

# The Docent Muse



November 2013

## From the Docent Chair

---

*Linnea Asp*

Welcome to autumn and the start of the 2013-14 school year. I am pleased to be serving you as Chair of the Docent Executive Committee. We have met several times already and I can report that you have a wonderful team of representatives! The DEC is currently working on the November 7 Docent Forum. We hope that an interactive format will meet your needs, but we will also seek feedback from those attending in order to plan two later forums this year. Do not hesitate to contact any one of your representatives on DEC – we always welcome your input.

The Docent Fall Luncheon and Celebration was a lovely way to start out the year. I enjoyed hearing the buzz of excited conversation as we gathered that day. I felt honored to be part of one of the docent classes celebrating an anniversary this year. To have members still actively touring after 35 and 45+ years is a clear indication that not only are we committed to serving museum visitors, but we also enjoy many benefits, including camaraderie, continuing education, the pleasure of interacting with museum visitors, and the ever-expanding and fabulous MIA collection. Helen Leslie and Paula Sanan did a great job of planning this event.

The Friends of the MIA also started the year off with engaging activities. Nick Cave's conversation with Liz Armstrong in September and the lecture by Henry John Drewal on Yoruba arts and culture were both very useful for docents. *Art Perchance* was a fun occasion to enjoy interactions not only with friends but also artists. I was not lucky enough to win a work of art, but I loved wandering through the myriad donated works and meeting a number of the artists to talk about their work and lives. As it happened, one of the artists I talked to that evening had been a participant in my Picture Person Training session that week!

With November's re-opening of the African galleries, we will have expanded touring opportunities. I look forward to sharing the excitement of the coming months with you!

## Musings from MGP

---

*Debbi Hegstrom*

Colorful fall leaves and excited students are all around us! With school tours now beginning in the Target Wing first floor atrium, it's time to think about changing up routes for multiple groups starting at the same time. Over the next few weeks I will draw up some suggestions for how to spread out into the galleries from this new point of entry. Let me know how the tours are going. As always, the MIA is buzzing (with more than bees):

Tours have begun for *The Audacious Eye*, which showcases eight galleries of Japanese art from the newly acquired Clark Collections. It's an amazing array of objects spanning 1000 years of Japanese history acquired by Bill Clark, a passionate collector. If you missed the lecture by Andreas Marks, be sure to watch it online from your website.

Docent and librarian Mary Bowman has added our *Book Tours* to the Hennepin County Library website. Go to the HCL Home page, choose *BookSpace* from the top menu bar and then *Book Clubs*. Mary has several entries that list the books we are featuring. See *Fall 2013 MIA Book Tours* and *MIA Book Tours for 2014* for the most recent titles. Thank you, Mary!

*VERSO*, the MIA's award-winning digital publication, is now available from the MIA website. From the Home page, select *LEARN*, then scroll down to *Verso: Unveiling the Backstory*. Click on *Learn more* and then *try this web viewer* (in the last sentence). Two clicks on the forward arrow gives you navigation instructions. Click again for the *Contents* page. One of the stories in this issue, "Start on a Highpoint," features the docent sessions we had at Highpoint Center for Printmaking in preparation for the *It's New It's Now* special exhibition.

We have several new-generation iPads in the tour office. If you haven't used one yet, we will be conducting sessions on using iPads on tours sometime this winter. Stay tuned for more information.

### Special Exhibition Assignments

I've been asked some questions about the 2013-14 special exhibition assignments that I am happy to address. We are fortunate to have about 165 touring docents. This year, we do not have any "blockbuster" exhibitions like *Rembrandt in America* or *The Terracotta Warriors*, so the demand for tours is lower. We are also fortunate to have CIF guides who were trained specifically on our Japanese and Korean collection helping us with *Audacious Eye* tours on Thursday evenings and weekends when very few docents are available. Here's a look at the approximate numbers for those assigned to special exhibitions this year:

<i>Special Exhibition</i>	<i>No. of docents</i>
It's New It's Now	14
The Audacious Eye	31 + 15 CIF guides
Max Beckmann restoration	10 ("Ask Me")
Winterlights at the MIA	12
Winterlights at the Purcell House	12
Matisse	40
Art in Bloom	20-25
<b>Total</b>	<b>139-144 docents</b>

This leaves about 20-25 people without assignments. My goal is to keep the number assigned to an exhibition small enough so that those assigned get enough tours, but large enough to cover the need. When we get closer to the *Matisse* exhibition, I will probably assign a few more people. That means some people will not get a special exhibition assignment this year. In most cases these are people who had the good fortune of touring *Rembrandt* or *Terracotta Warriors*, or both. In an attempt to be fair to all, I hope you agree that we want to "share the wealth" with as many people as possible.

In a season of abundance, I am grateful for your abundant good will and participation!

