

Minutes of the
Docent Council Board Meeting
Santa Barbara Museum of Art
Date May 11, 2016

Present: Joan Dewhirst, Gail Stichler, Vikki Duncan, Christine Holland, Teda Pilcher, Karen Brill, Ralph Wilson, Mary Ellen Hoffman, Paul Guido, Loree Gold, Patsy Hicks, Rachael Krieps

Absent: Denise Klassen, Michi Ho, Barbara Boyd

Call To Order: Joan called the meeting to order at 9:37 a.m.

Minutes of the Meeting April 13, 2016 were approved.

Board Reports

President, Joan Dewhirst

Joan shared her perspective on the year: "We have had a very good year together," with Board members "taking responsibilities seriously and thoroughly, and always with humor and camaraderie." Joan thanked the Board for guidance and support, saying that she has thoroughly enjoyed serving as President.

Next, Joan shared an email message from SBMA Trustee and 75th Anniversary event hostess Judy Little who remarked: "I have so many wonderful Thank You notes in my mail from happy docents! I think the evening achieved what we had hoped! A fun social evening with docents and board members intermingling. The notes make me so happy!" One docent told Joan what a good time he had had and said that Judy Little doesn't give "little" parties.

Joan revealed that Denise Klassen is responsible for the great looking re-upholstery of the chairs in the Docent Office, adding that Denise did a fantastic job.

Joan and Gail have heard from docents who have expressed concern over not having a Provisional Class next year, and further suggesting a fallout of Active Docents. In reply, Joan has suggested that new docents are not the answer, rather, that the underlying problem is deeper: unpredictability with many parts of the renovation process and the need for additional funding for later phases. She also repeated her message from the Council Meeting, saying that "this year has been challenging for the Trainers and the Provisionals with so little art on the walls and so much of the permanent collection put into protective storage due to the renovation." Further, "that new class of aspiring docents deserves much more than we can provide at this time." Joan asked Patsy Hicks to discuss the issue with the Board.

[See President's Report, attached.]

Education Department: Patsy Hicks and Rachael Krieps

Patsy noted that concern for attrition is not new. The Ridley Tree renovation took two years, and we were without a Provisional Class several years ago. Karen mentioned similar concerns in the past, and that we can make adjustments. Patsy referred to the current concerns as a sort of call to arms, identifying this as a time when we can recognize contributions, listen--making sure that docents know that the Board and Education Department are taking their concerns seriously, respect individual decisions, and take the approach that while we will have to be different, we can be better.

In recognition of docents, Larry Feinberg approved reserving a copy of the 75th Anniversary Catalogue to be given to each docent. The Education Department is offering more and different things (e.g., such as docent time with curators to emphasize pieces which will be on view, and time with living artists). We can look at how training will go forward, and we will have high-quality exhibitions. We might take as an example the plans of the new Curator of Photography Charles Wylie, who is in a time of change: he is working on a block-buster exhibition which will be three years in the making.

Christine added an insight from a national volunteer convention about why we should hold on during a little bit of chaos: the motivation of the camaraderie and a framework in which to act and in which the spirit is positive.

Gail noted these strengths as seen on the NYC trip, adding that Ralph [2017 Vice President] already is planning things. Ralph ventured that were our Council half its size, the same enthusiasm would be present in that group. There was agreement that the social activities are continuing and strong. Loree added that it is important that we keep building ourselves, that we are every bit as much a structural support as a beam. Patsy identified docents as the Education Department's support group-- most active and involved, and throughout its demographic shifts, unselfish in its dedication. The Board and the Education Department see this time as valuable in shaping how we will go about changing and growing to be successful.

In new business, Patsy announced: the appointment of a new Director of Development [Gina Benesh], who will begin in July; Community Celebration cards [announcing events on May 15th vwd] will be available this week; and the FRC wall cards and selections will be complete before the Docent Graduation, and will be wonderful for summer touring in connection with Puja and Piety. Yoga classes will be held in Ludington on June 11, July 9, and August 13 from 10-11 a.m., with additional classes if the initial classes are successful.

Vice President, Gail Stichler

Gail reported on the recent docent trip:

Our NYC trip was a great success. The Wellington Hotel in midtown Manhattan was the perfect place to move throughout the city. We met at 9:30 every morning in the lobby to discuss the day's activities. We then left by taxi, subway or by foot to the museum of the day. The trip was designed to have a structured itinerary each day along with free time to explore the city on our own. Our itinerary included the Metropolitan, MoMA, the Whitney, the Frick and the Asia Society and group meals. Loree Gold added visits to The Judd Foundation Spring Street House and to Peter Halley's art studio. Docents went to Broadway Plays, a concert with Woody Allen at the Carlyle, the NYC Ballet, the 9/11 Memorial, The Guggenheim, the Neue Gallery, the National Academy Museum, the Tenement Museum, NY Public Library and much more. We had much time together to reinforce and strengthen our friendships while our days were filled with amazing art. The response to the trip has been enthusiastic. I think everyone on the trip feels much gratitude for being able to be a part of this adventure.

Gail has received the announcement of the 2017 National Docent Symposium in Montreal and the call for proposals. Gail brought up for consideration carrying forward unused Symposium funds so that a Docent Council President who was unable to attend [either in the year leading into office or while in office--the Symposium is biennial - v.w.d.] might still attend with the designated support. While there was initial discussion, no motions were made or decisions reached.

Noting the possibility of proposals for Symposium Beakout Sessions, Paul suggested from a conversation with Kathryn Padgett that we might submit another proposal on our evaluation process. Our evaluation structure is so far outside the practice of other museums that the idea of Team Leaders (muchless their roles in evaluations) was unfamiliar. Another possibility might be how to survive during a renovation process.

