

Ben Shahn, *Unemployment*, **1940–42**, egg tempera on plaster, 9 x 24'. From the four-part mural scheme *The Meaning of Social Security*, 1940–42. Cohen Federal Building, Washington D.C. Photo: Carol M. Highsmith Archive/Library of Congress. From Art Forum, April 30, 2020: Andrew Hemingway on cultural democracy and the New Deal Art Programs. https://www.artforum.com/slant/andrew-hemingway-on-cultural-democracy-and-the-new-deal-art-programs-82962

Dear Friends,

I'm afraid that it is back to business this week and I really do need each and every one of you to respond. You may recall that last month Michelle sent an email regarding the proposed by-law revisions that were passed by the board at our last in-person meeting. The substantive revisions include:

- Leave of Absence status is defined as an absence for any reason of up to two years per request. Upon return, Leave of Absence docents are generally not required to undergo additional training or review. Leave of Absence status must be approved by the Board.
- Sustainer Status is a status intended to be either permanent or longer than two years. Sustainer docents who wish to return to Active Docent status may be required to undergo additional training or evaluation. Sustainer Status does not need Board approval.
- In the Resignation section, the board voted to remove the statement "Active Docents may not resign in good standing" because this statement is ambiguous and unenforceable.
- In the Suspension or Termination section of the by-laws, the phrase "Consistently failing to arrive 15 minutes early for either a student or adult tour" was removed as overbroad for adult tours and unenforceable because docents touring adults are generally unmonitored when they arrive for a tour.



Molora Vadnais, Docent Council President

According to our by-laws, the final step to changing the by-laws is for the revision to be presented at a docent council meeting and then for 2/3 of the active docents present at the meeting to approve the changes. Because we are unable to have a normal docent meeting, I am calling an electronic meeting starting now in order to vote on the revisions. This vote cannot wait until next fall because some of you need clarity before then in order to make decisions on LOA and Sustainer status. Therefore, please study the proposed revisions and if you agree with the changes, email me before **May 15** at moloravadnais@gmail.com with your approval. If you disapprove of the change, please also email me so that I will know you voted. Please do not hesitate to contact me by email or phone (805) 886-7393 if you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely, Molora Vadnais

PROPOSED BY-LAW REVISIONS

3.6 LEAVE OF ABSENCE DOCENT STATUS

1. Leave of Absence status is a temporary status to accommodate situations when an Active Docent requests to cease temporarily the duties of an Active Docent, for personal reasons including illness, injury or other matters. The Docent Council is committed to addressing the concerns and requests of Active Docents in a flexible and open manner.

2. Leave of Absence status is granted by the Docent Council Board for up to two consecutive years' time per request. After that time period, a Docent not wishing to return to Active Status must request status as a Sustaining Docent.

3. Any Active Docent may apply to the Docent Council Board for permission to become a Leave of Absence Docent by submitting a request in writing or by email to the Docent Council President and the Membership Chair. The request must indicate the anticipated starting and ending time for the Leave of Absence status.

4. The Docent Council Board in consultation with the Education Department has sole discretion to accept or reject a request for Leave of Absence status.

5. Leave of Absence Docents maintain membership in the Docent Council but are excused from Docent duties during the time of Leave of Absence status. Leave of Absence Docents may attend Docent Council meetings and social/educational programs but are not eligible to tour or hold office on the Docent Council Board.

6. Docents who have not completed their four-year commitment cannot become sustainers without board approval.

7. A Leave of Absence Docent returning to Active status must notify in writing or by email the Docent Council President and the Membership Chair. Evaluation of returning Leave of Absence Docents is generally not required, unless determined necessary by the Docent Council Board. 8. Any Active Docent who takes a Leave of Absence within the first four years of service must, upon his/ her return to Active status, complete his/her original four-year commitment.

3.7 SUSTAINING DOCENT STATUS

1. Active Docents who have completed their four-year commitment may request status as a Sustaining Docent in writing or by email to the Docent Council President and the Membership Chair.

2. Sustaining status does not require the approval of the Docent Council Board.

3. Sustaining Docents pay annual dues to maintain membership in the Docent Council and are encouraged to attend Docent Council meetings and social/educational activities.

