

Docent Dates

Council meetings start at 10 am, coffee at 9:15.

January 17

Council meeting

February 7

Council meeting

February 21

Council meeting

March 7

Council meeting

March 21

Council meeting

April 4

Council meeting

No Meeting April 18

Cancel for Bus Trip

May 2

Council meeting

May 16

Council meeting

June 6

Only if needed for summer exhibition

SAVE THE DATE:

April 22-27, NYC Trip



Self Portrait, Posed in a Balloon Basket, Nadar, 1862, Albumen print carte-de-visite. SBMA From Crosscurrents: American and European Portrait Photographs, 1840–1900

Opens January 28
INTERNAL USE ONLY

My colleagues and friends,
We thought fulfilling our mission while half of the museum was closed for renovation was going to be a disaster! Yet we gathered our strengths, tightened our determination, and produced as usual to our high standards and the satisfaction of all.

Once more we have been presented with an even

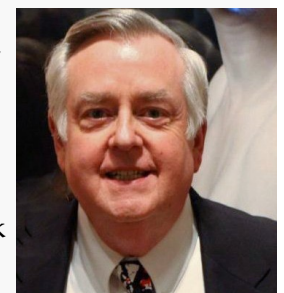
greater disaster. We feared a half-closed museum but survived spectacularly. Now we have been faced with a half-closed city, and we have similarly bounced back with enthusiasm and joy.

I have been moved and gratified by the responses to my request for information about Docents affected by the Thomas Fire. The first reply came from Tracey Miller, who offered her whole family to help if needed. There followed others expressing support and assistance. I have not been informed of any Docent losing a home, but should that become known, we will once again gather our strengths, steel our determination, and aid anyone in a stressful situation.

We often speak of our Docent family, and in a tragic moment, those two words become real and loving and caring and beautiful. Thank you for being so supportive.

I look forward to our next “family gathering” on January 17th when we can share our stories and exult in our safety as we look forward to a new and exciting year.

Ralph



Ralph Wilson, President

Here are excerpts from some of the replies I received to my message:

Tracey Miller

Thank you for this kind message Ralph!

My family & I are readily available should anyone be in need.

Merry Christmas to you & yours! I hope you enjoy a wondrous time of Celebration.

Hugs & Best Wishes

Kind regards,

Tracey

Linda Adams

Thank you, Ralph!

You are so right about our family. Between the art and my friends at SBMA, I am most grateful.

My husband and I wore a mask for our one hour walk every morning. The ash was the only issue we had to deal with.

Happy holidays and see you next year for more art and fun,

Linda

Pma Tregenza

Oh, thank you Ralph, what a lovely letter.

I do not know of anyone who has lost their home, only of those who had to evacuate for long periods of time and of those where the fire came far too close.

I think it's important to remind ourselves, too, that those who have lost everything are really happy to know there are those who did not suffer loss. A lot of times there is such a thing as "survivor's guilt" that surfaces. Having been one of those with extreme loss and having talked with others in the same situation, I can confirm that we are all glad to know when someone has survived or did not suffer; it represents hope..... and we all need that.

David Reichert

Diane and I are OK. We were just outside one of the warning zones but were prepped to go if needed.

When the fire crossed the County line on December 10, I started packing rare books just in case. When it blew into Montecito a week ago, Diane's son Alex came up from Orange County with a U-Haul.

Along with 2 of his friends who live here in town, we took down, wrapped and loaded the greater part of our art collection. We didn't actually depart, but the truck was in the driveway just in case. Yesterday evening, with danger past, we unloaded and returned the truck. I'll be re-shelving books this weekend.

Susan Billig

Thanks for the good wishes. My friends evacuated my house and cars while I was in Lisbon. Just like we expect Santa Barbarian's to be.

Paul Guipa

Thanks Ralph, good holidays. We were evacuated for 12 days, but are back and all is well.

Sara Bangser

Ralph,

Thank you so much for your beautiful holiday message. You meet 100 people, 99 have a story about the fire....just staggering how your perspective on the important things in life can take a right turn in a flash. As you know, many are affected by the fires. We will be directly involved in the recovery aftermath for several years helping our long distance daughter (and family) rebuild their Ventura home. They are safe, healthy, and the rest is nothing more difficult than a headache. We have much to be thankful for. Having the support of my fellow provisionals, Ralph, and Karen Brill just lit up my heart.

