including chairing both the Houston Archeological and Historical Commission and the Julia Ideson Library Preservation Partners. Her appreciation for the past—and historic places—was sparked during childhood, inspired by cross-country trips with her parents.

“History—especially historic captured in art and architecture—is a critical part of the educational process,” Tudor said. “Cultivating an understanding of the places we live or work helps us become more grounded in our communities.”

As Tudor noted, the Rotunda is more than an old building plagued by a leaky roof, crumbling column capitals and the need for a new oculus, drum and guttering system. It’s the main surviving link—together with the entire Academical Village—to all generations of the U.Va. family. “I know many alumni were like me—blown away by the architecture on the Lawn during their first U.Va. visit,” Tudor said. “It’s an amazing feeling to stand where others once stood, to walk the very same footprints and imagine what life was like for them.”

When more people learn of the Rotunda’s 21st-century needs—and of support like hers—Tudor hopes they will share her vision of preserving and enhancing U.Va.’s most enduring symbol.

Whit Hunter: A Budding Entrepreneur in Action

In January of his third year, Whit Hunter (Col ’13) participated in a time-honored tradition among University of Virginia undergraduates: he applied to live on the Lawn his fourth year. In March, he learned that he had been selected and convened with other soon-to-be Lawn residents at the Homer statue in front of Old Cabell Hall to learn their room assignments.

The Office of the Dean of Students, which oversees the Lawn program, uses a lottery to determine room assignments. As Hunter explained, he and the other students were each dealt a card from a deck.

“You room is based on where your card is in the order, with spades first, then diamonds, hearts and clubs,” he said. “I got a good one: the queen of spades.”

Residing now in 47 West Lawn, Hunter describes his room: “My golf clubs are in the corner, and I have a bookshelf, a loft and a tarpon, which my great-granduncle caught, mounted on the wall.”

During his time at U.Va., Hunter has developed what many students past and present feel: an abiding affection for the historic buildings and spaces that surround them daily. In spring 2012, Hunter put his affection into action by chairing the Jefferson Literary and Debating Society’s committee that organized the 49th annual Restoration Ball, an event that raises money each year for the Rotunda’s care and maintenance.

Hunter’s sense of connection with the University’s historic structures and spaces has taken an even more ambitious form. As an Echols Scholar studying business through the College of Arts & Sciences, he has an interest in entrepreneurship, with a special twist: he wants to create for-profit businesses whose models include a strong public-interest component.

“I’d like to build a successful business that aims to do good for the world beyond simple philanthropy. How can you innovate for the common good?” he said. As Hunter mulled over that question during his third year, he learned that a friend of a friend had University-related antiques for sale. He spotted an opportunity to test out the concept of building a business with a public-good slant, and it stood mere feet from his Lawn room.

Why not create an online auction so people could bid on U.Va. memorabilia, with the proceeds going to benefit the Rotunda renovation? He talked with friends, and they soon fleshed out a plan of action. In 2011, they launched the online auction, expanded the offerings and refined the website’s functionality. And by fall of 2012 had unveiled a newer version, www.restoreUYa.com.

Hunter describes the venture as an “online platform for engaging the University community. People can bid on experiences as well as items. We’re looking to create even more excitement and engagement with the U.Va. community and beyond.”

The first auction, which raised $13,000, included dinner for 12 with President Teresa Sullivan, a golf outing for three with Dean of Students Allen Groves, a chance to tour the Rotunda roof (“legally,” as the site notes) and a set of rare first-edition Wedgewood plates featuring paintings of the Rotunda, assorted pavilions and the serpentine wall.

When Hunter graduates in May 2013, he will go where the best opportunity presents itself for the Lodging.

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When Hunter graduates in May 2013, he will go where the best opportunity presents itself for pursuing his entrepreneurial instincts. But no matter where he may be

advocating for others to join in support of U.Va.’s care and preservation of its historic buildings and spaces.

“The Jeffersonian Grounds is so entwined with our identity as members of the U.Va. community. If the buildings are in peril, that reflects on us. We have a responsibility to care for and restore them.”