4. Sustaining Docents are not eligible to serve on the Docent Council Board or to tour.

5. Sustaining Docents who wish to return to Active status may, upon written request to the Docent Council President and the Membership Chair, request reinstatement by the Docent Council Board and agree to meet any retraining and evaluation requirements determined by the Docent Council Board in consultation with the Education Department.

4.1 RESIGNATION

1. Any Senior Active member of the Docent Council may resign in good standing by submitting a Letter of Resignation to the Docent Council President and the Membership Chair.

2. Any resigned Senior Active Docent who wishes to return to Active status may, upon written request to the Docent Council President and the Membership Chair, be reinstated upon meeting any retraining and evaluation requirements determined by the Docent Council Board.

4.2 SUSPENSION OR TERMINATION

1. Membership in the Docent Council may be suspended or terminated should a Docent fail to fulfill the applicable service requirements or performance expectations as determined by majority vote of the Docent Council Board with the concurrence of the Director of Education.

2. Failure to fulfill applicable service requirements and performance expectations includes, but is not limited to:

a) Missing more than four Docent Council meetings in any service year. If a Docent has more than four absences, the Membership Chair will report to the Docent Council Board for appropriate action.

b) Failing to give a scheduled tour or presentation. It is the responsibility of the team leaders to report all unexcused absences to the team chairs, who will inform the Membership Chair and the Docent Council

President.

c) Failing to pass tour or presentation evaluations. Failure to pass two subsequent evaluations shall be considered grounds for suspension or termination by the Docent Council Board.

d) Consistently failing to arrive 15 minutes early for a student tour and in time to be adequately prepared for an adult tour and to perform an adequate sweep of the galleries to advertise the tour.

e) Consistently failing to read and respond, if necessary, to messages from team leaders, team touring chairs, and the Education Department.

f) The Docent may appeal any such action by the Board in accordance with the guidelines in Section 5.

Molora



Dear Docents,

With our Museum closed and our lives disrupted by the Covid-19 pandemic, the staff at the SBMA has been deeply engaged in developing programing for the Museum website in order to remain connected with and to continue to serve the community. Observing the stay-at-home order, many staff members, including curators, curatorial assistants, and educators are busily developing, remotely, various virtual tours, programs, and art-making projects for children and adults. If you haven't already, I would like to invite you to tour the In the Meanwhile exhibition of recently acquired contemporary art, participate in various hands-on art projects via our Art Making At Home and Studio Sunday instructional videos, and watch or listen to many, many illuminating lectures and concerts, some going back a decade. Each week, we intend to post new features, and we hope that you will stay in touch by sharing your comments.

With more time to focus on the SBMA's permanent holdings, the curatorial staff has also been adding myriad digital artworks to the Museum's online collection, so there is much to explore and learn. The curators are diligently planning for the upcoming completion of the renovation, when the Museum, notably the new and remodeled galleries, will again be filled with works from the permanent collection; a transformed Ludington Court will display not only the Museum's outstanding Greek and Roman antiquities, but also African and Pre-Columbian sculptures and scores of 17th- and 18th-century European paintings, many that have not been on view for decades. The renovation is still on track to be finished in late summer. During this difficult period, the curators are also planning important new exhibitions and catalogues and, in some cases, negotiating alternate dates for exhibitions that may need to be postponed.

While our creative and dedicated educators are organizing online versions of programs usually held at the Museum or the Ridley-Tree Education Center, they are also preparing a variety of new or refined programs for when the Covid-19 crisis passes, including educational activities for young children, students, families, adults, seniors, underserved members of the community, and those with learning differences and special needs, such as children on the autism spectrum, adults in the early stages of dementia, and the blind. Our experiences of recent months remind us that art can be an unparalleled vehicle for empathy, inclusion, and empowerment. We are grateful for your help in developing and delivering these programs.

At this time of uncertainty and unquiet, we must be very thankful for all of the good people and enriching cultural experiences in this community, including those provided by the treasures of our Museum, which will sustain us through this unprecedented situation and the challenging period just ahead. We look forward to the day that we can welcome you back to the Museum and offer you, again, its inspiration and solace, and when you, as the public face of the Museum, can once again welcome visitors and share with them the art we all cherish.

