

Honolulu Museum of Art  
Draft of the Minutes of the Docent Council Meeting  
Thursday, September 4, 2015

In Attendance: Carol Root, Sue Francis, Betsy Robb, Jan Tucker, Lizzy Lowry, Mif Flaharty, Cathy Levinson, Sandra Simms, Sabra Feldstein, Christine Park, Tomoko Kamiya, Karen Ley.

President Carol Root called the meeting to order.  
Appreciation was expressed to Jeri Simons for the inclusion of the docents' photos in the 2015-2016 directory.

Following are the committee reports:

#### The Hospitality Committee

The committee was thanked for organizing the Potluck and DOT graduation on Monday, August 31, which was attended by about 75 current docents, DOTs and staff. The subject of both a different venue and/or a different time of day for future graduation gatherings was discussed in light of the fact that it is quite hot in the Palm Courtyard at midday at this time of year. It was suggested that the HMA cafe would provide more shade, but the drawback to use of the cafe is that the tables cannot be moved. Another suggestion was to have an evening event rather than a luncheon.

Sandra Simms feels that the docents should have a supply of basic paper goods to have on hand for future use and she has volunteered to arrange for that.

#### The Docent Room Committee

Mif Flaharty gave the report for Joyce Azama. The new mirror and bulletin board are now in place. Mif stated that the mail in the docent room is often left unclaimed for too long. Also, the designated shelf should be used for the book exchange rather than the table. At the end of each month, the shelf will be cleared of unclaimed books. Docents are reminded that no food or drink is permitted in the docent room

#### The Adopt-A-Gallery Committee

Mif Flaharty informed the council members that she will be leaving the island and therefore will no longer be able to head the Adopt-A-Gallery program at HMA.

Betsy offered thanks to Mif for all the work she has done on behalf of this program and for the countless hours she has volunteered toward the task of keeping the docent tour binders current.

Mif is wondering if the Adopt-A-Gallery program might be updated to an on-line format in light of the availability of resources for docents through the Education Department website that did not exist ten years when the program was first initiated. In the meantime, Mif suggested that perhaps gallery "parents" could take photos of current exhibits or artworks with the labels and wall text and then send this information out as part of the weekly "blast", with the ultimate aim

of creating a future gallery-by-gallery website.

#### The Education Committee

Betsy Robb announced that Christine Park has been selected as the Kress Interpretive Fellow and offered congratulations to Christine on her new role.

Betsy stated that the Stupski Foundation has given a new grant for an independent assessor to evaluate the HMA's neighborhood outreach program which the foundation has funded at Queen Kaahumanu Elementary School for the past few years. In addition, a position has been funded for a curriculum specialist in the HMA education department whose job it would be to formulate and articulate a unified curriculum for all three HMA campuses as well as the outreach programs for five to twelve year olds and life long learners. The ultimate goal of this effort would be to demonstrate to the DOE the importance of integrating an arts curriculum into the public schools and to have the DOE then take over the program.

Betsy brought up the importance of meeting the benchmarks mandated for the school tours and said she has noticed in observing the school tours that at times some of the docents may not always include each of the activities on a given tour or meet the stated goals of the tour. She is planning to be in the galleries observing during the school tours and then to offer her thoughts to the docents after the tours regarding the goals and the activities associated with the tours.

She feels that conversations with the docents might take the place of the evaluations that were done prior to the merger of the museums.

Lizzy thought that the docents might benefit from a program of continuing education.

Cathy suggested that a group of docents who enjoy giving a particular tour might meet to discuss a shared approach to the tour which would meet the goals.

Lizzy felt that if docents meet after a tour to share their experiences, it would be helpful if Betsy could be there also.

Sue posed the question " how does a docent know whether or not the students understood the goals of the tour ?". Lizzy suggested a possible "exit survey" for the docents to fill out after a tour as a way to assess if goals were met.

Betsy stressed the importance of always first looking at the art with the children, and then doing the activity after viewing the art.

Jan reminded the docents to check the current routes for a school tour because they always try to include the current exhibits, such as the Rodin exhibit, in the school tours if appropriate.

Jan also shared that since she has separated the types of tours available on the docent website, she has had many more docents signing up, especially for the school tours.

Regarding the adult tours, Lizzy suggested that the docents might be available for visitors at the front from 10:00 AM to 10:30 AM and then move into the galleries to offer help there.

The lead docent would stay at the front.

Betsy thought it might be useful to pass out a questionnaire to visitors with a suggestion of something to think about while in the galleries and also to let the visitors know at the entrance that there would be docents available in the galleries.

The actual feedback from visitors has been equally positive whether or not their visit included

interaction with a docent.

The museum's communications advisor shared with Betsy that the museum has received praise on Trip Advisor and Yelp in English and Japanese.

Sue advised to always check the tour guide for possible changes prior to giving a tour, and Mif felt that this advice pertains to the school tour binders as well.

Betsy stated that she has just completed a new policy for the Art after Dark program.

#### The Book Club Committee

Lizzy Lowry shared that the book club is enjoying a successful year. Dietra will continue on as co-chair with Lizzy until the end of this year at which time Lizzy hopes to have a new co-chair. Lynn Hiyakumoto may be considering this position.

#### Foreign Language Representatives

Christine Park stated that the Korean Speaking Docents Myoung Won Han and Sigrid Tokuda will rotate to cover the Tuesday morning time.

Tomoko Kamiya, the Japanese Speaking Representative, stated that having a docent present from Tuesday through Saturday has been difficult even though in theory there are several docents who have completed the training. Apparently, a couple of the new docents are not yet quite confident of their skills. Tomoko stated that she is helping out the docent who is working on the first Wednesday of the month because there are many Japanese visitors who come on that day.

Betsy was wondering if there would be any way to train Japanese docents who do not speak English.

The National Docent Symposium preparation was reported to be going well per Cathy Levinson.

The next Docent Council Meeting will be held on Thursday, November 5.

The meeting was adjourned.

Minutes submitted by Karen Ley

