

VRA Southern California Chapter Meeting
Japanese American National Museum in Los Angeles
December 19, 2006

Approximately 25 VRA-SC members assembled at the Japanese American National Museum in Los Angeles for a business meeting, behind-the-scenes tour of the museum, and to enjoy the special exhibit on Ansel Adams in Manzanar.

Business Meeting

Jackie Spafford, the Chair, welcomed everyone, provided a run-down on the day, and called the business meeting to order. The first order of business was to resolve Chapter officer issues. An election was held to fill the vacant Secretary position. The Nominating Committee had a difficult time finding candidates. The ballot had only one, Maureen Burns, and the option to write-in a candidate. Loy Zimmerman explained the Bylaws and oversaw the election. He passed out the biographical information and the ballot, collected and counted the ballots, and announced the results. Maureen was elected Secretary by a unanimous vote.

Deborah Lenert, the Treasurer, reported on the present state of the VRA-SC finances. With the local membership renewals and the income from the JANM meeting, the Chapter treasury stood at \$617.14. It was mentioned that new local members are always welcome and everyone was also encouraged to join the national organization.

The Chair then facilitated a discussion about possible venues and themes for future meetings. Colleagues at the Gemological Institute of America http://www.gia.edu/3954/gia_home_page.cfm have offered to host a meeting in Carlsbad. It was suggested that we might consider doing this closer to the VRA 2008 conference in San Diego in order to be in good proximity for planning and assisting with this big job. Since the Getty Villa <http://www.getty.edu/visit/> re-opened recently and our Getty colleagues have been doing so much work with the Cataloging Cultural Objects project, it was suggested that we combine a CCO information session with a visit to the Villa. ARLIS-SC members have expressed an interest in a joint meeting as well. Jackie looked into the possibility of a fun (possibly fundraising) event with Charles Phoenix who does retro slide shows <http://www.godblessamericana.com/>, but it appears that it might be too expensive to host and so we might try to get a block of tickets for one of his existing programs instead.

A discussion about the 2007 VRA conference in Kansas City ensued. Jackie encouraged everyone to attend since it looks like such a great program and it is the organization's 25th anniversary. There was some discussion about the possibilities of offering a VRA-SC travel award, as has been done on occasion in

the past, to help a SoCal member attend the annual conference. Members seemed interested, but there have been few applicants in the past. It was also decided that continuing the tradition of a conference donation to help with refreshments or something would also be a good thing. A brainstorming session about the SoCal raffle donation followed. It was decided that a collection of movie DVDs would be the best idea with a "silver screen" theme to tie into the 25th anniversary. Several movie titles with SoCal venues or themes were suggested for purchase and donations of any sort welcomed.

With the VRA conference coming to San Diego in 2008, members were reminded that our San Diego colleagues will need our help since they are few in number. UCSD's Vickie O'Riordan, as VRA's Vice President for the Conference Program, is busy getting the sessions and other events together and Greg Reser is leading the charge on the local planning. So, expect to hear more from them both and please consider taking part in a volunteer activity not matter how big or small.

In terms of other business, Jackie provided a summary of her activities with the national organization's Travel Awards Committee. The awards are competitive, but she encouraged members to apply. Maureen reported on the national organization's Education Committee and mentioned that the Summer Educational Institute for Visual Resources and Image Management will be held at Indiana University in Bloomington in 2007. EdCom is also working on the possibility of scholarships for SEI attendees and an internship award similar or in conjunction with that offered by ARLIS. Maureen also mentioned some interesting programs that may be of interest to the VRA members at UCI sponsored by HumanITech, see http://www.humanities.uci.edu/humanitech/lectures/lectures.php?event_cat=current for more information. Jonathan Furner, UCLA Associate Professor of Information Studies, introduced himself and announced the formation of a student group called ARTiFACTS <http://polaris.gseis.ucla.edu/artifacts/> that hopes to connect with professional organizations.

Digital Copystand

A series of presentations followed the business meeting and focused on "Setting up a Digital Copystand: Reports from the Trenches." David Gustafson from UC Santa Barbara, Tom Moon from Cal Arts, and Loy Zimmerman from UC Irvine generously shared their expertise in setting up digital copystands and provided detailed information. Their experiences provided a variety of perspective ranging from the non-photographer curator to the professional photographer. Lists of the major equipment purchased for these different set-ups, tips for improving results with enhanced photographic tools, and lessons learned were shared by the speakers. The complexities of the workflow, image quality challenges, and ways to increase efficiencies seemed to be of the most interest to attendees. The presenters provided information about good online links and references to

obtain additional information and there was plenty of time to field questions from the floor.

JANM Tour

The tour of the museum began in the Manabi and Sumi Hirasaki National Resource Center <http://www.janm.org/nrc/> which supports researchers with over 60,000 artifacts chronicling more than 130 years of Japanese American history, including: reference services; access to materials in the permanent collection, archives, and library resources; reproduction and licensing permissions; and online resources. Cheryl Toyama and other JANM staff highlighted the diversity of the collections from art works to rocks from internment camps and how they catalog such materials in their Argus collection management system developed by Questor. The group was led into the storage area where it was easier to see the fascinating variety of art works, furniture, textiles, memorabilia, etc. They are making their collections accessible with their own digital image database accessible at <http://www.janm.org/collections/online/list>.

A tour and demonstration followed in the Watase Media Arts Center <http://www.janm.org/mediaarts/production.html> where the director, John Esaki, told the group about their in-house film production and the Discover Nikkei Web site at <http://www.discovernikkei.org/en/>. They mostly do in-house production of DVDs and sometimes contract out the film-making which focuses on museum exhibits and performances, outreach activities, and oral histories. They consider the life history recording as important as acquiring artifacts in terms of the museum's mission. John demonstrated and shared information on the state-of-the-art equipment used in the facility as well as showing the group clips of their productions, some of which are available in the museum bookstore or on the Discover Nikkei Web site.

Conclusion

Sincere thanks were extended to Cheryl Toyama, John Esaki, and all the JANM staff for graciously hosting such a terrific program and working on the planning with Jackie Spafford who was eager to have an event in LA's Little Tokyo area. VRA-SC members then dispersed to view the collections and enjoy the special exhibit focused on Ansel Adams in Manzanar.

Respectfully submitted,
Maureen Burns
VRA-SC Secretary