

SANTA BARBARA MUSEUM OF ART

Docent Council Board Meeting Minutes

November 4, 2024

Family Resource Center 9:30 a.m.

Board Members Present: Pattie Firestone, President; Cindy Anderson, Vice-President; Ursula Ginder, Secretary; Mary Benedict, Treasurer; Merle Guadagnini, Membership; Susan Lowe, Adult Teams Co-Chair; Elizabeth Russell, Adult-Teams Co-Chair; Anne-Marie Dunaway, Student-Team Co-Chair; Barbara Ross, Research Chair; Christine Holland, Evaluations Co-Chair; Loree Gold, Webmaster; Patty Santiago, Provisional Chair.

In Attendance: Department of Education - Patsy Hicks

Not In Attendance: Teda Pilcher, Nicola Ghersen

1. **Call to Order:** President Pattie Firestone called the meeting to order at 9:40am.

2. **Approval of Minutes:**

Action item: A motion to approve the Board Minutes of the October 14th meeting was made by Pattie, seconded by Mary. The Minutes were unanimously approved.

3. **Board Reports:**

President's Report – Pattie Firestone

The President opened the meeting by addressing several issues to be discussed by the assembled members of the board. The issues raised concerned a) Sustaining docents as well as those that left the program before completing their training and shortly thereafter, and b) personal solicitations by one of the docents through the docent distribution list.

The Board decided that individual solicitations are personal matters that should not be tagged onto general correspondence involving the whole body of docents. With regard to La Muse, the Board confirmed that both active and sustaining docents are the recipients of this monthly docent-generated publication. Regarding Book-Club participation, the Board narrowed membership to active and sustaining docents for now. However, this is a subject that could be discussed again at a later time.

A school Art Contest at Foothill Elementary was mentioned. It appeared that several docents had already signed up to be judges at the contest and that local artists are partaking as well.

Vice-President's Report - Cindy Anderson

The Vice-President reported that the trip to the Huntington Museum was successful. There were 38 participants.

Cindy generously offered her home for the Docent Holiday party scheduled for December 7th. Details will come forth as we get closer to the event.

Referencing her inspirational "Tips and Quips", Cindy pointed out that the new Ridley Tree exhibition will pose new challenges with the abundance of artworks that have not been seen for a while. We will follow a thematic approach rather than a chronological art historical one. Cindy will present ideas at the next Docent Council meeting.

Department of Education - Patsy Hicks

There is a checklist out for the upcoming exhibitions. James will provide a new approach with various juxtapositions of divergent art pieces in the installation of the objects. Charlie is in the process of writing labels keeping in mind that these works of art will be shown for a long time.

Accretion viewer participation is high. We were able to provide tours to Santa Barbara New-Comers and Spanish-speaking participants. Pattie and Carlos witnessed emotional engagements with some of the works on display once viewers could freely express their response to the art in their own language.

We will have Alex Espinoza, author of "The Sons of El Rey" at the Museum on November 17th. James will bring in Narsiso Martinez, possibly mid-December.

Secretary's Report – Ursula Ginder

Ursula reported that the Docent Council sent a flower bouquet and sympathy card to Cindy Anderson.

Provisional Chair – Pattie Santiago

The provisional class is currently learning about the Elements of Art and Principles of Design. They have each selected an artwork for their three-minute talks and are working on their presentations. They will be evaluated on their 3-minute presentations on November 20th. Mentors will be assigned this week. Unfortunately, there have been several resignations; two with back issues, one the drive time (Thousand Oaks) and another who felt the workload was too much for her right now. The class size is now ten.

Treasurer's Report – Mary Benedict.

This report covers the period Oct. 1-31, 2024 for our checking and savings accounts. The Savings account balance as of October 31, 2024 is \$10,423.03. The Checking account balance is \$11,065.36. Deposits amounted to \$2,725.77 total; expenses were \$16.51.

Membership Report – Merle Guadagnini

Merle reported that the new Google format is now successfully running and up to almost 100% responses.

