Comments from the Executive Director

Expanding the “Preservation Community”—YES WE CAN!

Now is the time to expand our community of preservationists. Development is moving at a slower pace, and the new Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) has the opportunity to streamline the entitlement process. For example, it’s expected that for minor repairs and maintenance permits to landmarks, property owners will be able to obtain administrative review and approval review, a best practice consistent with similar commissions nationwide.

In this city of passionate voices, our “preservation community” might benefit from embracing a wider set of core values. For example, preservationists and green building advocates can link up, evidenced early on by the LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design)-certified historic rehabilitation of Adobe’s 701 Townsend Street, and more recently by Pelli Clarke Pelli’s sensitively designed plan for a LEED Platinum building next to the historic Audiffred Building.

In San Francisco, many view the preservation community as the Darth Vader of best laid plans: invoking environmental review to advance the NIMBY—NOT IN MY BACKYARD agenda. We regret that instead of opposing a project on its merits, some in our community use preservation to stop development. Projects are delayed or cancelled, costs escalate, and tempers flare. The much larger city suffers the consequences of NIMBYism—invoicing the “preservation community” to further questionable agendas.

Heritage embraces the concept of a dense, culturally diverse and more sustainable city, with contemporary and “green” architecture that fits within the historic context, and respects neighborhood values. It is in this spirit that Heritage seeks to expand the preservation community and also to better reflect our great city’s cultural and ethnic diversity. As preservationists we must listen more carefully to neighborhood voices and respond to the aspirations and values of people who live and work in these places. We must be more sensitive to cultural values and the broader context. By listening we advance our mission, especially in areas where we’ve been less active, such as the Tenderloin, Chinatown and Bayview.

A new Partners-in-the-Field matching grant from the National Trust (see Page 4) will enable Heritage to do just that. From engaging with a wider constituency of San Franciscans who may not be familiar with our work, to strengthening the connection between historic preservation and sustainable development, to collaborating and partnering with other stakeholders, such as SPUR, AIA SF, the Victorian Alliance, Heritage will work hard to ramp up major-gifts fundraising to satisfy the National Trust grant match. We will also be advocating for best planning and urban design: on March 27th, a joint Heritage/Bingham-McCutchen Symposium focused on developing historic properties; Heritage is also participating in a working group that is rewriting Articles 10 and 11 of the Planning Code in response to the new HPC (see Page 5).

In our living city, historic preservation is a quality-of-life issue, along with public health and safety, environmental justice and other civic priorities. Heritage will continue to increase public awareness about our incredible architectural and cultural legacy, while also galvanizing neighborhood stakeholders toward a common goal of improving the quality of life for all San Franciscans.

Jack A. Gold
Executive Director
**Preservation Notes**

**HeritageYP Join up for Tonga Room, CPF**

Two big events are on the horizon for the Heritage Young Preservationists Group, and both have Mid-Century history in common.

The first relates to the Tonga Room & Hurricane Bar, at the Fairmont Hotel. When the Fairmont announced its plans to convert the whole of the Fairmont Tower into condominiums, plans did not indicate a future home for the Tiki bar and restaurant. While the final outcome is still being studied, grassroots efforts have already begun to save the Tonga Room (www.SaveTonga.com).

YP will be working to bring attention to the Tonga Room’s uncertain future. In attempts to capture an accurate and diverse history, YP asks Heritage members to share their fondest memories of the restaurant and bar, especially those who remember the space when it first opened. A collection of oral histories will help strengthen future efforts in preservation.

At time of print, the process was still in the initial planning phase, but if you’d like to be involved in saving the Tonga Room or would like be kept up-to-date, and especially if you have any stories that you’d like to share please contact abevk@sfheritage.org.

The California Preservation Foundation will be holding its 2009 conference in Palm Springs, April 16 - 19. Titled “The Culture of Leisure - Rethinking the California Dream”, the conference will take advantage of the Mid-Century and Spanish Colonial architecture of the Coachella Valley.

HeritageYP will be hosting a New Preservationists reception at the conference on April 16, from 9-10:30pm. The event will be an opportunity to meet and mingle, and enjoy the historic former General Telephone building in downtown Palm Springs. If you plan on attending the conference, please join!

More information can be found on the YP blog: www.heritageyp.org.

**Notes from the Editor**

This issue of Heritage News marks the first of 2009, and the first of a new schedule for the newsletter.