Sincerely, Larry J. Feinberg



Vikki Duncan

From our Adult Teams

While waiting to resume public docent activities in whatever accustomed and new forms they may take, we are appreciating all the posts and interest supporting our continued exploration of art, art making, and our wonderful Permanent Collection that so many of you are contributing to, and all that Patsy and the entire Education Department, as well as Museum staff, are putting in public press to give the greater community an uplift with art and our Museum as a vibrant center to turn to now and going forward.



Christine Holland

Vikki and Christine

From our Community Speakers Program Team Leaders



Kathryn Padgett

Although our CSP team is not currently able to venture out to public venues, we remain dedicated to creating new, exciting, and interesting PowerPoint presentations for the SB and Ventura communities. I am inspired by our team members' enthusiasm for sharing the power and importance of art in our lives, and I feel very privileged to be a part of this important docent program.

Joan Dewhirst is always creating enticing talks about fascinating artists. She does a deep dive into Matisse, including thoughtprovoking details about his life and art. Joan's talks are always lively, fun and full of interesting insights. Here's a preview.



Shirley Waxman

MATISSE: The Master of Color, Part 1



At the dawn of the 20th century, an intrepid group of artists led by Henri Matisse began a new adventure with color. Gone were the French Academy's standards of representation, the light-shimmering brush strokes of the Impressionists, the shadow and perspective of the Renaissance — the "truth" of reality using the illusion of three - dimension. This was a new day for Parisians who were shocked with paintings like "Woman with a Hat." Art critics dubbed the artists as fauves (wild beasts) but the period of Fauvism was just the beginning.

This presentation will follow the evolving art of Matisse from the early years up to the 1940s. We will see dancing nudes, provocative portraits,

inviting interiors and enticing views out sunny windows. This is COLOR painted on canvas — through the eyes and the feelings of Matisse.

MATISSE: Painting with Scissors, Part 2

In his last years, Henri Matisse was infirm and spent most of his days in bed or in a wheelchair. Painting taxed him. His activity of choice was to cut fanciful shapes out of brightly colored paper to either be pinned to a wall or glued into large-scale collages.

Blue Nude II—figure of a female nude sitting in profile—the segments of her upper body, head, and arms appear to be an assembly of parts. Looking closely...they were cut in one swift go... from



a single sheet of paper. What is stunning about the work is how easy it seems. It was not, of course. This talk will follow a series of collage creations, including several from an illustrated book titled *Jazz*. In 1946 Matisse was commissioned to create stained glass windows for a chapel in Vence. The designs were made with paper cut-outs. These... being cut from glass.... would not reflect light but let it through. Designs for his last work, *Rockefeller Rose*, were laid out on his floor. Intended for a window in a New York chapel, he continued working on it till his death of a heart attack on November 3, 1954.

From Ricki: The Nostaliga of Emma Lewis Coleman



Emma Lewis Coleman [From Historic New England Website] Photographer, writer, and multimedia artist Emma Lewis Coleman was born in Boston in 1853 and spent much of

her life in Deerfield, Massachusetts. The daughter of wealthy merchants, Coleman was educated in Paris and returned home in the 1870s to teach at a school in Brookline. It was there that she met Charlotte Alice Baker and Susan Minot Lane, a pair of



Emma Lewis Coleman. This photograph is untitled and printed from a glass plate negative between 1880 and 1889.

friends whose creative and intellectual ambitions mirrored those of her own.

In the 1890s, Coleman and Baker made journeys to Canada to gather information about Deerfield children

taken captive in February 1704 during the French and Indian Wars. They wrote a book, *True Stories of New England Captives Carried to Canada*, based on their findings, which featured photographs taken by Coleman.

According to Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association, she is also credited with illustrating the novel *Deephaven* by Sarah Orne Jewett, another woman artist on our list. Historic New England's Emma Lewis Coleman Photographic Collection consists of nearly 300 glass plate negatives, from which study prints have been made. Coleman's work is marked by artistic effects that express the timelessness and universality of rural life, after the fashion of Jean-François Millet and other Barbizon school painters. She worked extensively in York, Maine, where she often posed her city friends in costume to impersonate the rhythms and traditions of farming routines.



