To All Mission Inn Docents –

I am sure you may have noticed some staff changes around the Mission Inn Foundation and Museum in the past couple of months. As President of the Board of Trustees, I would like to explain what has been going on lately. Most importantly there have been some staffing changes.

In March 2019 our Executive Director Gina Cavallo Collins resigned and relocated to Seattle. While Gina was only with the Mission Inn Foundation since January 2018, during that time she expanded our cooperative activities with other museums and cultural institutions both nationally and locally. The Mission Inn Museum is now a part of the North American Reciprocal Museum Association (narmassociation.org) where your Mission Inn Museum membership at $100 or above allows admission to over 1,000 other museums. Gina also spearheaded a collaborative partnership between various museums and libraries highlighting our regional citrus history in Riverside and San Bernardino counties. To see our part of this project, check out the new exhibit, *Citrus Legacy: The Mission Inn and Riverside’s Citrus Legacy*, currently on display in the Mission Inn Museum and Store. We wish her well as she begins her new life in Seattle.

While the Executive Committee and Board of Trustees consider the best way to go forward with recruiting for a new Executive Director, members of the Board of Trustees are working with staff to maintain the office structure and ensure that the Foundation’s work continues without interruption. Meanwhile, Karen Raines, Collections Manager, and Kanani Hoopai, Director of Education, both resigned to work at local educational facilities. Karen will be working in the Special Collections Department at the University of California, Riverside library and Kanani will be in the academic support area with Riverside Community College at the Riverside City Campus. Again, we wish them both well in their new positions.

Meanwhile, to make sure our outreach programs continue as planned, Mary Frances Keiser has been hired as the Education Coordinator and will oversee both the Hands On History program and the Youth Ambassadors. She recently completed a Master’s in Library and Information Science at San Jose State University and has previously worked in museums. She joined the Mission Inn Foundation as a Program Instructor for the Hands On History outreach programs in fall 2018. She is currently teaching Hands On History classes in the Alvord Unified School District and will be starting a new series with Riverside Unified School District in May. Board of Trustees member Walter Parks is working with staff to cover the collections and acquisitions areas until that position is filled.

The Executive Committee and Board of Trustees are working to provide a balanced budget for the fiscal year beginning July 2019. To that end there may be some changes in the staffing structure of the organization. These potential changes have not yet been determined. The goal is to maintain the Mission Inn Foundation and Museum and its important role in our community. A solid and sustainable financial plan will help us to accomplish our mission.

If you have any questions or concerns, feel free to contact me directly.

Thank you.

Gary M. Christmas

President, Board of Trustees
The evening of January 10th was crisp and clear as the docents and staff gathered at the Dales Senior Center to celebrate the end of the 26th annual Festival of Lights.

Sounds of laughter and greetings filled the air as fellow docents expressed happiness “that we survived” the craziness, insane parking, immense crowds and changeable weather of the previous 6 weeks. Catching up was one of the many topics heard as docents found seats at the dining tables.

Gina welcomed everyone, expressing her appreciation for all whose unselfish and diligent work made the Festival a rousing success. Craig Goodwin, President of the Docent Council, congratulated all and spoke briefly about the impact we have as goodwill ambassadors for not only the hotel but also the foundation. Craig then introduced the mystery guest of the evening, Riverside Mayor Rusty Bailey.

Mayor Bailey expanded on the theme of how unique the Mission Inn Docent organization is. He likened us to being Deputies of the Mayor in that we are not only Mission Inn ambassadors but also the City of Riverside by assisting in the “Doors Open” and other citywide events. He mused how our organization is actively passing on Riverside’s history and stories not just to the various visitors but to area residents as well. The Mayor mentioned especially our school tours and their impact on future residents by showing how one Riversider made a difference at the City, County, and State levels.

Dinner was a delicious assortment of Italian entrees with sides of fresh fruit, garlic bread, and Caesar salad. A tempting array of desserts finished off the meal. Lively conversation resounded throughout the dinner.

