

Letter from the Docent Chair

It is a challenging task to be faced with writing a letter to all of you in the capacity of Docent Chair. Let me say, first of all, that it is a privilege to represent you this year. I hope great things will occur for each of us. May we each experience an "ideal tour!" It has always been enjoyable for me to sit in the Docent Lounge and listen to comments as docents come back from touring. So often there is excitement because things went well. A particular group of students was interested, they answered our questions and asked many great ones of their own. These students went away enthused about what they saw and heard. It is times like this that make the work we do preparing for our tours worth it. We need an "ideal tour" now and then to remind us why we love what we do.

As I began thinking about preparing for this next year of touring, I told myself that I would add new objects to my list of favorites. I began walking through the museum looking at objects from China, Japan and India because these are areas where I need to learn more. I realized I should take time to do this more often! I discovered the *Yuan Dynasty Animal Figures of the Zodiac*. It was great fun trying to figure out which were the dog, the rat and the ox. I envisioned children enjoying looking at them and doing the same thing. I then discovered the Japanese Divine General who was associated with one of the twelve animals of the Asian Zodiac. I believe he may have a dog peeking out from his unusual hat. I stopped at the Chinese pillows and became intrigued with the *Tiger Pillow*. What remarkable detail! One of my favorite discoveries was the *Priming Flask* from India. It is carved with wild animals associated with the hunt. Both ends terminate with wonderful leaping antelopes. I moved on to the Pambadam Earrings from India. How unlike my vision for Indian jewelry with all the spheres, cones and arches. I thought it would be fun to compare them to the *Ear Spools*.

After my walk-through, I remembered that while talking to a recent junior docent graduate, I learned that they had a different way of preparing their papers than we did when I went through training. I was told that the first thing they did was to come up with three open-ended questions about the objects. Easy, I thought. So I went back to my objects and attempted to do just that. No, it wasn't easy. It was hard to come up with good questions. I realized then that I would like to start looking at objects that way first, before I knew anything else about them.

For example, what word would I use to describe the *Divine General*? What is there about him that would make me choose that word? Or, what might that interesting ivory-carved object be used for? Why would the artist have put such delightful animals all around it? I decided that coming up with questions make me look more closely and think a little longer about the object. I liked that. So thinking first in terms of questions will become my newest challenge. In case I don't master it, our required continuing education training on February 2, 2004, will be devoted to the topic of developing and using open-ended questions.

Each of us will have our own challenges this year. It appears that it may be calmer as we lack the blockbuster exhibits. There just might be more time to walk through the museum and enjoy what we see, discover new things, and maybe for some of us "older" docents, master the art of open-ended questions.

Peggy Dietzen

From the Museum Guide Program Office

Welcome back to another great season of touring!

As you look for ways to perk up your tours, we'd like to remind you of the many resources available—in addition to the object files!

- The computer in the study area provides direct access to ArtsConnectEd, a powerful tool to search for particular objects or groups of objects in the MIA collection related to a specific topic. Type in the name of the object or a key word, such as "turtle" or "lacquer," and you will receive a list of possibilities! Look for the field that tells whether the object is on view, and what numbered gallery it's in. You can print color pages from ArtsConnectEd for 25 cents each.

- In fact this computer can be used to research (and print) anything on the Internet. If you know of great sites that other docents might want to visit, please feel free to bookmark them.

- You have access to hundreds of excellent books that you can use to find valuable information. An assortment of new books has recently been added to the docent/guide library, including these new titles:

Axel, Elizabeth and Nina Levent, eds. *Art Beyond Sight: A Resource Guide to Art, Creativity, and Visual Impairment*.

Buchanan, Joan and Sandra Davies. *The Pacific Northwest Coast Indians: Music, Instru-*

ments, Legends.

Causey, Andrew. *Sculpture Since 1945*.

Johnson, Paul. *The Birth of the Modern: World Society 1815-1830*.

Kemp, Martin. *The Science of Art: Optical Themes in Western Art from Brunelleschi to Seurat*.

Moss, Paul. *The Literati Mode: Chinese Scholar Paintings, Calligraphy and Desk Objects*.

Metropolitan Museum of Art. *Manet / Valezquez: The French Taste for Spanish Painting*.

Museum of Modern Art. *Matisse Picasso*.

Reid, Bill and Robert Bringham. *The Raven Steals the Light*.

Shearar, Cheryl. *Understanding Northwest Coast Art: A Guide to Crests, Beings and Symbols*.

Wallace, William. *Michelangelo*.

Some of these books were purchased with funds raised by all of you at silent auctions a few years ago. Additional book funds remain in the D.E.C. account, so please let us or your committee representatives know if there are books you would like to see added to the library.

- The MIA and MCAD libraries are both available for your use. You can use MIA books in the second-floor library, or take advantage of borrowing privileges at MCAD. Be sure to identify yourself as an MIA docent at both libraries. Show your picture badge in the MIA library and your nametag at MCAD, where they will check your name against a list at the reference desk.

If in the course of researching objects you find readings that are particularly relevant to our permanent collection, give a copy to Kristine who will make additional copies and put them in the object files so that they are available for others to share.