We’ve decided to adjust the distribution to three times a year: end of March, July, and November. Fear not, as we are also bulking up from 12 page issues to 16. With all the exciting things happening at Heritage, this will allow us to maintain our momentum, while still providing a quality newsletter for our members.

This issue is also exciting as it is almost entirely made up of member-generated writing. I’m thrilled to feature an article by board member Carolyn Kiernat and her team at Page & Turnbull.

As always, I continue to encourage your participation. If you would like to write something for the newsletter, please email me at abevk@sfheritage.org.

Enjoy the new Heritage News,
Alex Bevk

**Correction**

The Fall 2008 issue of Heritage News featured an update on the lawsuit regarding 55 Laguna (The San Francisco State Teacher’s College National Register Historic District). A caption on the accompanying photo mis-stated that Richardson Hall was slated for demolition. The plans actually call for Richardson Hall to be retained and adaptive reused as mixed-use building, while the Richardson Hall Annex, an administrative wing, will be demolished for new construction. We apologize for the incorrect caption in the last issue.
**Restoration Interrupted**

By Christopher Yerke

In January of 2009, the Ernest Coxhead-designed Julian Waybur house at 3232 Pacific went from active restoration project to “restoration opportunity” for sale. The house suffered a fire on the 3rd story in May of 2008. While the fire damage was contained to the third story, the rest of the house suffered smoke and water damage from the firefighting efforts. In order to prevent mold and continuing smoke odors, the house was largely stripped to the framing for proper drying and smoke encapsulation procedures.

The ensuing restoration effort was a collaboration between preservation architects Page & Turnbull, general contractor Lencioni Construction, and Restoration Workshop acting as architectural millwork restorers. Phase one of the project involved removal of interior finishes, repairs to the building envelope at the roof and cornice, smoke remediation, completion of as-built drawings and the creation of the overall plan for the building’s restoration.

The three story winding stairwell and the grand living room contained Coxhead’s signature redwood paneling. As in other Coxhead houses, there is a playful juxtaposition of Shingle Style, Arts and Crafts, and oversized neoclassical elements. The stairs included cascading redwood moldings on the underside of the flights, and a spectacular Spanish Cedar handrail supported by a profusion of delicate redwood balusters. The stairwell trim was meticulously disassembled by the Restoration workshop crew and taken to their shop to begin the long process of stripping and restoration, while crews under the direction of Lencioni construction completed the other phase one tasks. Phase one was largely completed by December 2008.

Phase two, involving seismic, electrical, plumbing and all other infrastructural upgrades to the house, was due to begin in January, along with the removal of the living room paneling and trim for restoration. By this time, the downturn in the economy had forced a change in circumstances for the owners, and the decision was made to close down the project and put the house on the market. Now, the fate of the remaining historic portions of the interior is in doubt, as there is no guarantee that a potential purchaser of the property would elect to reinstall the now restored stairwell millwork, or restore the living room paneling, which will have to be removed in order to perform mandatory seismic upgrades.

It is to be hoped that the eventual purchaser of the property will wish to see it restored to the fullest extent possible. For more information on the Julian Waybur house, visit www.3232Pacific.com.

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**Heritage, National Trust Team As Partners-in-the-Field**

Just one year after Heritage joined the National Trust as a partner organization, on February 17th Heritage was informed of its award of a three-year $120,000 Partners-in-the-Field matching grant from the National Trust for Historic Preservation. Partners-in-the-Field is part of the National Trust’s effort to strengthen preservation organizations across the country. Heritage will use the funds to enhance its citywide engagement by hiring a Neighborhood Preservation Specialist who will focus on neighborhoods where Heritage has traditionally not been active. These neighborhoods include the Tenderloin, Bayview, Chinatown, Japantown, as well as advocating for preservation and reuse of public school buildings throughout the city. Heritage will assist property owners, neighborhood residents and organizations, developers, local officials, and others with information and tools to recognize, protect, and enhance neighborhood livability.

“Partners-in-the-Field grants are catalysts that spur historic preservation, economic revitalization and promote sustainability,” said Richard Moe, president of the National Trust for Historic Preservation. “Grant recipients have used preservation to create innovative solutions to complex problems – with measurable impact.” ED Jack Gold expressed thanks to the National Trust, its Western Office, and the Robert W. Wilson Charitable Trust for this partnership, and stated, “The matching grant will also challenge Heritage to secure the major gifts necessary to match this generous grant from the National Trust.”