After dinner announcement included “Nanci’s Recap” which told us the story of the Festival in numbers:

432 additional tours of which 232 were after 2 p.m.; 4900 guests of which 2250 toured after 2 p.m. The new “Under the Lights” hotel guests only tours – 22 tours.

Finally, it was time for the event we were all waiting for – THE AWARDS!! Rachel Builtman and Nancee Richardson presented the “fun” awards:

“You’ve been bumped” to Deby Anderson who was “bumped” from tour to tour.

“Weird-o Magnet” to Diane Jackson who received the most unusual queries and call for information.
“Double Duty Lifesavers” to all who worked desk shifts.

“Fit to be Tie-d” to Jim McMurry (singing cats), Jerry Sturmer (bow ties) and Michael Bussee for their unusual neckwear.

“Padre Award” to Eric Beacham for his portrayal of St. Frances of Assisi.

“Came to the Rescue” to Jacci Barnes, Barbara Radle and Peter Keck, retired docents who came to our rescue by assisting on many tours.

The “serious” awards followed:


To finish of the evening, several docents related Festival experiences (the good, the bad, the ugly – we all have them!)

Susan Wassman related why she will now be known as the “FOL Crazy Lady”; Linda Ward related the dysfunctional family; Jim McMurry related the centurion’s birthday tour and Dani Trynoski related the disappearing reservations dilemma. Many docents related little random acts of kindness which were greatly appreciated.

Most of all everyone agrees the 2018-2019 Festival of Lights was wonderful, memorable, exciting, frustrating, exhausting, educational, and beautiful and we will do it all again next year!

Side Note: USA Today started the Reader’s Choice for Best Public Holiday Light Display in 2014. The Mission Inn Festival of Lights has won the Award EVERY YEAR!!!!! 5 years and counting!!!!

Docent Council has revised the Policy and Procedures and the INN-laws!! Go to the All Access section of the Museum Website to get your copy today!!

YES, they made changes!!
The 2019 Friends of the Mission Inn silent movie fundraiser was 1927 “My Best Girl” staring Mary Pickford and Charles “Buddy” Rogers. It is the love story of a department store stock girl (Pickford) who falls in love with a co-worker who is the store owner’s son (Rogers) incognito. Even though the feelings are mutual, the couple face many difficulties including his engagement to another before the love conquers all fairy tale ending.

Mary Pickford was born Gladys Mary Smith in Toronto, Canada in 1893. She started in plays at age 5, went on tour at age 8 and became a Broadway star at age 14. She was known by many sobriquets “Baby Gladys”, “Girl with the Curls” but was best known as “America’s Sweetheart”. She acted in 245 films, produced 25 films, wrote or co-wrote 14 film scripts, was a founding member of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, and along with D.W. Griffiths, Charlie Chaplin and Douglas Fairbanks started United Artists Studios in 1919. In 1929, Ms. Pickford won her only Best Actress Academy Award for the film Coquette, which was also her first talking motion picture. She was awarded an honorary Oscar for her contributions to the motion picture industry in 1976.

Mary Pickford passed away in 1979 at age 87 in Santa Monica, CA.
Two Trees on The Tour Route
(Part 1 of 3)

By Karl Healton, Mission Inn Foundation Docent

If you’re like me, you may sometimes start your tour by referring to the 1903 photograph in the Museum of Teddy Roosevelt shoveling a few loads of dirt at the base of the Parent Washington Navel Orange Tree. If time permits (we only have seventy-five minutes, after all) and most of the venues are closed, you may mention that after the tree died, Frank Miller had the wood cut up into souvenirs, such as the gavel for the Riverside chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR). [1] But did you know that there is another tree on the tour route, in a framed picture that is very similar in significance to its local history much like our Parent Navel? I’m referring to the oak tree in the James McBurney painting on the First Floor Landing. You may never have time to share any of this information with your tour guests, but I’d like to present a more comprehensive story here for your edification, and because I’m being paid by the key-strokkkkke.