Adult Teams Report– Susan Lowe and Elizabeth Russell

- Susan and Elizabeth are working on the Winter Schedule and will send dates to team leaders this week.
- Changes to team members:
 - Mary Benedict is no longer on the Nature and Spirituality team
 - Linda Gorin was added to the Winter Modern/Contemporary team
- Red Book:
 - The touring numbers are incomplete at this time, because we are waiting for the numbers from one special request tour. Docent has been messaged a few times with a reminder to submit their visitor numbers. A final report will be sent once the numbers are submitted.
 - We will submit a reminder about the importance of the Red Book to La Muse next month.

- LoG had an impressive number of special request tours this month. Cheers to this amazing team!

Statistics about tour attendance during the month of October show that 34 tours (a combination of Highlight, Modern-Contemporary, Nature and Spirituality and CPS tours) were attended by an audience of 279. Special Request tours numbered 16 with an attendance of 180+.

Student Teams Report– Nicola Ghersen and Anne-Marie Dunaway

The Student Team reported an impressive number of students being toured and of Museum trips and unique programs for students scheduled.

5 Unique programs for school groups to engage with
39 Schools have enrolled in at least one session
48 Docents touring students
129 Field trips scheduled through May
544 Students visited in October
379 Students visiting in November in only two weeks of touring. Every field trip opening on the calendar in November is full.

These numbers show how important it is to have intact and solid student touring teams to take on all these tours. To that end a lot of effort is being invested in promoting tools that help support new active student-tour docents to get comfortable with the evaluation process and the subsequent touring of students.

It was suggested to have the student team leaders gather their team on a day they have no touring obligations and to go up into the galleries and share information and discuss how they would approach

an art piece with a group of students. Some other proposals, such as listing student touring tips on our website or encouraging docents to create individual self-education plans prior to their evaluation were put forward. Discussions about Student Touring concluded with the suggestion that the best scenario for getting comfortable with these tours is “to shadow” as many docent-led tours as possible, and to use the website guidelines for grade level objectives.

Research – Barbara Ross

There is a huge list of research needed; six on the list are abstract pieces. Mary volunteered to write the research for Ganesha.

Evaluations – Christine Holland and Laura DePaoli

Scheduling for all evaluations is progressing. The evaluations for the Legacy of Giving team are completed. We hosted a discussion about the Evaluations process for evaluators and those who wanted more information. The meeting was well attended with many thoughtful questions. We discussed standards, and tips for conversations about the tour. We discussed focusing on the evaluations form as a means to understand what makes a successful tour and to ensure consistent standards for evaluations. We also discussed ways to improve communication during evaluations.

We thank all who attended and for your insights and thoughtful questions. We look forward to many interesting and helpful mentoring conversations in the next months.

Looking to the future, Laura DePaoli is scheduling evaluations of student tours, which will be occurring in the next month or two. Adult tours for Contemporary and other teams will be doing evaluations on schedule.

Webmaster Report – Loree Gold

It was a slow month on the website. From last month’s sign in problem, this month it was a sign out problem. Gail S noticed that signing in to the website her computer no longer was asking for a password and she was unable to sign out. I shared with her I was experiencing the same thing. I believe our computers, with the help of AI, are helping keep us connected.

I have been successfully loading the front-page information, touring calendars, La Muse, and changing exhibition status. Working on converting board meeting minutes from Word Docx. to PDF for uploading and also changing names on student and adult teams as needed.

I will be working this week on upcoming exhibitions. We have the new checklist for the Ridley-Tree gallery and after waiting an hour for it to upload it stopped connecting and disappeared. Although frustrating I will keep trying.

I look forward to conversing with other museums at the docent symposium and will be asking a lot of questions on if and how they maintain a docent website. We are in need of a web tech and a budget to support it.

4. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn 11:10 by Pattie Firestone, seconded by Cindy Anderson and Loree Gold. The next Board Meeting will be held on Monday, December 2, 2024, at 9:30 am.

Respectfully submitted,

Ursula Ginder
Secretary, SBMA Docent Council (2024-2025)