## What I Do Now

### Sheila McGuire

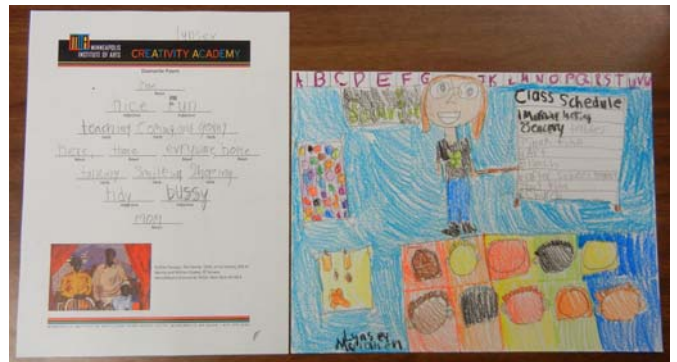
"What do you do now?" I hear this question a lot.

My title is *Head of School and Teacher Programs*. Annie Dressen, Jennifer Curry, Paula Warn and I make up the department, and docents Mary Lewis and Barb Edin support our *Visual Thinking Strategies* and *Art Adventure* programs. We have our brains and hands full with a lot of exciting and innovative projects.

### Creativity Academy

MIA Creativity Academy is a pilot, multi-visit, museum-school program for fourth-grade students, which is generously funded by the Friends Children's Fund. The goal of the program is the development of creative thinking skills, which are so crucial for students to be successful.

The fourth graders will participate in four 1.5 hour lessons (two lessons in the school classroom and two lessons at the museum). Each lesson features a core art work from the MIA collection that serves as a foundation for class discussions, art making and poetry. Ashley Griffin, an experienced art educator, is facilitating the classroom sessions and leading the studio activities at the museum. For example, lesson 1 focused on Rufino Tamayo's *The Family*.



We are piloting this program with two St. Paul public schools that do not have visual arts in their curriculum. During this experimental year, the MIA will provide bus transportation for the school visits to the museum. The program will culminate with an exhibition of student artwork in the MIA's Community Commons and will include an opening Family Night reception.

We are fortunate to be working with evaluator Marianna Adams, who will assess the impact of the program on student creativity. In our evaluations we

are focusing on the skill of elaboration, *e.g.*, building off an art work or idea to create a new art work or idea and embellishing these creative works with details. The results of the pilot program will determine the ongoing structure and strategies for the following year.

#### *Water is Life Twin Cities Museum Collaborative*

We are equally excited to launch another pilot program with our Twin Cities Museum Collaborative project partners, the Science Museum of Minnesota and the Minnesota Landscape Arboretum. This is a multi-visit program called *Water is Life*. A series of three programs presented by MIA, MLA and SMM will engage students in powerful, real-world learning experiences that stimulate science discovery and language development, and support academic standards in science, language arts, social studies and the visual arts.

Our program, called “World of Water,” includes a tour and studio activity. At the MIA, students observe and discuss how humans from different times and cultures capture, move, and harness water for agriculture and other uses. In the studio, students explore watercolor painting with traditional and non-traditional techniques to create artworks filled with a variety of textures. Each student has her or his own “Water is Life” journal in which they will respond to the tour and make observations based on the experiential art activity.

The Collaborative is piloting the program with all second graders at Green Central and Lucy Laney, and every third grader at Elizabeth Hall, all Minneapolis Public Schools. We are working with the Science Museum’s evaluators with the goal of developing a program that can be offered to many schools in the future.

#### *Full STEAM Ahead!*

I set an unrealistic goal that over the summer I would develop six museum tours focused on infusing discussions of artworks at the MIA with activities that support STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Math) learning for students in grades K-6, in order to make STEAM. The idea of putting the A (Arts) into STEM is not brand new, but it has taken some time for it to make traction in schools.

I got so excited about learning how STEM is being integrated in classrooms that I developed tour outlines that were driven not by meaningful themes,

but rather by tons of fun science, engineering and even some math activities. It was probably good that I had to set these aside for a while so that I could see where I had gone so wrong. I am now re-designing these tours by starting with themes and figuring out how to use STEM activities to support them. I have been fortunate to work with some very smart STEM and STEAM teachers on this project, and look forward to getting feedback from all of you in the new year.

Timing is everything. I am also super fortunate to be working with Siri Anderson from St. Catherine’s and Diane Aldis from the Perpich Center and a group of exceptionally smart students enrolled in a special Twin Cities Teaching Colleges (TC<sup>2</sup>) STEM program. The students are training to be middle and high school math and science teachers. Their work with Siri, Diane and me, which focuses on integrating Art into STEM to make STEAM, is just part of their extensive program. So far, we have met as a group two times at the MIA. These students are drawing on their experiences at the MIA and in classrooms (as student teachers) to develop ideas for MIA docents to use on tours with middle and high school students in the future.

#### *Gallery to Classroom Lessons*

Ann Isaacson and I have had the pleasure of working with a small team of docents and guides to fine-tune and seriously practice the delivery of lessons from the MIA galleries to classrooms using the iPhone. We are currently working with a lead teacher in each of four districts – Minneapolis, St. Paul, Robbinsdale and Anoka – to figure out how to best connect with students. In short, we are facilitating conversations with students in their classrooms using an earpiece with a mic, the iPhone, and a WebEx meeting app.

We currently are delivering roughly 20-minute lessons on many topics ranging from visual elements for second graders, bird adaptations for third graders to animals in Chinese art for sixth graders and Native American ceramic designs for high school students in an advanced ceramics class. Recently, your very own *Muse* editor spoke to fifth-grade students in Robbinsdale about Chinese brush painting and the tools these artists use. Next month we will experiment with conducting picture person training over the iPhone with parent volunteers in Duluth.