New England Captives Carried to Canada Between 1677 and 1760 During the French and Indian Wars Emma Lewis Colema and a Group (for Dood High

Two Reminders from Webmaster Gail Stichler



1: Mike Ramey is our website developer and updates our site by routinely posting information distributed by our Education Department. The current and upcoming exhibitions posted on our website are up to date. The information includes Checklists,

Labels, Overviews and Wall texts as they become available. Mike also searches through our database to find completed research papers for works included in an exhibition and posts them as well. If you haven't visited our webpage recently, you can feel confident that we have future exhibitions to look forward to. We are deeply appreciative of the support that Mike continues to give to the Docent Council.

Current exhibitions posted:

In the Meanwhile... Recent Acquisitions of Contemporary Art

Small-Format American Paintings from the Permanent Collection

Upcoming exhibitions posted:

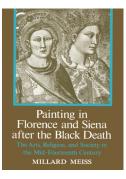
Ludington Court Reopening September, 2020

Ridley-Tree On Site **Ridley-Tree Gallery Coming Fall, 2020**

Thayer Gallery Reopening September, 2020 # 2 Artnet.com is a great website to subscribe to. A recent article recommends 9 Classic TV Series about art history and techniques that are available on YouTube, Netflix and/or Amazon Prime. Here is that website: <u>https:// news.artnet.com/art-world/art-history-tv-series-1843368?</u> <u>utm_content=from_&utm_source=Sailthru&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=News%</u>

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EXAMPLE FROM ARTNET:



Millard Meiss, Painting in Florence and Siena After the Black Death (See next weeks La Muse for Christopher Knight's The Black Plague, Art History and the Coronavirus)

The Black Death that gripped Europe between 1347 and 1351 was a calamity on an unimaginable scale. The plague killed perhaps 60 percent of the continent's population; was attended to by widespread economic collapse, notably of the major Florentine banking institutions; and inaugurated a cultural reckoning that extended well into the Renaissance. No one has done a better job of explaining how the Black Death worked its way into Florentine and Sienese culture than the scholar Millard Meiss, whose study on the subject remains an arthistorical classic.

Tibet: Revisiting F. Bailey Vanderhoef, Jr. and his Gifts to SBMA Part 2

ori Mohr Interviews Lifelong friend, Pam Melone, 2008



From Part 1:

Lori: So he was pursuing these religious objects?

Pam: Well, in Tibet, everything is religious. But I'll tell you something *very* interesting. He had been downstairs in a hospice situation and one day he called me down and said, 'I want you to look in that cupboard for something – it's a rock. It looks like a green baked potato.' So I went and got the rock. He said it was a piece of jade from Tibet and he wanted me to go build a fire and

get the rock as hot as I could, then wrap it in a towel and bring it to him. So, I went – I did it on the stove – and brought it to him. He put it under the covers. I asked if he was cold and he said yes – even though he had an electric blanket – but he said he found the rock in Tibet and had used it in his sleeping bag to keep warm. I've known Billy since I was 15 and I'd never heard him mention this rock, and to remember it now, near the end, to know exactly where it was, and ask for it... that's something that obviously had some spiritual, emotional remembrance that comforted him.



"As we stood there, astride both those worlds...we looked back towards the plains of India, catching a glimpse of the snow-clad Himalayas in the distance."

Lori: That *is* interesting. You men-



"The Two Billies". F. Bailey Vanderhoef, Jr., (1913-2008) and (left) William L. Cummings, Jr. (1914-1943), who traveled 200 miles in 10 days along an ancient trade route from Kalimpong, India to Gyantse to photograph the famous Lama dances in Gyantse.



A small agricultural town famous for its wool carpets, Gyantse lies between a monastery and a fort in the Nyang-chu Valley along an old trading route. Before 1959, traders coming from Kalimpong, India, would enter Tibet through Yadong traveling on to Gyantse, en route to Lasa. *Internet image and text added by LM*.

tioned that in his memoir, Mr. Vanderhoef talked about the allure, the overwhelming beauty of that geography and about the cultural traditions. I understand it was Susan's [Tai] initiative that got the memoir published.

Pam: Yes, in fact Jose' Cabezon [editor] came here with Susan with the idea of getting his permission to put it online so other Tibetan scholars could read it. After that visit, Billy suddenly wanted to be in contact with Bill [Cumming's] sister, Molly! They've kept in contact over the years – she's 90 and lives in Greenwich – but suddenly they

were sending letters back and forth several times a week by FedEx. Suddenly all this stuff – these memories, this time in his life - became really important, overshadowing everything else that occurred in the previous 70 years.