The Oak Tree shown in the McBurney painting is known locally to Monterey Bay historians as the Serra Oak, or sometimes the Vizcaino/Serra Oak, and according to local legend, the Spanish explorer Sebastian Vizcaino, upon his discovery of Monterey Bay during his voyage of 1602, carved his initials in the great tree. Over a century and a half later, Father Junipero Serra, in 1770, supposedly carved his initials in the tree as well. This connection between Serra and Vizcaino is interesting because Vizcaino was widely criticized for his “absurdly exaggerated claims [about Monterey Bay] for its value as a harbor.” [2] According to Walton Bean, Professor of History at University of California, “Vizcaino seems to have feared that if he did not return with a favorable report, he would not receive the rewards he hoped for [i.e.: command of a Manila Galleon]. The result was that he described the bay to the viceroy not only as having an abundance of fine timber for shipbuilding, but as being ‘sheltered from all winds’—a claim that can only be described as positively fraudulent, since the bay actually included no proper harbor at all.” [2] (The current harbor was man-made centuries later.)

At least one historian, in an unpublished manuscript, attempted to prove that Vizcaino had not discovered Monterey Bay at all, but rather San Francisco Bay, because his descriptions were more indicative of the San Francisco Bay Area than Monterey Bay. Monterey Bay possessed little drinkable water; the river there is called Salinas (saltwater). There is little in the way of food supplies (some deer, fish and small game) and the timber there is largely coastal oak such as our Serra Oak in the painting (totally unsuitable for shipbuilding). Another historian compared Vizcaino’s accounts of Monterey Bay to that of a present-day Real Estate Agent (e.g. “fixer upper”: house in total disrepair; “quaint”: a very, very small dwelling, etc.)

Probably the best evidence that Vizcaino did in fact land at Monterey Bay is that in 1770 Father Serra, aboard the Spanish ship San Antonio following the charts of Sebastian Vizcaino landed there as well. The ship in the background of the McBurney painting is the San Antonio in Monterey Bay. The
initials, said to have been carved in the tree, are unfortunately lost to history if indeed they ever existed at all. The tree itself, however, does exist, much like our Parent Washington Navel Orange tree, in souvenir chunks around Monterey Bay. Here is its story as told by Monterey Bay Historians.

“The tree once stood in a ravine whose creek flowed into the southern end of Monterey Bay. It was there that the Sebastian Vizcaino expedition drew fresh water after entering the bay on December 3, 1602. On December 17, 1602 the Carmelite friars of the Vizcaino expedition held a mass under the tree and Vizcaino claimed Monterey for Spain. Vizcaino also noted the tree in his descriptions of the bay for future expeditions. In 1769 Gaspar de Portola led an [over-land] expedition to find the bay and establish Monterey as a Spanish settlement. [Portola sits on a horse in the McBurney rendition] After initially failing to find it, he was successful in May 1770- after following Junipero Serra’s suggestion to look for the large oak tree described by Vizcaino. On June 3, 1770 bells were hung from the tree. [See the bells in the McBurney painting.] Father Serra said Mass in an arbor constructed under the tree [one can see the arbor behind Junipero Serra] and the military officers of the Portola expedition unfurled the Spanish flag. [3][4] [Notice the soldiers and the Spanish flag in the McBurney painting as well].
What’s “INN” a Name?