In addition to two training sessions at the end of October for docents and guides who previously



expressed interest in this project, we are working with a videographer to create two short training videos to help all of you get comfortable with the necessary technology and processes of this initiative.

### *Teaching the Arts*

While all of this is going on, Teaching the Arts is getting a facelift. As part of the move to the new MIA Website, we will make a change from the old template (which still requires me to enter html to format it!) to a design built in WordPress. Look for a new feature on the *Djenne Equestrian Figure* soon. Based on conversations with teachers and a number of focus groups we conducted over the past year, I am trying a new approach that more clearly states how each feature ties into state learning standards. We will, of course, evaluate these to see if we are on the right track. I look forward to getting your feedback as well since I know many of you use these features for your work.

### *Art and Law*

This summer I had the privilege of working with a team of MIA and Dorsey & Whitney staff on an innovative continuing legal education program. Brian Palmer and Bill Wernz, both retired lawyers from Dorsey & Whitney, and I designed and presented a program on Truthiness in art and legal ethics. In the year ahead we will continue to explore ways to tie the museum's collection to continuing legal education programs related to elimination of bias and ethics. We also hope to expand our professional development offerings into other professions.

### *Other Exciting Projects*

If you haven't stopped reading yet, you might like to know that we (Annie is the project lead) are also involved with a special Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS)-sponsored artist's residency with Natasha Pestich (artist and MCAD professor) and teens from Youthline. I am working on teacher materials to support integrating the new African art galleries into their lessons. And, we recently received



a grant to do an extensive evaluation of the *Art Adventure* program.

On the *Visual Thinking Strategies* front, we have switched back to a focus on third grade. Target is generously funding a visit to the MIA for every third-grader in the Minneapolis School District for a VTS tour. I am eager to try out, albeit on a small scale, a new type of evaluation using drawing with a small sample of students on VTS tours that will measure how they feel about their museum experience. I'll let you know more when I have a better idea just how to do this!

Thank you for being so interested in "What I Do Now!" It is a pleasure to continue to work with many of you on these projects.

## Young People's Ofrendas

*By Maria Eggemeyer*

Last year at the MIA, tours were led in Spanish. Expect to hear much more of the language beginning October 22, opening of *Young People's Ofrendas: Expressions of Life and Remembrance*. In its fifth consecutive year, the exhibit this fall features shrines in a shadowbox created by students from El Colegio, Humboldt, and Austin high schools to honor their family, friends or favorites who have passed away.



The *Ofrendas* exhibit, a project begun with funds from the Friends of the Institute, gives voice to adolescents in our community, who create artful offerings to those they loved and admired.

Throughout the ages and around the world, human beings have venerated their ancestors. In regions of Mexico the rituals are particularly colorful to this day. Museums all over have exhibited art from the *Day of the Dead* in Mexico, and the Young People's *Ofrendas* project at the MIA is inspired by the Mexican *Day of the Dead* tradition.

Although mystical, this Mexican celebration probably has had such broad appeal because of its sensuality. Families in the villages and towns of Mexico revive the tradition of their ancestors and make ready for the return of the souls on the first two days of November by preparing the *ofrenda* (offering) in the cemeteries and their homes to lure their loved ones back from the dead. Markets come



alive with animated skeletons, sweet sugar skulls, tasty tamales, intricate designs on colorful cut-out paper, playful clay figures, the pungent scent of fresh-cut marigolds, aromatic Day of the Dead bread with a hint of orange and anise and other fam-

ily favorites to be placed on the *ofrenda* table. Cemeteries and homes are illuminated by burning candles to lead the way for their departed loved ones' visit. However, the sensual delights also entice the living, who come to share the offerings with the returning souls.

Don't miss the *Ofrendas* exhibit at the MIA that runs from October 22 through November 24 with tours, *Day of the Dead around the World* offered in both English and Spanish. Visit Marissa's bakery, practically an MIA neighbor, and savor the divine cadaver-shaped Day of the Dead bread. Shop the Mercado Central for the skeletal clay figurines and sweet skulls. While you're there, try the toothsome tamales at the food court. And remember your loved ones, as you think about a line from Louise Erdrich's *The Master Butcher's Singing Club*: "The dead are only a song away."

## How do I navigate the MGP website?

Lynn Brofman

How do I navigate the MGP website?

How do I find the object research that's posted on the MGP website?

How do I share my object research?