Lori: That alone says a lot about the meaning for him.

Pam: Oh, absolutely. He traveled a lot with both sets of grandparents when he was a kid – to exotic places like Egypt, Africa. Tibet is what everyone is interested in now. That trip is what he became best known for even though he had traveled to Japan and had a much bigger Asian collection. Tibet was just so unknown at that time.

Lori: It must have been an unimaginable adventure for two 24-year-old guys! Did it launch future adventures to far corners of the world? Pam: Interestingly, no. It's funny. He didn't really do a huge amount of traveling. I mean, he traveled the way people do— he was in Rome, Paris. But he wasn't someone you would say was a great traveler. In 2001 when the Twin Towers were destroyed, he'd never even seen them! He hadn't been back to NY since 1940.

Lori: Do you think reaching the 'roof of the world' was also the pinnacle



Tea Pitcher, 19th cen, silver with gold gilding. 10 in. x 6 in.. Gift of Molly Cummings Cook in memor of her brother, Wilbur L. Cummings, Jr.



of exploration for him.

Three-headed Hayagriva 18th-19th cen. Opaque watercolor on cloth, 46 x 28 in. Gift of F. Bailey Vanderhoef, Jr.

Pam: [Nodding slowly] I think so.

Lori: China must've been high on his list earlier on.
Pam: He never got to China because of the politics at that time. I went with Susan [Tai] two years ago and I sort of felt like I was doing the trip for him. Of course, his attitude was, you know, if you can't go during the Ming Dynasty, why go at all? [Laughing].
Lori: Yet I understand he was the guiding force behind the Museum's Asian collection.

Pam: Yes. The Museum has 108 pieces of his art, the largest dona-

tion of Asian art in the Museum's history. In the beginning, everything in the Asian Gallery came from either Wright Ludington or Billy.

Lori: How did his life unfold after Tibet?
Pam: As I mentioned, he continued to travel, but not in a major way. Then when his father retired from Wall Street, they moved out here to California.
Lori: Did he work with his father?
Pam: No. He never really had a career.
He lived in Greenwich and worked a



Ritual Apron, 18th-19th cen., bone, leather, brass. 34 x 28:" Gift of Mrs. Cummings, Sr., in memory of her son.



Above: "Unidentified scenes, most likely from the life of Buddha." Memoir images.

little in New York City when he was very young. But no, he had the means to travel and collect and live a life of exploration and study. Then he found his perfect place here, in Ojai, where he was happy among his...stuff. **Lori:** And what beautiful stuff it is! Pam, where did Mr. Vanderhoef get his sense of textiles?

Pam: His mother. She liked good things. She only bought European pieces for their home in Connecticut. His mother and father started a weaving company where they taught children with polio how to weave. It was thought that these kids couldn't do this and couldn't do that. But they could sit at a loom. This was during the time when Roosevelt had polio. So his parents built this cottage industry in Greenwich for these kids making cushions and such. I'm sure that exposure played a part in his affinity for textiles.

Lori: That sounds like a rather profound introduction.Pam: Yes, it was. And so he developed a very good eye. He mentored Susan[Tai] when she was just out of college when she first arrived. That's been a

lovely relationship...he was very fond of Susan, and she of him. [Sitting back with a sigh] And here she was planning this reception [for the opening]. Dying was all his idea you know. He came home from the hospital with pneumonia in January; he got over that but just decided he didn't want to go on anymore and sort of gave up. He wasn't able to read anymore and I think it drove him crazy. He read every day and he read everything – science, novels, classics...it didn't matter. If it was good, he'd read it. That loss must've been it for him.

Lori: What about his family?

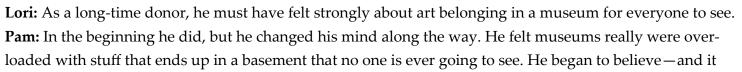
Pam: He has a few nieces and nephews, but never married. When he came out to California with his father in the 1940s, he was one of the founders of the Music Festival, and of course he got involved with the Museum. And that was it. He wasn't one to get involved with everything. He was happy at home here in Ojai.

Lori: It's easy to fall in love with Ojai, especially this quiet end of town.

Pam: It is, and he did. And it really kind of put an end to his travels.