Back in 1989 when the first issue of what we know as the INNsider was being produced, a “Name Me” contest was held. The idea was for the docents themselves to name the newsletter. Several docents submitted entries. The finalist listing of prospective names was as follows:

- INN-credible Docents (Eileen Hamel)
- Docents with a Mission (Unknown)
- Docent Diggings (Joan Hall)
- Guiding Tidings (Joan Hall)
- Mission INN-terests (Philippa Jones)
- INN-sider (Kathryn Stafford)
- Mission INN-possible (Michelle McQueary)
- The INN Guide (Bette Kidder)
- INN-steppers (Joan Hall)
- The Mission Inn Guardians (Bette Kidder)

Which would you have voted for? After the list was narrowed down, in the final vote INN-sider won!! We will always be INN-debted to Docent Kathryn Stafford for her INN-sight into what docenting is all about!
So, who are we talking about? Disi? HUH?!? Achille Giacomo Disi, the guy who didn’t finish the sgraffito on the south wall of the Spanish Art Gallery.

Achille (Achilles/Archille/Archilles) Giacomo Disi was born December 3, 1866 in Rome, Italy. He studied at and graduated from the Academy of Fine Arts in Rome. While in Rome he decorated the four largest rooms in the Palazzo Silenzi and did some work at the Vatican. While fulfilling these commissions he worked in the old master’s technique of sgraffito.

Sgraffito which means “to scratch” in Italian is a decorating technique produced by applying layers of color or underglazes to leather hard clay (stiff but not bone dry) and then scratching off parts of the layers to create contrasting images, patterns, and textures to revel the clay or color underneath. “In order to produce a picture which will last for ages, Artist Disi traces his outlines on the cement as soon as it is laid. Then before it is dry, he adds his colors with the result that the paint is drawn deep into the plaster becoming a part of the structure itself.” (Los Angeles Times, Paintings to Outlive Ages, 30 August 1914).

In 1900, he and his wife, Francoise, immigrated to Nice, on the coast of France. It was in Nice that Disi worked on the frescos at the villa of Empress Eugenia (wife of Napoleon III). He also did frescoes in the Monaco Casino Monte Carlo’s Moorish room. In May 1900, the Disi’s immigrated to the United States settling in Chicago where he was a partner in Disi and Faggioni Studio. Disi became a naturalized citizen on October 17, 1913.

In 1910 Myron Hunt (architect of the Spanish wing) and his partner won an architectural competition for the design of the First Congregational Church in Riverside. After returning from his trip to Spain, Frank Miller decided to emphasize the Spanish architecture in his design for the next phase of the Hotel. He knew California would experience an influx of visitors from around the world for the Panama-Pacific International Expo and the Panama-California Exposition which were scheduled to open in 1915. Frank hired Myron Hunt in 1913 to fulfill his vision for the Spanish Wing. Hunt then introduced Frank to Achille Disi, the artist whom Hunt envisioned painting the murals into the concrete of the courtyard wall. From the description of the work to be performed, it appears Frank was thinking of doing more than just the wall of the Spanish Art Gallery.

“One panel depicts Youth, light-hearted and expressing itself in music, industry and art. In medallions on the side, a Roman marriage scene and other figures portray the classic period. A second fresco depicts the spirit of Romance, the age of knights and ladies, and the third glorifies California’s natural subjects. The bear, birds and fruits typical of the State are revealed in their natural colors. There will be others when the court is eventually finished and Artist Disi is busily engaged on them.” (The Los Angeles Times, Paintings to Outlive Ages, 30 August 1914, pg. 21) Frank also wanted Napoleon and Joseph in several of the panels.
A completion deadline was set for November 1, 1914 as the Hotel was planning a grand opening celebration of the Spanish Art Gallery on New Year’s Eve 1915. Then Frank changed his mind and dismissed Disi. An article published in a 1984 issue of the Baxter Art Gallery Journal entitled *Myron Hunt 1868 – 1952: The Search for a Regional Architecture* relates “but again Miller apparently objected to the cost, and the sgraffito work which Hunt had planned on the concrete on the north wing was only half completed.”

Unfortunately, all we have is:

![Section of the North wall from the 3rd floor overlook of the Spanish Patio.](image)

*Photo by D. Trynoski*

It must have been difficult for Frank to call a halt to the fresco considering all his plans for the Spanish Wing. It was probably difficult for Achille Disi, an outstanding and respected European muralist.