I'm sending back to you heartfelt wishes for a calm conclusion to this tumultuous year. I'm sure we're all anxious to kick 2017 to the door. So, here's a toast to safe, healthy, joyous days in the coming year.

Sara

Pattie Firestone

Thanks, Ralph, for making me as a provisional feel like part of the family and for expressing our sentiments from the last two weeks so well.

Karen Brill

Ours was quite an odyssey, with 12 days of evacuation. Our house was right in the middle of the war zone, with sparks up and down Coyote Road and the Parma park fire encroaching our street. We thought we would lose the house several times. We raced home on Thursday when the evacuation order was lifted, prepared to spend the holidays at the Hyatt, and were happily shocked to discover that the house, although smoky and ashy, was livable. So after some days of heavy cleanup, with 4 air filters running, we had a very happy holiday here with both of our kids. I am meeting today with insurance and professional cleanup people. And plucking out all the new gray hairs!

Other messages were received from: Mary Ellen Hoffman, Patsy Hicks, Gwen Baker, Gail Stichler, Virginia Randolph, Niki Bruckner, Teda Pilcher, Joan Dewhirst. *Ralph*

From our Vice President



I hope this finds everyone safe in the aftermath of the Thomas fire. This really has been a long December. I don't know if it was the first time in our Council history, but the fire meant we had to cancel the holiday party, as it turns out, not a minute too soon before evacuations began in Montecito.

However, I will be looking at other celebratory options for the near future that hopefully will help us coalesce, set us on a healing and positive course for 2018. I will also be scoping out a spring bus trip to the Norton Simon, focusing on their Degas bronze exhibit, probably towards the end of March or beginning of April.

Mary Ellen Hoffman

And, finally, don't forget the NYC trip Gail is planning for April 22-27. She will have information at the check-in desk at every meeting and will provide more details to those who sign up for the trip.

I hope you are ready to begin a new year, and suspect we all share a desire to come together with our fellow docents and museum staff with even more than our usual support and goodwill toward one another.

May we find much to be joyous about and grateful for.

Mary Ellen

From our Student Teams Chair



Karen Brill

I would like to share one of the most moving experiences of my holiday. I was driving by the Montecito Fire Station in the afternoon on Christmas Eve. I saw kids from Cold Spring School caroling for the firefighters, bearing gift boxes of what were presumably cookies. That certainly turned on the water works for me and gave me a chance to express my gratitude for the firefighters heroic protection of our community!

I am overwhelmed when I think of all of those brave men and women standing in our driveways prepared to do battle.



From our Adult Teams Chair



Irene Stone

Dear Docents,

Given the magnitude of destruction from the fire, it feels odd to be writing this report as if everything were normal. I have thought of my fellow docents, and hope you are all okay. What a month we have had.

In October Adult Tours recorded a total of 289 visitors with an average of 5.4 visitors per tour. Even with 9 tours with no visitors and *Ten Talks* scheduled only on First Thursdays, we had a total of 40 more visitors than in September. We hope that the numbers will keep increasing as more visitors learn about the Valeska Soares exhibition.

Just a reminder that starting in January we will have only one tour at 1:00 on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday, but continue with two tours on Friday, Saturday and Sunday. Team leaders have the dates for January-March tours (with some adjustments still to be made as the dates of special exhibitions are modified.)

I want to thank all of you for responding so rapidly and generously to cover tours as we have had more injuries and changes of plans affecting docents. It is such an affirmation of who we are and how we care for each other as we respond so readily to changing circumstances.

All my best wishes for the New Year.

Irene

Kiefer Rodin' shows Rodin through a dark lens at the Barnes Foundation in Philadelphia

From Lancaster Online, By Erin Negley December 10, 2017



For this issue, all board submissions were optional. Next Month *La Muse* will return with its normal coverage.

~LM



From our **Community Speakers Program**



Team Leaders Kathryn Padgett & Shirley Waxman

We both hope all of you survived Thomas without harm. It's times like these that we docents are at our best, a true family.

The Community Speakers Program did five presentations with a total of 136 people in attendance in December. Two presentations were cancelled due to the fire.