We encourage all of you to take full advantage of the resources in the study. We also ask that after making copies or color prints, remember to pay 5 cents per photocopy or 25 cents per printed page by leaving a check or cash in the container on the vertical file in the office. We fell very, very short in our collection jar last year, leaving a big red hole in the budget. Use of the machine far surpassed collections. We ask that all of you who might have been short on cash or simply forgot to pay last year put a little extra in the jar now. We would hate to see the copier disappear because we cannot afford to keep it.

Sheila McGuire and Debbi Hegstrom

Book Group Meets in September

The Docent Book Group begins another year of reading and discussing books related to art on September 29th following the morning lecture at the MIA. (The meeting room is still to be determined.) The book to be discussed on that day is Ross King's *Michelangelo and the Pope's Ceiling*. Members will also be asked to suggest books for upcoming sessions, and times for future meetings. This merry band of book lovers welcomes new members! If you think you might be interested, show up on the 29th. If you need further information, contact Dale Swenson.

Art in Bloom Redux

I send a belated and very sincere thank you to the seventeen docents who toured Art in Bloom this year. You made 1,063 guests very happy, and survived giving 61 tours of various sizes. I'm always delighted by what a jaunty, perky group you are...certainly contributing to the upbeat mood throughout the museum during our annual welcome-spring-at-last event.

Some highlights: a visually impaired tour (if you can't touch the flowers, then how...) with seeing eye dog, and sighted companion carrying voluminous purse with tiny dog peeking out! A hearing impaired tour...for young mothers with strollers practicing their "infant signing." Try to fit three strollers in one elevator!!!

Two compliments from committee chairs about docents summarize their excellence: "docents take *Art in Bloom* to a higher level, adding an educational element that we plan to increase in time;" and "docents are the backbone of *Art in Bloom*, doing their duties with grace and good humor."

Docents are worth their weight in gold – but a thank you is all we can afford.

Janey Leck
Art in Bloom Docent Chair

In memoriam - Pauline Lambert

Our friend and colleague, Pauline Lambert, died on Tuesday, August 19th. She had been undergoing treatment for a brain tumor for the past year. The docent training class of '98 remembers Pauline as a person of great warmth, intelligence and positive attitude. We relied on her not only as a resource for her expertise in French language and culture (she had a doctorate in French literature), but also for her special interest and touring tips in the topics of *Women and Art* and *Spirituality and Art*. In addition to giving wonderful tours, she was active in the Docent Book Group and co-edited the *Docent Muse* last year with Karen Boe. Members of the class of '98 plan to create a fund to provide a memorial gift to the MIA in Pauline's honor. Barbara Horlbeck will be coordinating this effort. Please contact her if you wish to contribute.

Honorary Docents

The Honorary Docents' monthly programs this year will again consist of Book Club on the third Wednesday and General Tour/Lunch on the fourth Wednesday of the month.

On August 27, we toured the new University of Minnesota Regis Center for Art on the West Bank campus and ate lunch at near-by St. Martin's Table. On September 24, we will tour the Frank O. Gehry drawings at the Weisman Art Museum and also the U. of M.'s renovated Coffman Memorial Union.

In October, our annual luncheon/meeting will be at the home of Ruth Waterbury, where we will also view the Waterbury's woodturning collection. We honoraries are grateful to Barb Diamond and Margaret Leddick for planning our events. Questions? Call Barb, Margaret or Pudge Christian.

Update on Docent Executive Committee

Your 2003-2004 Docent Executive Committee met with the outgoing committee on June 9, and convened its first meeting of the year on August 11th. Please feel free to contact committee members if you have questions and/or concerns about issues pertaining to the docents. This group of talented people is excited to serve you in the coming months!

Chair	Peggy Dietzen '95
Chair-Elect	Kati Johanson '92
Secretary	Susan Tasa '98
Treasurer	Christine Meenan '95
Newsletter Editor	Linnea Asp '98
Social Committee	Barbara Edin '01
	Maria Eggemeyer '01
Communications	Pat Wuest '92
Honorary Docents	Pudge Christian
Staff	Debbi Hegstrom/MIA
	Sheila McGuire/MIA

Meeting dates for 2003-04

Meetings are usually held at 12:30 p.m. in the West Conference Room.

September 15
October 13
November 10
December 8
January 26
March 8
April 12
May 10
June 14

From the editor:

Greetings to you from the *Docent Muse* editor for 2003-04. I have a challenging task ahead of me after the wonderful job that Karen Boe, Pauline Lambert and Merritt Nequette did on last year's *Muse*. Merritt has agreed to help me with technological support, for which I am truly grateful. I look forward to producing a newsletter that keeps docents and staff in touch and gives useful information about the many aspects of giving tours at the MIA. Please feel free to contact me with ideas, articles, suggestions, and comments. You may reach me by phone (763-551-1558), e-mail (jasphus@aol.com), or my docent mailbox. Please note the publication dates and deadlines for this year's newsletter, and keep in touch!

Linnea Asp

Docent Muse Publication Dates, 2003-2004

Fall 2003

Publication date: week of September 1

Deadline: Monday, August 18

Winter 2003

Publication date: week of November 17

Deadline: Monday, November 3

Spring 2004

Publication date: week of February 23

Deadline: Monday, February 9

Summer 2004

Publication date: week of May 17

Deadline: Monday, May 3