

MINUTES

DOCENT COUNCIL BOARD MEETING FEBRUARY 10, 2021

The meeting was held on-line by Zoom. *[Note re context: during this time 2020-21, there have been no Docent tours, or in-person meetings, due to the Covid-19 pandemic.]*

Present: Patty Santiago; Karen Howsam; Christine Holland; Jeff Vitucci; Shirley Waxman; Sara Bangser; Teda Pilcher; Paul Guido; Pattie Firestone; Sarajum Quazi, Irene Stone, Vikki Duncan and Gail Stichler.

Museum Education Department: Patsy Hicks and Rachel Heidenry.

President Santiago called the meeting to order at 9:35 a.m.

On Motion, the Minutes of the meeting of January 13, 2021 were approved.

BOARD REPORTS

PRESIDENT – PATTY SANTIAGO

Patty plans to attend by Zoom a National Docent Symposium meeting, to discuss ideas for topics for the next Symposium general meeting in 2022. She seeks ideas from Docents for topics to suggest.

Patty was pleased with the increased attendance at the last Docent meeting, with 63 Docent participants.

Patty and Ralph Wilson met with New Actives and will work with them in the galleries in the spring, to prepare for summer (or later) touring. The goal is to discuss newly-displayed art and how to integrate it with their previously-prepared tours.

Docents will have a dedicated Zoom account set up soon, and we thank the Education Department.

VICE PRESIDENT – KAREN HOWSAM

The tour of Crystal Bridges Museum on Zoom was a well-appreciated success. Karen is planning similar tours for two more museums.

SECRETARY – CHRISTINE HOLLAND

There is no report.

TREASURER – JEFF VITUCCI

As of the end of December, the savings account balance is \$10,323 and the checking account balance is \$6,644. Dues were received from another Sustainer Docent.

Jeff added \$600 to the budget item for “miscellaneous”, as approved at the last Board meeting. He will send a check for a \$200 honorarium for the Crystal Bridges tour.

Patty Santiago commented that because our expenses have been extremely decreased this year, we may wish to discuss making Docent dues optional for next year.

MEMBERSHIP – PATTIE FIRESTONE

There are 70 active Docents, 2 of which are on Leave of Absence. There are 44 Sustainers. There were 1538 Docent Research hours reported recently, with only 16 docents providing reports.

ADULT TEAMS – VIKKI DUNCAN AND SARA BANGSER

There was a discussion regarding what types of tours we may wish to offer in the future, and when and how to send out Preference Sheets, given the continuing uncertainty about opening dates and exhibition dates.

Patsy Hicks noted that some of the teams and divisions of the past may no longer apply due to radically changed and expanded galleries and the richness of the exhibits in Ludington Court. Re timing, she noted that there are ongoing problems with regulating the new HVAC system which are causing delays in starting the installations of galleries, and in setting a firm opening date. There are also changing Covid guidelines and restrictions to consider. She questions if it might be prudent to push back our plans to envision a start time for next fall.

Also to be considered are questions re Docents' different levels of comfort with in-person touring. And there will be issues with the comfort level of visitors.

It is noted that we will be experiencing a completely new layout and newly-displayed works of art, and in effect Docents will all be starting from scratch in envisioning what their tours will include and the possible themes for tours.

Patsy suggests setting up smaller groups, some time in the future, to discuss these various touring issues. Also, we can invite discussion at a Docent meeting. Also helpful at some time would be a video walk-through of the new galleries to suggest how Docents could prepare their tours.

STUDENT TEAMS – TEDA PILCHER AND IRENE STONE

If schools re-open for in-person learning it is still unlikely that we can return to hosting student tours, given issues with students gathering for bus rides and for tours.

PROVISIONAL CHAIR – PAUL GUIDO

The plans for recruitment are in flux, as plans change about Museum re-opening and the easing of Covid restrictions. There will be discussions in the future about possible changed rules for time commitments for training, and for Active Docent status. There is a recruitment brochure that should be updated but we don't yet have firm information for the brochure.

RESEARCH – SARAJUM QUAZI

Sarajum is sending e mails to some Docents to follow-up on research papers. There are no new papers being reviewed at this time.

EVALUATIONS – SHIRLEY WAXMAN

There is nothing to report at this time. However, it is noted that when Docents do start touring, that everyone will be set up for a new Evaluation schedule.

WEBMASTER – GAIL STICHLER

There is no new information to report.

SPECIAL PROJECTS – RACHEL HEIDENRY

Rachel has received audio recordings for more of the *Guide By Cell* tours. There will be a new dedicated webpage for these tours.

She received another completed *Travels With a Docent*.

The *Community Pen Pals* project is asked to continue through the summer.

For the *Storytelling* project there will be a new dedicated webpage. Teda noted that the group began with a robust team which has now diminished. She suggests re-inviting participants and notes the value in doing an audio format, and in the increased structure and resources for the project.

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION – PATSY HICKS AND RACHEL HEIDENRY

Patsy highlighted the many projects that the Education Department is working on. There will be a Conversation with the author Jane Smiley. There is an installation in the Museum bookstore re the Community Programs. They finished judging the Art Scholarships program and made 27 awards. They are working with the Santa Maria School District re programming. There will be an interview with artist Hung Liu re a program she is doing with high school students and she hopes the artist will do a talk for the Museum in the fall.

In the next week or two, Rachel will send Docents the checklists re several new galleries.

There was a positive discussion re the idea of re-starting the Docent Book Club.

There was discussion about what Docents are enjoying by way of video and audio programs. Rachel offered to start gathering a list from Docents of their suggestions for recommended things to watch and listen to.

ADJOURNMENT

Patty adjourned the meeting at 10:35 a.m.

The Docent Council Board meetings are scheduled for the second Wednesday of the month.

Respectfully Submitted,

Christine Holland

Board Secretary