Lori: Beyond art collecting and music, can you tell me what kind of man he was? Pam: [Emphatically] He was an absolute gentleman. He could talk to anybody, even teenagers. He was looking forward to talking to you. He kept his bad moods to himself, had perfect manners, loved to cook. He had lovely fine motor skills—he could fix jewelry, repair clocks, do needlework. Intricate work. He was conservative...a Republican, so of course we never talked politics; that was easier. [Pause] He was just lovely. Lori: I imagined him as an athletic-Sir Edmund Hillary-mountaineer sort.

Pam: No, working with his hands. On his travels he loved to make jewelry from stones he found. Objects were the thing for him; he loved objects — the look, the feel. He did-n't collect much at all after the 1960s, when he said things were: a) available, and b) reasonable. His contention was that all the good things were gone and the kinds of prices people were paying was absurd.





Ritual Dagger, bronze on iron, 6 7/8 in. .Gift of Mrs. Cummings in memory of her son.

eventually became his overriding principle—that they ought to go back into circulation, sold to other collectors who could hold them and love them as he had. It's so odd to see pieces in the Museum behind glass that he had around the house that, as children, he'd let us touch. He'd get things out of the cupboard and tell us about them. I think that was important to him, sharing those stories, especially since he didn't have children. Susan said some of his things were a little bit chipped, worn. And that's why—he loved to touch them, hold them, use them. Every piece has a story.

Lori: That's a real connection, that passion. But really, who knows if another collector would have the same affection for his art. In a museum, it becomes a cultural asset rather than a material commodity. And isn't having it go back into circulation what drives the price up?

Pam: [Cocking her head, smiling cynically] Well... it isn't quite like that.

Lori: [Smiling sheepishly] I read that somewhere. I don't know anything about art collectors or collecting. Pam: Well, you said you were new to the museum. No, it's that too many people have too much money and they think that buying art is the fancy thing to do. Billy never cared about that. He came from that world. When collectors would come in and talk about how they'd bought this and that for such and such and now it's worth this amount...Billy was *appalled* at that. Absolutely appalled! He bought things because he loved them, for their connection to the people who made them. In fact, he was shocked when people would offer him obscene amounts of money. Sotheby's knows him. Christie's knows him. Collectors know him. But he never went out looking to sell and he never assumed anyone was interested just because of the value. These were just his things, the things that made his home. It's partly a generational thing too. We'd watch *Antiques Roadshow* sometimes and he'd say, "Oh we've got one of those downstairs. And look how much are they're paying! I got mine for two dollars!"

Lori: [Laughing with Pam] Did he rotate the pieces he had out?

Pam: Sometimes. That was a complaint he shared with the Museum–limited display space!

The bottom line is he just wanted his things to be as appreciated by someone else as they were by him.

Lori: That's our goal, too, Pam, as docents...it's our mission on every tour.

Pam: Well, that would please Billy.

"We had, as if by some magic, been able to step across that dividing line, and have a brief glimpse of what lay beyond. And what we saw there was of such beauty and mystery that we cannot pretend to understand, but altogether an essence we could take away with us, something like the sacred Amrita in Tibetan paintings, the liquid of immortality that would add richness to life in a thousand ways, and a better understanding of the world."

F. Bailey Vanderhoef, Jr.'s memoir was published in 2011 by SBMA in collaboration with the UCSB School of Religious Studies. The journals and photographs of Vanderhoef and Cummings are available online at <u>http://</u> <u>www.religion.ucsb.edu/tibetjourney1938</u>

THE LAST PAGE



Ricki celebrating her 90th!

(Right) Welcome May to all of us from Mooneen Murad, former docent and a talented ceramicist now living in Chicago. *Submitted by Ricki*



Perils of working from home ...





Shirley Waxman's Cobie

NOTE: josiemartin702@gmail.com

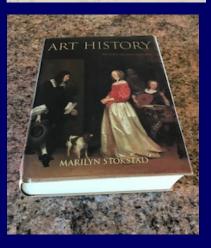


Editor: Loriwindsormohr@gmail.com

Discoveries of Packing



LORI MOHR Provisional Docent



When *we* were provisionals, we had to carry this 30 lb textbook to class every week, and were quizzed on the assigned reading! (And yes, it was three miles through snow to the museum).