Ellen Lawson has donated to the Docent Council the copy of the Ray Strong book which was purchased to honor Ellen for 40 years of service. Ellen also received a copy as a contributor to the book, and chose to share the service award copy with the Council.

As decided at the April Board Meeting, there will be a subcommittee meeting (members: Gail Stichler, Denise Klassen, Ralph Wilson, Michi Ho, and Karen Brill) to discuss the possible creation of Emeritus status.

In connection with Service Awards, Gail asked that the Board consider another concept which would recognize the number of years since graduation. Docents might stand with their classmates even if individual docents in the group were not receiving pins due to differences in their Active service accruals. The Board allowed that standing with one's class would be acceptable, with service pins to be awarded upon achievement of recognized service intervals.

[See Vice President's Report, attached.]

Secretary, Vikki Duncan

Key correspondence this month was a thank-you to SBMA Trustee Judy Little for hosting the April 20th event in her home for Trustees and docents to celebrate the 75th Anniversary of the Museum and in recognition of docents' service.

Encouragement cards were mailed to Ellen Lawson, Susan Northrop, and Queenie Schuerwater. Corresponding Secretary Nicola Gherson has sent a thank-you to artist and Council Meeting speaker Hank Pitcher. Loree added that Nicola also is sending thank-you notes to Peter Halley and the Judd Foundation for the studio visits on the New York trip.

Former docent and Sustainer Bonnie Bisoglio has made a memorial donation to the Docent Council in honor of Jean Reese and Judy Loughrin. The contribution is specified from the Council's discretionary use.

[See Secretary's Report, attached]

Treasurer, Denise Klassen [Joan presented the Treasurer's Report.]

The checking account beginning balance was \$5,730.01 on March 31st, and the ending balance was \$7,147.75 on April 29th, 2016. Deposits totaled \$1,147.00 for the Long Beach Bus Trip and for contracted lunches on the NYC trip. Interest earned was \$0.74. The savings beginning balance was \$10,785.37 on March 24th, and the ending balance was \$10,786.74 on April 22nd, 2016 after interest of \$1.37

[See Treasurer's Report, attached]

Membership, Michi Ho

Michi Ho was in Taiwan. Although no formal report was submitted for the meeting, Joan said that Michi had been working hard on getting the presenters of Service Awards lined up.

Adult Teams: Christine Holland and Teda Pilcher

Overall visitor numbers improved In April with 600 visitors on 55 tours compared to 270 visitors on 48 tours in March. Puja and Piety opened well with 17 people waiting in the lobby on the first day. Three docents dropped off teams due to illness leaving weekday Highlights with only 3 and European with only 2 members. People stepped up from outside Highlights and did so quickly. It's wonderful to see the good attitudes and a good sense of community. The Community Speakers Program is a huge success with our docents reaching so many community members: six presentations in April to a total of 145 attendees.

June's touring calendar is finished.

Christine will be meeting with Rachael next week about possible teams and Preference Sheets, which will not be available at the last Council Meeting.

[See Adult Team Chair Report, attached.]

Student Teams: Karen Brill

The Student Touring Workshop on Puja and Piety (Monday, April 18th) was very well attended. More docents attended than the 20 who had replied. Laura DePaoli, Sneh Singh, Pma Tregenza, and Jean Smith all gave excellent presentations in time for student tours the next day. In April, 10 student tours were conducted, touring a total of 303 students. One Tuesday team had a tour of 45 5th graders and a tour of 45 2nd graders the day Puja and Piety opened, and was able to get additional docents. May 24th will be another large tour day with 90 high school students touring in two groups.

Karen thanked Patsy Hicks, Rachael Krieps, and Kelly Almeida, saying that she is so grateful for the way they stepped up and created other touring plans including hiring teaching artists for hands-on activities this year.

[See Student Teams Report, attached.]

Provisional Chairs: Ralph Wilson and Mary Ellen Hoffman

The Chairs are preparing to graduate four Provisionals, who will be great additions to the Council. Those who departed earlier gave various reasons for leaving, but almost all related to the expectations of docent preparation, research and evaluation. Mary Ellen and Ralph agree that this is not the time to have a Provisional class. At some point Luria will not exist, there are not big rooms and much will be in storage. For those without backgrounds in art, there already is some anxiety, and everyone wants some predictability of structure.

Research: Barbara Boyd

Barbara was absent due to illness. No report was filed.

Evaluations: Paul Guido

Four evaluations already conducted are not in. The new form makes it easy to complete evaluations. Paul asks that they be turned in right away. When they are not turned in promptly, they put a burden on both the evaluator and the docent being evaluated. Paul will be tutoring a docent in Student Touring this summer.

Webmaster: Loree Gold

Student and Adult Touring Calendars are posted on the website. Karen expressed appreciation for all that is on the website. Loree noted that we also need to add obituary information: Miriam Schapiro and Charles Garabedian died this year. Loree also asked that docents adding information under Comments cite the sources and own their work, identifying themselves as contributors. Without this, the information appears as from Docent.

Nominations: Molora Vadnais

Molora was unable to attend. No formal report was submitted.

OLD BUSINESS:

The Community Celebration (May 15th) had an NPR publicity spot.
Atelier tickets (May 14th) are still available.

Double Board Meeting Wednesday, June 8th, at 9:30 a.m.

We will meet in the LAC and enjoy breakfast goodies and coffee from the Museum Café. All INCOMING and OUTGOING OFFICERS will attend with the latter bringing their month of May as well as End-of Year reports.

NEW BUSINESS: None

ADJOURNMENT: Joan adjourned the meeting at 11:36 a.m..

Note: Monthly Board Reports are filed behind the Minutes in the Docent Council Board Meeting Minutes Binder located in the Docent Office.

Respectfully submitted,

Vikki Duncan, Secretary