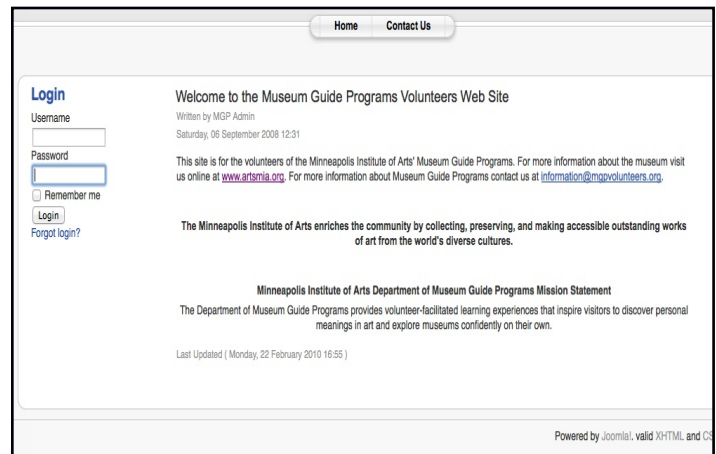
### The Basics

From a browser such as Firefox, Safari, aol, Explorer, Chrome... type in the internet address:

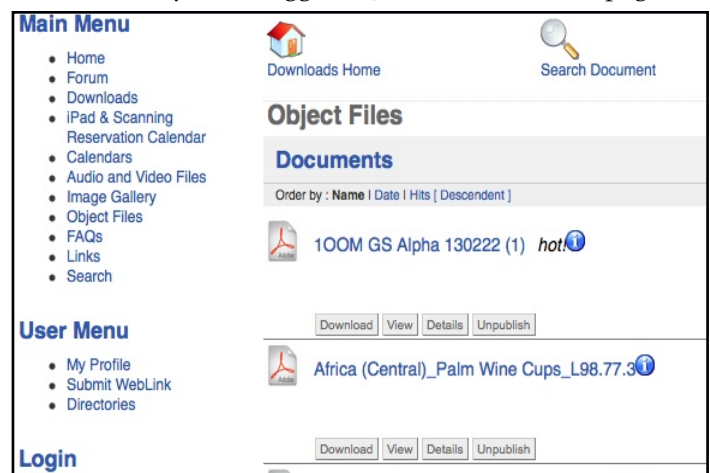
<http://mgpvunteers.org>

Login: Type in your user name and password and click "login." Your user name is usually the first initial of your first name and your last name. All in lower case letters with no spaces. The current password is the same for everyone and is: mia4all

You may need to login twice.



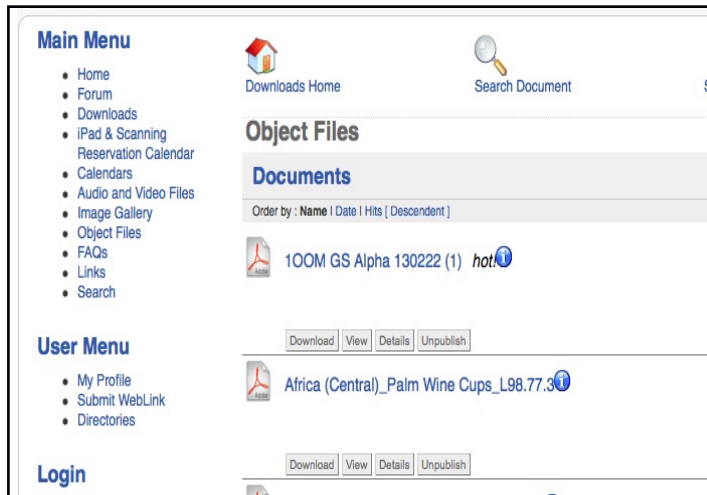
Once you've logged in, this is the "home page."