The grant is timely—given the new 33-block Uptown Tenderloin National Register district. According to Randy Shaw, Executive Director of the Tenderloin Housing Clinic, “The federal designation represents a milestone in a thirty-year campaign to preserve the community’s working-class, historic character.”
Built circa 1875, the Italianate cottage at 900 Innes Avenue was approved as an Article 10 San Francisco Landmark on May 9, 2008. As the only surviving worker’s cottage in the India Basin neighborhood, it is one of the few physical links to San Francisco’s once important scow-schooner industry.

What started with this home became a village which built shallow-draft scow schooners for transporting supplies around the Bay Area. The village subsequently became a thriving boat building community. Unlike the waterfront districts of other neighborhoods, this area was characterized by small family-run businesses with the specific purpose of building wooden boats.

Among the hundreds of boats built here: the scow-schooner Alma, now a tourist attraction at the National Maritime Museum at Fisherman’s Wharf; the barges that were used to build the Bay Bridge; Jack London’s adventure boat the Snark; and WW II Victory launches.

The gingerbread trim featured in the photo above is now gone. The India Basin Neighborhood Association is working with current property owner, Tenderloin Housing Clinic, and the Carpenters Union to find funds and donated services to renovate the cottage, including painting the outside and rebuilding the trim.

New legislation proposed by the Board of Supervisors looks to rewrite the existing Articles 10 (Preservation of Historical Architectural and Aesthetic Landmarks) and Article 11 (Preservation of Buildings and Districts of Architectural, Historical, and Aesthetic Importance in the C-3 Districts) of the Planning Code. The Planning Department has also prepared modifications, and a working group has been established to help guide the Department in the drafting of new Articles 10 & 11.

Heritage Executive Director Jack Gold and board president Charles Olson are participants in the working group, as well as members of AIA, SPUR, the Planning Commission, the Historic Preservation Commission, and other stakeholder groups. The Planning Department will also hold public testimony hearings. Please visit their website (http://www.sfgov.org) for more information.

On March 27, Heritage is teaming with Bingham McCutchen for a symposium on developing historic properties in San Francisco following the passage of Proposition J and the future changes to Articles 10 and 11. Panelists will offer diverse perspectives on challenges and opportunities in the entitlement process, and the effect of the new Historic Preservation Commission.

The Golden Gate Bridge, Highway and Transportation District, which owns and operates the Golden Gate Bridge, has investigated both physical and non-physical measures to stop people from committing suicide by jumping off the Bridge and currently utilizes several non-physical suicide deterrent systems. Last year it prepared alternatives to consider the installation of a physical suicide deterrent system on the Bridge.

During a formal comment period from July through August, 3,458 individuals, organizations and agencies provided 5,870 comments on the DEIR/EA. The Board of Directors voted on October 10, 2008, with a vote of 15 ayes and 1 no, to select Alternative 3 - the NET as the Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA).

The Golden Gate Bridge is considered an historic property, primarily because it was determined eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places in 1980. Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 requires federal agencies to take into account the effects of their activities and programs on historic properties. Joining the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, the National Trust for Historic Preservation, and DOCOMOMO, Heritage will serve as a consulting party during the Section 106 review.
The Walt Disney Family Museum: The Challenge of Addition, The Art of Subtraction

By Carolyn Kiernat, AIA, and Lada Kocherovsky; photos courtesy of Page & Turnbull unless otherwise noted

Later this year, the first visitors to arrive at the Walt Disney Family Museum in the Presidio of San Francisco will experience the same shaded porches and timeless views enjoyed by 19th Century soldiers. This continuity of use expresses the stewardship of the Presidio Trust as well as that of the property’s leaseholder, the Walt Disney Family Foundation. Now in final construction, three historic buildings in the heart of the Main Post are being adapted for new uses as museum, offices, and physical plant. Getting here has required more than 30 feet of excavation into the site’s sandy clay soil, implementation of new technologies and systems, and ongoing collaboration among architect, client, design team, contractor, the local community, and the Trust.

As architect for the project, Page & Turnbull’s challenge has been to capture Walt Disney’s story and to spark the imagination of the 350,000 visitors anticipated yearly. The outcome blends history and modernity, preservation and contemporary design, addition and subtraction.