Kathryn is working on a new CSP presentation for the upcoming exhibition of *Crosscurrents: The Painted Portrait in America, Britain, and France, 1750-1850*. Eik-Kahng very graciously provided a copy of her docent presentation for Kathryn to modify for CSP's use. It is extremely helpful to have high resolution copies of all of

Community Speakers Program January Presentations

January 9	4pm	Casa Dorinda	Kathryn Padgett	<i>Texture, Emotion, Fragments: How Rodin Shaped Modern Sculpture</i>
January 18	11am	Alexander Gardens	Mary Eckhart	<i>Dancing with Daffodils: The Artist Meets the Flower</i>
January 20	1pm	Ojai Library	Shirley Waxman	<i>POP Art and the American Dream</i>
January 31	7pm	Vista del Monte	Shirley Waxman	<i>POP Art and the American Dream</i>

Public Lecture

Spring Trip: Docents in NYC



What a terrifying fire. And what a relief that it is almost over.

It's time to start firming up plans for our NYC trip. There will be a **short meeting after our next docent council** meeting on January 17 for questions. Our hotel is the Wellington, next door to Carnegie Hall and two blocks from Central Park. Instructions about how to make hotel reservations will be sent out in January.

We'll have optional group activities Monday through Thursday, including at least one museum each day—the Metropolitan, MoMA, the Guggenheim, the Whitney. We will coordinate other optional activities—Broadway plays or city highlights such as the World Trade Center. Those interested in these activities will know who else is going. There will be designated gatherings for some meals. It's possible to plan group meals if there is interest. If you're traveling to NYC for the first time, you will learn to navigate confidently throughout the city. Our last trip was a great success, and we know this adventure will prove to be just as wonderful. *Gail*

THOMAS—Our Shared Nightmare

by Lori Mohr



Flames erupted behind our house the day we returned. More followed over the next six days.

Luke and Romey watch



For the last eight years, the January issue has been filled with images of our Holiday Party. Not this year. As provisional Sara Bangser said, "Talk to 100 people and 99 have a story." Those stories still dominate our conversation in shops, restaurants, among neighbors. Evacuating is traumatic. Preparing to evacuate is upsetting. And yet this holiday season that is our communal experience. For the first time I can remember since 1975, Ventura and Santa Barbara residents have shared the same fire.



Unknown photographer

That "Ring of Fire" did indeed encircle us all, starting in two places near Thomas Aquinas College, one arm sweeping down to Ventura, the other going the opposite direction across Ojai, finally tracing Highway 150 around Lake Casitas, the two arms meeting in Carp before burning north. You've all seen the image of the fire burn. It still stuns, the



enormity of its reach.

As I sit in my favorite chair with a cup of steaming coffee on one side, my iPad charging on the other, the view of Nordhoff Ridge outside my window under perfect blue skies, it almost seems like a dream. If you drive through Ojai, with the exception of Lake Casitas, a sickening moonscape of charred hills and blackened trees, you won't see much actual destruction. Firefighters formed a ring around our resort town to save it. We are the hole in the donut shaped map. But if you look beyond the iconic Arcade, the destruction is clear. We all share in the trauma of our communities, Ventura the hardest hit with over 500 homes lost. In Ojai we lost 171 homes, most in Upper Ojai, Oak View, Matilija Canyon. Our communities have come together to offer support. But this fire was so monstrous, so unrelenting, that it feels something has been lost forever.

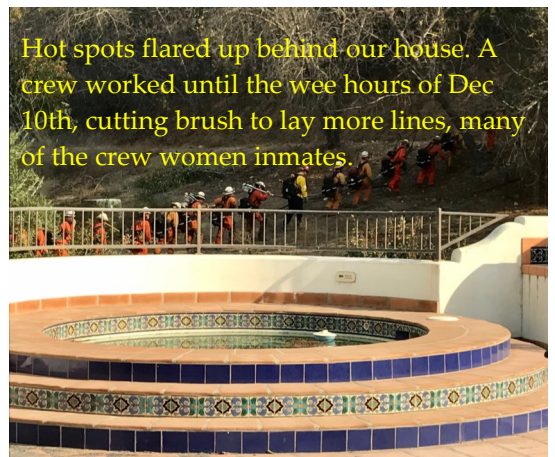
Of course it hasn't. My perspective has not recovered a broad focus.