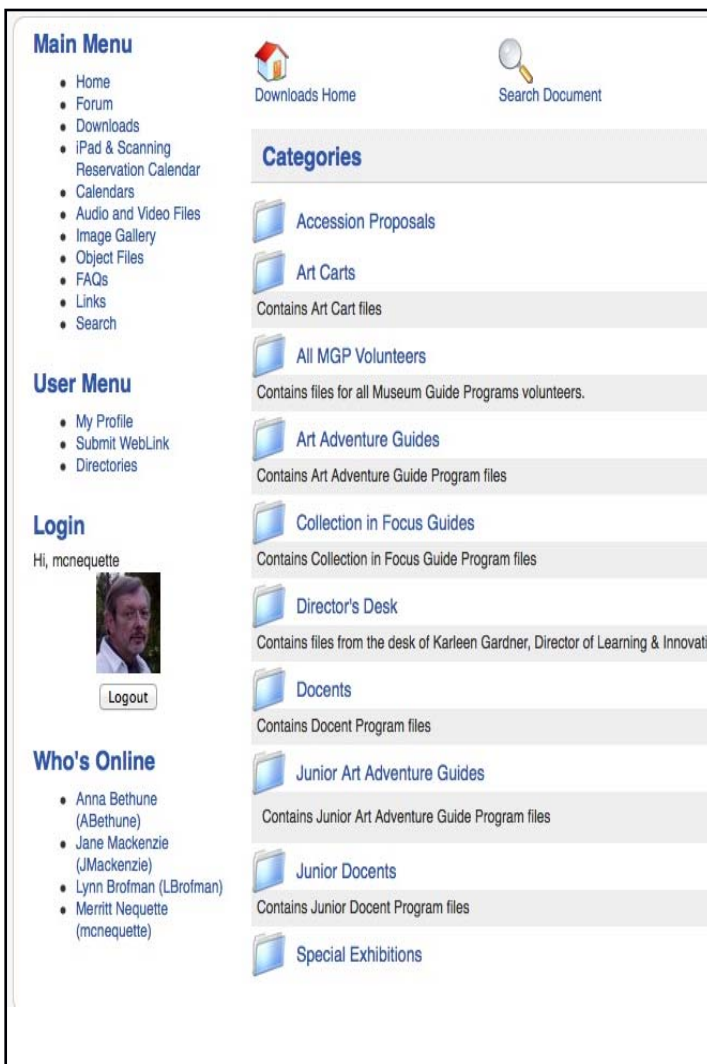
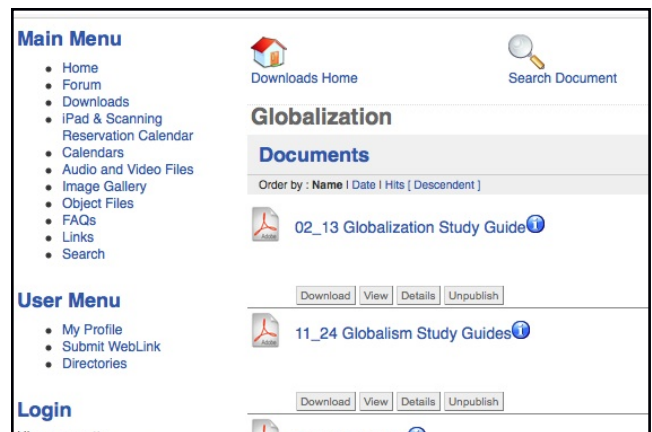
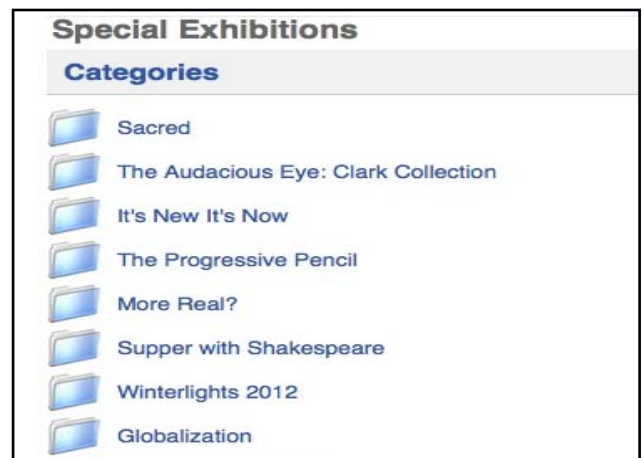
Where can I find Object Research?

On the left hand side of the page is the "Main Menu" on the home page.

Click on “Object Files.” This will bring you to the Object of the Month Documents.



Or Click on “Downloads,” then click on “Special Exhibitions,” then click on the “Globalization” folder to find the study guides and objects.



How do I find out what objects have been researched?

At the top of the “Object Files” screen [top left on this page]

you’ll see a document 100M GS Alpha 130222.

This is a list of all the Objects of the Month and Global Scholar research documents that have been produced.

The list has:

object name in alphabetical order

accession number

artist,

period and culture if the artist is unknown

name of the docent who produced the document

date when the document was submitted.

Not all research listed has been posted on MGP. If you can’t find it you can contact the person who did the research.

How do I sort the documents?

Below the “Documents” heading on the Object Files page:

Order by: Name/Date/Hits/Descendent.

Click on the order you want.



At the bottom of the page there is a menu for navigating through the pages by clicking on the page number:

«StartPrev12345678910NextEnd»

Page 1 of 35

If you're looking for an object name in the middle of the alphabet it's easier to find it if you go to a page in the middle and go forward or backward from there.

How do I search for documents?

The search box is at the top right hand side of the page. Type in the name of the object. The search function is limited. For example it does not search the content of the documents.

How do I share my object research, tours, themes, object lists...?

Does format matter?

There is no format requirement. Different classes were given different formats during our initial training and many of us have adapted that format to suit our needs. Some of us have written articles for the *Muse* and Friends Newsletters.

Any format that works for you is fine. Do put your name, the name of the object, the accession number, name of the artist, year or time frame in which the object was created and culture.

For example: Dedicated Docent, *Tiber Muse*, 56.12, Artist Unknown, Europe, Greek 27 BC-about 395 BC

Does length matter?

No. Sometimes we find a tasty tidbit of information that will make an object more interesting – go ahead and share it. Sometimes we become engrossed in the research and can go on and on. It's up to the reader to decide if it's helpful for them.

How does the research get posted on the MGP site?

Save your document as a pdf, give the document a name using the name of the object

Email the document to the Administrative Assistant in Learning and Innovation and copy your email to the volunteer who is managing the master spreadsheet.

Lynn Brofman is doing this at this time. In the email state the name of the object, the accession number, artist, time frame, culture. If the document is a tour, use the tour title or theme.

If you need someone to one help with this, contact Lynn Brofman.

## Leading Tours for Fellow Docents: Some Thoughts and Tips

---

*Emily Shapiro and Kathy Rothenberger*

Even the most seasoned docents have been heard to express some trepidation – dare we say fear? – about leading a tour group composed mainly or entirely of their fellow docents. Perhaps we are still haunted by memories of those early gallery talks we did with our classmates during docent training. Remember wanting to impress your classmates but worrying about sounding like a fool? How about the fears of sudden memory loss and dry mouth!