From 1900 thru 1925 Disi lived at various times in Chicago, San Francisco, and Los Angeles. In the 1920 census, he is listed as a housepainter. What a lowly description of a man known as a watercolorist, muralist, and an interior designer. On his 1922 passport application, he listed his permanent address as San Francisco and occupation as muralist.

Some of his most memorable works include the Iroquois, the Majestic and the Marlow theaters in Chicago; the Pompeian room of the Union League Club, the Imperial theater, and the ceiling of the Sacred Heart Church in San Francisco; and Hotel Land, Hotel Sacramento, Alhambra theater, California National Bank, and others in Sacramento. It is surprising and sad that as talented and prominent as Disi was not much is known of his life. Also, unfortunately, many of his works have been lost in fires or destroyed in other ways.
Scena di guerra by A. G. Disi
Image Courtesy askART.com

Ceiling of the Sacred Heart Church in San Francisco (rear view)
Photo from Friendsof1800.org website

An Italian Coastal Village with Figures by A. G. Disi
Image Courtesy askART.com
Frank Miller had “stuff”. So do we all. Scott M. Haskins, a historical artifact restorer known as the “Preservation Coach” on youtube.com, presented several tours and did a couple Antique Roadshow-esque appraisal sessions. His book “How to Save Your Stuff from a Disaster” is a gold mine of practical information for the everyday situation which may arise.

Here are a few ideas gleaned from him to help prepare for the “Big One”.

1. Gather all important documents (originals if possible or clear copies on archival paper if not) into one area which is secure; weather and temperature resistant and free from dust.
   a. Birth, Marriage, and Death certificates
   b. Insurance policies and paperwork
   c. Trusts, Wills, Estate and Financial information/documentation
   d. Passports, original Social Security Cards
   e. Military Discharge Paperwork
   f. Ownership records/pictures for vehicles, major appliances, and important art/artifacts
   g. Medical histories and treatment permissions
   h. Family History/Genealogy records
   i. Religious records
   j. Copies of the last seven (7) years Tax Returns
   k. Electronic backups, website login id’s and passwords
   l. Important family contact information

2. Use archival grade materials for all copies and storage options.

3. DON’T TRY TO DO ALL THE ORGANIZING NOW OR AT ONE TIME!!! Remember – Rome was not built in a day. Break into sections. Work from large to small (ie. Images ➔ Photos or Prints or Negatives ➔ Year or Person or Family Name or Place or Event).

4. DON’T USE ANY OF THE FOLLOWING:
   a. Any type of off the shelf tape
   b. Any “smelly” plastics
   c. Any “permanent” or “sticky” type glue, fixative, or cement
   d. “Magnetic” or self-stick photo albums
   e. Any staples, paperclips, brads or such that can rust
   f. Any household cleaning supplies
From the Editor’s Desk

As we celebrate 30 years of the INNsider, I thought a retrospective look into the origins of our newsletter might interest some. The first edition of the newsletter was not titled. Read “What’s INN a Name” for details. I have also dug through the files and found some interesting tidbits of long-lost information which will be shared in future editions. Can you spot the detail we have been deleting for years?

You may have noted that the Issue number is somewhat out of sequence with the previous. The change was made due to my digging through the files. Duplicate issues of the INNsider were published during the 1990’s (someday this may become trivia or myth). To correctly account for all issues, the duplicate issues were added into the total.

Research (digging) has turned up the Issues missing from the archives. These are currently being scanned to preserve them on a digital format. A searchable index of all the articles in all issues will, hopefully, be online by the end of the year.

The other news is that we now have an email address for you to submit ideas, articles, suggestions, or questions. Please note innsider@missioninnmuseum.org. I will try to get back to you quickly with an answer or at least keep you posted with the progress of your inquiry.

I look forward to serving my fellow docents in the capacity of Editor of our great newsletter.

Lynette Loveland