

Historical Guides Association Newsletter

October 2008

Bus Booked

It is "one of the greatest monuments to one of the most fascinating U.S. citizens we have," said Mary Levkoff, curator for *Hearst the Collector*, opening at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA) on November 9. The HCA bus trip to the exhibit will be December 8. As of the printing of this newsletter, it was virtually sold out.

The HGA was able to get the \$10 admission fee and \$8 tour fee waived. Unfortunately, only those on the bus can take the tour. For logistical reasons, if you choose to drive, LACMA will not allow you to join the HGA tour.

At a September *Salon* put on by Friends of Hearst Castle, Levkoff talked about the artwork on loan from our monument, saying it will be fun for us to see the dozen Greek vases from our library "in a different context, spotlighted in a museum setting" versus high atop the bookcases. Mr. Hearst's collection of Greek vases, says Levkoff, "at one time was probably the greatest west of Pennsylvania."

We can visit our Antonio Canova *Venus Italica* on the first floor of the Art of the Americas building. It will be among 150 works once collected by Mr. Hearst including a Bertel Thorvaldsen sculpture coming from Copenhagen, the Hope Athena (of course), and a mother-of-pearl-encrusted Renaissance box coming from the Louvre, dotted with garnets and crowned with four giant spherical emeralds, which was made in India in 1533-34 as a gift for King Frances I of France.

New York's Metropolitan Museum is sending a Spanish choir screen and a cabinet for which it paid \$12,000. Levkoff says each individual panel on this piece would sell for about \$65,000 today. We will see a four-foot alabaster sculpture of St. Barbara from the National Gallery of Art in Washington, DC that Levkoff describes as the best forgery. (Look in the back at her Art Deco

hair.) And there will be an Anthony van Dyck painting, a full-length portrait of Queen Henrietta Maria with Sir Jeffrey Hudson, loaned from the National Gallery of Art in Washington, DC.

From New York's Metropolitan Museum, the exhibit includes a 16th century tapestry from Millicent Hearst's Long Island home (illustrating the Apostle's Creed) that has never been seen and which has surprisingly vivid, jewel-like colors. There will be suits of armor from the armory hall in the Hearst's New York apartment at the Clarendon, but Levkoff couldn't get two six-foot candlesticks made in 1400 she says are worth about \$1 million each. Apparently the candlesticks were mistakenly included in the liquidation sale at Gimbel's. Levkoff said Mr. Hearst tried to buy them back, but an art dealer already bought them and would only sell them to Mr. Hearst if he covered the dealer's profit.

In the last five years of Mr. Hearst's life, Levkoff said he donated "more than 800 works of art" *without strings* to LACMA. "Without strings" is significant because it meant LACMA could sell some of these pieces and use the money to buy more important pieces.

Levkoff believes Mr. Hearst absolutely knew what was important and that LACMA didn't realize what it had at first because he didn't particularly like collecting paintings; instead he favored decorative arts. Of course, not everything Mr. Hearst owned was significant because he often bought things simply to decorate his various estates.

LACMA is the second largest repository of art collected by Mr. Hearst in the country (next to our monument). And thanks to Hearst records, Levkoff said, "We know the history of most of the objects."

There will be free time to explore some of the other buildings while we're at LACMA. The HGA will send out trip details to the lucky members who signed up soon.



It was as if the ghosts of previous guests were approaching the castle as the Duesenberg Car Club slowly snaked its way up the hill on October 28. While the car club members enjoyed a private tour with Museum Director Hoyt Fields, Hearst Castle workers surrounded the giant dinosaurs from automotive days past, taking photographs and picking their favorites. In the photo above, the car on the right once belonged to Mr. Hearst. Duesenbergs are an American car, manufactured in Indiana. Thanks to Beverly Steventon for the photos.



President's Corner

For health reasons, I have not actually been at the castle for several months, but I continue to be involved and miss you all.

In my spare time, I received a gift of *Lettice and Lovage*, a comedic play by Peter Schaffer, author of *Equus* and *Amadeus*. I knew of the play, but had never had a chance to read it. It is the story of a tour guide and how she makes her tours more interesting, albeit not so factual and to the disapproval of her supervisor. I think it is certainly worth a read... less than an hour...not only for the humor but also for the underlying philosophy of Lettice, that life should be "enlarged, enlightened, and enlivened." I wish all three for you and your endeavors.

—Hollie Stotter

Field Trip to Milpitas Hacienda and

Mission San Antonio de Padua



Griffin at the security staff at Hearst Castle

Brian Griffin's journey to the security staff at Hearst Castle

is a fascinating one. He and his wife Dale, came through Cambria on their honeymoon in 1975. He was a CHP officer in Woodland (not Woodland Hills); Dale worked for UC Davis. They took a tour of Hearst Castle before the big Visitors Center was built. Brian says, "The buses were not quite as comfortable then, but the tour guides were just as nice as they are today."

That's when the Griffins decided Cambria was where they would retire one day. They bought a couple of ocean view lots for \$8,000 and Brian says, "That ended up being the best investment we ever made."

After retiring from the CHP in 1994, Brian worked for a member of Congress in Merced. His boss was voted out of office in 2003 so Brian went to work for FEMA and was assigned to the San Simeon earthquake in 2003.

The Griffins sold their house in Merced in 2007 and built a new house in Cambria. Dale joined the Living History program at the castle and in early 2008 Brian left FEMA for a day security job.

Brian is a hot air balloon pilot and together, the Griffins took people on champagne hot air balloon flights for several years in Yolo and Los Angeles. The couple also loves to travel aboard cruise ships. They've been on about 30 cruises so far. The next one will be in December to Mexico.

He is an Air Force veteran, active in the Cambria America Legion. He serves on the national board of directors for the National Association for Uniformed Services. He will be next year's president of the Cambria Couples Dance Club. Both Griffins are members of the Oddfellows fraternal club in Cambria.

The Griffins have been married for 33 years with three children and two grandchildren, who all live in Sacramento.



The HCA organized a carpool on October 22 through the Fort Hunter Liggett Army Base to the Milpitas Hacienda designed by Julia Morgan to manage the northern part of the ranch. We also visited Mission San Antonio de Padua in Jolon, where we discovered part of the museum devoted to the "Hearst Period." Most of the 25 who took the drive are pictured above. On the right at the top are Beth Stephenson, Guide I, and Constance Cordon, Guide I and HCA co-secretary, high above the hacienda dining room. Living History docents who made the drive, bottom



right, are (left to right) Sylvia Huth, Dale Griffin, and Lois DeNicola.

Our sincerest sympathy to Emily Penfield, Guide I, who lost her beloved husband Bob on Friday, October 24.

Dancin', Dancin', Dancin'



Weiss and Bobbie Hamilton practice the Lindy Hop (middle), and Instructor Brittany Armstrong shows Living History Docent Marj Sewell dance moves popular during the heyday on the hill. Truckin', anyone?

Renew Your Membership

Treasurer Bobbie Hamilton reports the HGA only has 65 members who have paid their dues for 2008-2009. We welcome 17 new members this year, but would like to see everyone renew. Dues are only \$10 and your membership gives you privileges like priority booking on field trips, free lectures, free dance lessons (complete with Twinkles and Jello!), and the fun of getting to know everyone on the hill in a social setting. Ask any member of the board for an application.

Board of Directors

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Members at Large: George Cartter,

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Program Suggestions:

Box 94 in the guide trailer