Nevertheless, if you have been tempted to lead a private tour for your docent friends but have not yet mustered up your courage, we are here to say, “Just do it!” You'll have fun and your colleagues will be incredibly grateful and appreciative of your efforts.

Last summer, the two of us teamed up to offer a tour of the special exhibit, *It's New, It's Now*, for our docent classmates. Here are some thoughts and friendly words of advice, based on this and other, similar experiences we've had over the years.

Tours of special exhibits are obvious choices for docent-only tours because they give you a chance to share your knowledge of these time-limited events with those of us who aren't assigned to tour the exhibit. They also allow you to increase the number of special exhibit tours you are able to lead and, thereby, get more out of the time you have invested mastering the exhibit. It's particularly fun to team up with a friend and co-lead the tour because doing so exposes you to your friend's different touring style and tour theme.

But docent-only tours need not be limited to special exhibits. For example, if you've developed a tour of the permanent collection that is based on a new topic or theme, or if you are assigned to a book tour or to the “tour of the month” for a particular month, consider offering a private tour on the topic to a group of your docent friends. Not only is this a collegial and generous gesture, it will allow you to get more “bang for the buck” out of your work.

Tours for your fellow docents don't need to take place at the MIA. Some of us have had a great time, particularly during the summer months, collaborating on tours of art and architecture in and around the Twin Cities. A few years ago, one of our docent colleagues led a wonderful tour of

public art along Nicollet Mall. The next summer, another colleague led a tour of architecture and sculpture along St. Paul's historic Summit Avenue. We combined both of these tour experiences with lunch and had a great afternoon, enjoying the sun and one another's company.

Last, but not least, leading tours for your docent colleagues gives you a chance to socialize with them and, in many cases, to renew friendships with those docents who don't share your tour day. Focusing on offering tours to your docent classmates, likewise, gives you an opportunity to return to those halcyon days of docent training when you were able to see each other on a weekly basis.

Now, in the interests of full disclosure, we will admit that conducting a tour group composed entirely of docents is a lot like herding cats. They will go where they want. They may want to stay at your first object for the entire hour. They may not be interested in answering your carefully-composed inquiry-based questions. They may even poke fun at your beautiful transitions!

No worries!! This experience is not about demonstrating your touring finesse. Your group is not interested in judging your knowledge or your performance. And don't be concerned about engaging your visitors with the art. They are already primed for that. Most importantly, remember that your friends have chosen to participate in your tour because they enjoy your company and appreciate your generous invitation. So have fun! In the end, that's what it's all about.

## Musings

*Tom Byfield*

I save things, but I'm not the common garden variety of hoarder who indiscriminately crams the space available with all the detritus of decades of packrattery. They are bourgeois with no class. No, my collection is of a higher order and channeled in its specificity, MIA stuff. Of course I have books everywhere, all tumbling over themselves yelling to be read. You know what I mean. One shelf houses all the papers we were required to write. They were birthed by typewriter using two fingers neither of which was familiar with the keyboard. They had been scrutinized by Sheila and Ann who made copious notes correcting spelling, punctuation and errors in my

presentation, filling the margins, tops, bottoms and backsides of most pages. Constructive criticism has its place I suppose, but those who need it most like it the least.

On another shelf sitting like lonely old men on a park bench are copies of the *Docent Muse* accumulated since I became a docent around the time that electricity was gaining popularity.

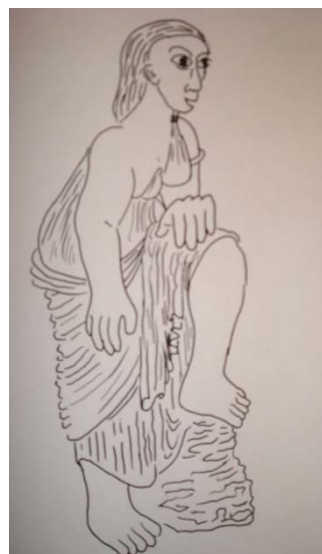
And that brings us to the purpose of this article. You didn't think there was one did you? How did the *Docent Muse* begin and how has it evolved over the years? Why this topic? Because the editor thought it might be a good idea and since I never had an original idea in my life, I said, "Yes." I thought with my usual brilliant insight that the MIA would be the logical place to start the research.

In a moment of absolute serendipity I ran into Fran Megarry there in the hall. Neither of us was injured. She asked what brought me to the MIA and I told her. She said that she had just finished assembling all the extant issues of the *Docent Muse* into two large binders with each year's publications in separate sleeves. And, that they are housed in Debbi Hegstrom's office. Problem solved! I leapt for joy or at least a reasonable facsimile for someone of my age. I wanted to kiss her, but a nearby guard was already viewing me with suspicion.

The first issue of the *Docent Newsletter*, as it was called then, was issued in 1979. It was printed on cheap colored paper. It contained hints for successful touring and write-ups for coming events. The spring issue of 1987 had a cryptic notice that collections for the *Doryphoros* came to \$470 with no reason given for the fund drive.

Perhaps, they thought that he would enjoy a trip back home to visit the relatives or maybe just for orthopedic replacement of the old soul's missing body parts.