Self Portrait
Jim Christiansen

The shock of Thomas seems to mandate that we acknowledge and experience our stunned sense of loss before we say..."but we're safe...the sky is blue." We know it's over, yet the impact will reverberate for a long time as we worry about who lost what. About fires to come.

Insured, uninsured, underinsured, all of it takes months to get help. In Ojai, as in Santa Barbara, we're small enough for grass roots organi-



Hot spots flared up behind our house. A crew worked until the wee hours of Dec 10th, cutting brush to lay more lines, many of the crew women inmates.



Firefighters checked on things every day until December 16th, their hoses "plumbing" the hillside. At night heat-seeking, infra-red-reading drones monitored Ojai.

zations to have risen from the ash to mobilize—neighbors talking, helping one another, offering support, solace.

The fire started at 6:30 PM December 4th. Larry and I were evacuated four hours later. We didn't take much. It's not the first time, nor is it for you in Santa Barbara.

Jesusita. Tea. Painted Cave. Those are recent memories. Several docents offered us their homes, including our three dogs, two of whom are very big. We had already settled in with our friend Leslie, one of our provisionals, a friend of 42 years. In a true twist of irony, five days later we returned home, the next day Leslie evacuating Santa Barbara to stay with us. The fire had moved on, except for troublesome hot spots on the hill behind our house. Those continued to smolder and erupt into flame for six more days. "It's better that you're here to keep an eye on it," one firefighter said. Right. But they did too.

None of us could have known the magnitude of impact. For two days Larry and I wondered if we still had a home. I wondered if my tears—driven by raw nerves and sleep deprivation—were not so much for the possibility that all was gone as for the worry that I would be able to cope if it was.



We had units from LA, San

The uncertainty was torture. Some of you know that experience, have mentally rehearsed how you would move forward if it comes to that.

When I read the stories of those who did lose their homes, what struck me was not so much the losing of stuff. At our age that might not be the hardest part. It's the infrastructure of our lives, the loss of small comforts and a sense of predictability that becomes precious—those things that structure your movement through



In an ironic twist, on Dec 10th Leslie left SB and came to us.

the day, orient you. Morning coffee. The chair where you sit and ponder, email and text. A sense of order. Everything you know is there each morning when you wake. Imagine being thrown into the chaos of utter loss. Simple things of daily life, no longer there. One image of a burned out washer and dryer said it all. Ordinary things we rely on. Add up all those inconveniences and you have a different life. For a while anyway.



LA County Fire Captain meets Wolfgang Pug

One thing I know after 16 Days. All of us were bound by adversity in a profound way that stripped away the differences. Politics disappeared, momentarily rendered insignificant. There was only us, you and me, one person to another, doing the one thing we are hardwired to do—connect. Empathy. It sustains our humanity.

Sometimes that empathy gets buried under our differences. Thomas brought it back.

I am grateful for all of you, for the Docent Council. May all good things rise from the ashes.



6 am...still there



December 16th they collected the hoses.

I had just returned from the store...

THE LAST PAGE

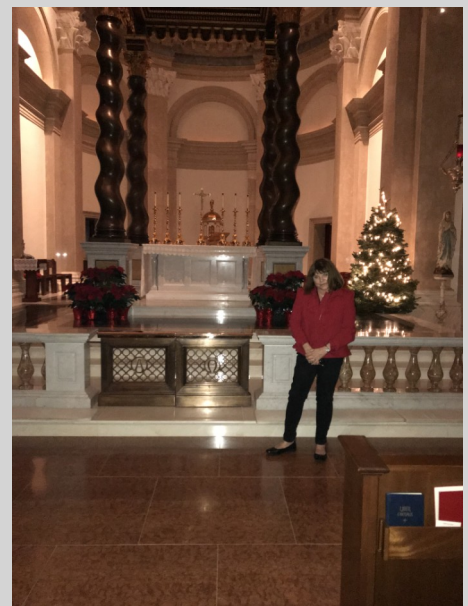
THOMAS: The Early Hours

'It was a view of hell': The wildfire raging in California was named after their small college — it started that close

Washington Post
Click link below



<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/grade-point/wp/2017/12/15/it-was-a-view-of-hell-the-wildfire-raging-in-california-was-named-after-their-small-college-it-started-that-close/>



St. Thomas Aquinas Church,
Christmas Eve. Note the huge
blue air filters along the nave.

Lori Mohr, Editor
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