Through the years the *Newsletter* was expanded and around 1991 or 1992 it became the *Docent Muse*. Because of missing copies of issues, her exact birth date is a tad uncertain. A



Picasso Muse



drawing of the *Tiber Muse* was used as a logo for a number of years which morphed into the same pose as interpreted by artists such as Monet, Picasso, Classical Phase, Seurat, and even a Princess Leia Muse promoting the coming *Star Wars* exhibit. Art related humor and cartoons appeared in many issues. In one of them was this dialog which may have been apocryphal, but has a familiar ring. On a tour with a women's bridge club, one of the matrons professed an intimacy with the art at the MIA:

*Matron:* Oh, look girls, there's a Constable!

*Docent:* I think you'll find that's a Lorrain.

*Matron :* That's a Renior over there.

*Docent :* You're very close, but that's a Degas.

*Matron :* I'm sure that one is a Seurat.

*Docent :* Sorry, but it's a Pissarro.

*Matron :* I am positive that one is a Picasso!

*Docent :* No, that's a mirror!

In 2010 color came to the much-expanded fourteen-page *Muse* and in 2012 it became anathema to us crusty old Luddites by being available only on line.

Finding fault is the most common type of unskilled labor. In going through these back issues one must admire the quality of writing fellow docents have consistently brought to the *Muse* and the 34 or so editors that collected the material. For those of you who are history buffs or desperate to fill an unscheduled moment, along with the *Muse* material is a copy of *The Origin of the Docent Program* at the MIA by Marion Cross which documents the sometimes tumultuous journey traveled in the formation of the docent corps as it is today.

The term "docent" came into being in 1962 as more formal training was instituted. Prior to that they were called "guides" and before that maybe just "clever museum folks."



On a personal note, these last seventeen years as a docent have added purpose and structure to my life in retirement saving me from becoming a hopeless untethered dilettante carousing in the

Spring Graduation *Muse*  
New Docent

North Loop, sending out Republican mailers and eating quiche. Beyond the sterling education, the pleasure of touring with diverse groups, the warmth and humor of the docent lounge, the unselfish sharing of tour tips, the unquenchable thirst for intimacy with the arts – all have been enhanced by the wonderful friendships with the remarkable bright and kind people who are called docents. My humble thanks.

## **Friends Buy-one, Get-one Offer!**

*Robin Keyworth and Maria Eggemeyer,*  
*Membership Committee Chairs*

Greetings Friends Members:

This is a great time to renew your membership in the Friends of the Institute and we have a very special offer for you, just in time for the holiday season! If you renew your membership during November or December (no matter when it expires) you'll receive a gift membership to share with a friend. And your own membership will be extended for a full year from its current expiration date! This is a wonderful way to support the Friends and at the same time share it with others. We hope you enjoy the perks membership offers, including Friends-only events like tours before and after the lectures, seasonal lunches, book club and the Art & Architecture tour. Wouldn't it be nice to share these with someone you love?

Remember, your membership helps the Friends support The MIA's collections, programs, and mission. Last year over 10,000 children were able to participate in educational tours at the museum, many for the first time, thanks to the Friends Children's Fund.

Just give the Friends office a call at 612-870-3045 if you want to take advantage of this offer.

Thank you for your continuing support of the Friends!

## Fall Docent Luncheon

*Paula Sanan, Co-chair Social Committee*

In spite of threatening severe weather, the annual Fall Docent Luncheon held on Thursday, September 19 in the Target Wing Reception Hall went on without a hitch! Seventy-five docents and seven staff members attended the event.



Recognition was given to Mimi Sanders for her forty-five years of active docent involvement.



Beryl McHale and Sally Polk were also recognized for their thirty-five years of volunteer commitment as docents.



Also recognized were the Classes of 1988 and 1998.

Christopher Atkins, coordinator of the MAEP program (Minnesota Artists Exhibition Program) was the luncheon guest of honor.

The event was staged with an Asian theme to celebrate the acquisition of Japanese art from the Clark Collections. Stunning Asian-styled floral arrangements were designed and donated by Christine Salmen, an Art Adventure guide.

Another year of innovative and informative touring by the docents has begun, kicked off by our luncheon gathering.

## Getting to Know Your Docent Executive Committee - 2013 – Somewhat Up Close and Personal

*Marilyn Smith*

As editor of the *Muse* for the touring year 2013-2014, it is my great pleasure to include an article in this first edition that will begin to introduce each of the new Docent Executive Committee members to you, the larger docent membership. Each committee member wrote a short autobiography and I enjoyed getting to know a little bit about each of them. I also realized as I was reading that this is an extraordinary group of individuals and that I wanted to find out even more about all of these interesting people. Perhaps you will too!

*President - Linnea Asp, Class of 1998*

My pathway to becoming a docent started with being a parent volunteer and attending a Picture Person Training. That's when I learned about the docent program. My enjoyment of fine arts and art history started in college, though handcrafts were part of my life from an early age. My husband shares my interest in the arts, and as of June, we are living full-time in the North Loop neighborhood of Minneapolis. In addition to loving my short commutes to the MIA, Jon and I enjoy exploring the city on foot and by bicycle. As always, there's much to learn and do as the museum continues to innovate and reach out in ever-expanding ways to the community. I look forward to working with this year's DEC to serve my docent friends.

*President-Elect - Mary S. Bowman, Class of 2005*

Over 30 years ago, I worked at the Golden Valley Library with a librarian named Jane Leck. Jane was also a docent at the MIA, and hearing her talk about that experience planted a seed for "someday" in my mind. That someday came in 2005 when the MIA called for applicants for the new docent class. I was one of the lucky chosen.

*Secretary - Sarah Henrich, class of 2001*

Even though I've been a docent since 2001, the MIA feels new to me every time I enter it. I am constantly expanded in of my awareness of and appreciation for all the energy, people, and commitments that go into creating and sharing art. This is a wonderful reality in a world as complex and often stumbling as ours is.

I am nearing retirement from a long career as a professor of New Testament. A couple of years ago I also finished my MA in Art History at St. Thomas. You get the picture – I love learning, thinking, wondering about human experiences and imagination. My future may open out in new directions: the arts and education will continue to be a major part of my life.

*Treasurer - Nancy Kelly, class of 2009*

I was an Art Adventure guide from the Class of 1999. I now am a docent from the Class of 2009. I began as the Picture Person at my children’s school, Nativity of Our Lord in St. Paul in 1995.

I am an attorney and work part time conducting employment hearings for the City of St. Paul. My husband, Peter, and I have four children and one beautiful granddaughter. I love being a docent and planning and researching tours. I enjoy the challenge of making each tour a rich experience for our visitors. I enjoy being on the Docent Executive Committee and also on the Friends Program Committee.



Tom Byfield      Mary S. Bowman      Linnea Asp

*Newsletter Editor - Marilyn Smith, Class of 2005*

I grew up in Frank Lloyd Wright land, Oak Park, Illinois. As a child, the highlight of each of my school years was a field trip to the Art Institute of Chicago. I loved seeing “my paintings” again and again, and I still do! I am a retired classroom teacher and spent thirty years teaching in various elementary classrooms, most of which were in Minneapolis Public Schools. But, I am an art teacher at heart, so after I retired I jumped at the chance to apply to become a docent at the MIA. The art degree remained a dream,

but as a docent I have the great good fortune to teach about art on every tour!

*Communications - Barbara Byrne, Class of 1998*

I was born and raised in Detroit, home of the fabulous Diego Rivera murals. In college, I majored in history with a strong minor in art history. My first taste of arts education was with the Picture Person program in the Edina schools almost 30 years ago. What fun! After 25 years in retail, I retired last year to have more time for visiting our grandchildren, foreign travel, golf, swimming, gardening and, of course, the MIA.



Sarah Henrich      Debbi Hegstrom      Marilyn Smith

*Social - Helen Leslie, Class of 2009*

I grew up coming to the MIA – we called it the “Art Institute” – with my family and was a member of the Saturday morning Gallery Club for several years when I was in grade school. I also took classes at MCAD, compliments of my grandmother who thought I was “artistic.” While I pursued a legal career and raised a child, whom I brought to the MIA, I continued to frequent the museum and, as I neared retirement, it seemed like the logical thing to apply for the docent class of 2009. And here I am!

*Social - Paula Sanan, Class of 2009*

I am a retired registered nurse who has worked in a variety of health-care settings over the years. I am a wife and the mother of three grown children, and the grandmother of two, with three more to be added this winter (including identical twins). My passions are politics, walking, tennis, reading, and learning new things. When I applied to become a docent at the MIA, it was a huge challenge for me to do so. I lacked a liberal arts background but hoped that my love of art would be an asset to be accepted into the



program. I continue to feel grateful that I can lead tours and inform an audience while I myself can be educated, too. How lucky to be able to be exposed to intriguing, beautiful, and cutting-edge art.



Nancy Kelly      Helen Leslie      Paula Sanan

*Honorary - Tom Byfield, Class of 1995*

When Jeul and I retired and moved from northern Minnesota to the cultural candy store of Minneapolis we lived like voracious dilettantes savoring all its delights. I have always enjoyed thinking I knew something about the Arts but having tried painting with execrable results, had to sublimate my lack of talent and go elsewhere. When Jeul pointed out an ad in the paper soliciting applicants for a new docent class at the MIA, I decided it might be fun to while away a few idle hours there. After checking the actuarial tables, the board reluctantly agreed to admit me. I have spent the last seventeen wonderful years whiling away.

*MIA Representative -Debbi Hegstrom*

I am the *Senior Educator* at the Minneapolis Institute of Arts. In this position, I oversee all aspects of a comprehensive docent training and continuing education program, which includes teaching about the museum’s encyclopedic permanent collection as well as evaluating and coaching docent gallery tours and conversations. I am actively involved in exploring new avenues of audience engagement, including the use of improvisational techniques and participatory activities on tours. I feel fortunate to work with an amazing group of docent volunteers.



Barbara Byrne      Sarah Henrich



**HELP SPREAD SUNSHINE**

The Docent Executive Committee Sunshine Fund needs your help.

- ◆ If you know a docent who could use some cheer, pass that information to Debbi, the tour schedulers, or Barbara Byrne of the Docent Executive Committee.
- ◆ Make a monetary donation to the Sunshine Fund. Cash or checks (made to Docents of the MIA) gladly accepted by Paula or Jennifer, our wonderful tour schedulers.

**Thank you for helping!**