The Disney Museum will settle into an 1897 barrack on the west side of the Presidio’s Main Parade Ground. The Walt Disney Family Foundation offices, collections, and gallery will be located to the west of the museum, in the former Post Gymnasium, built in 1904. The smallest structure, a former machine gun shed built in 1940, will be the central plant for the complex. With landscape elements joining these buildings to form a cohesive whole, this small campus is expected to open to the public in early fall.

The three buildings represent distinct eras of Presidio construction, and it gives us great pleasure – in this single project – to address the rich sweep of built history on the Main Post. We retained elements that make each building singular, and intervened with contemporary construction where additions and alterations were warranted.

The Disney project is the largest and most complex preservation endeavor to date in the Presidio. These buildings and the surrounding site contribute to the Presidio’s status as a National Historic Landmark District. The nation’s first urban national park, the Presidio is also a California Landmark.

When we arrived at the building in 2005, the exterior was in fairly good condition, but all historic finishes had been removed from its interior. Lath and plaster had been stripped from the walls and only exposed brick, wood framing, wood subfloor, cast iron columns, structural trusses, and wood windows remained. While the lack of historic finish materials enabled us to insert a new use in the building without the loss of sensitive features, we worked hard to retain the configuration of the building’s original floor plan and spatial relationships. The size and proportion of the building’s original spaces lend the new museum galleries a...
comfortable and human scale.

To accommodate exhibits and facilitate circulation, Page & Turnbull designed a contemporary addition to occupy the courtyard. This glass and steel pavilion is distinct from the masonry surrounding it, and the lightness of its form introduces contrast with the sturdy historic structure. From a second-floor interior walkway within the glass pavilion, visitors will enjoy unparalleled views of the Golden Gate Bridge and Marin Headlands.

The pavilion design supports the story of a critical turning point in Walt Disney’s life. Dynamic exhibits will showcase his more innovative ideas— including the genesis of the monorail—and Walt’s pivotal move from film into television, city planning, and theme parks.

Additions to historic buildings often inspire both praise and criticism. To us and to our clients, the addition was necessary to facilitate circulation through the building and to identify the next phase in this building’s use and evolution.

When considering where to locate an addition, we knew that anything visible from the Main Parade Ground at the front of the building would be off-limits. At the rear of the building, we did not want to obstruct the strong pattern of masonry wings that the row of barracks creates along Taylor Avenue. Placing the addition at the rear of the building, adjacent to what has been the service road, enabled us to insert the new construction into the courtyard. Set back from the western edge of the heavy masonry walls, and stopping before it reached the height of the existing eave, helped the addition step back into the void of the courtyard. This provides contemporary expression that does not impact view corridors within the site, and accommodates a volume and mass that respects the massing of the historic structure.

As architects, we worked through an exciting phase of discovery to carefully identify what the interior space of the pavilion needed to be. Many sketches and models later, all parties were satisfied. We commissioned a full-scale mock-up of the addition’s spiral walkway to enable the team to see every twist in the design, which accommodates the flow of all visitors through the space. Among final design challenges was to identify the appropriate degree of transparency in the pavilion’s glass façade. This was achieved by installing clear-vision glass at the edges of the addition where glass meets brick, and also along the second floor viewing.

Why the Presidio?

When people hear that the Walt Disney Family Museum is being built in the Presidio of San Francisco, they often ask, “Why build it in Northern California?” For our clients, the reasons are personal.

The goal of the museum is to tell Walt Disney’s story, his struggles and successes on the road to becoming one of the most influential cultural icons of the 20th Century. To accomplish that, the Disney family sought to separate Walt’s personal history from the many activities of the Walt Disney Company in Southern California.

Our clients were also well aware of this amazing location overlooking the Presidio Parade Ground with views to the Marin Headlands and Golden Gate Bridge. A trove of Disney artifacts had been warehoused in the Presidio for more than a decade.

Walt himself, an ambulance driver in World War I, was interested in military history. His favorite military leader, General John J. Pershing, was based at the Presidio for a time. The Main Street character of the Main Post may also have appealed to Walt. With its human-scaled buildings, white front porches, and the village green quality of the Parade Ground, the Presidio exudes the small-town character he cherished.
platform where visitors will be able to pause and take in views of the Golden Gate Bridge. The panels of glass carry through the rhythm of the courtyard’s west-facing wall, now enclosed within the pavilion.

The historic courtyard walls, visible from within the building, are intended to be legible to passersby. Perimeter skylights on the pavilion roof wash daylight across these walls, which define the gallery and frame the walkway.

**Walt Disney Family Foundation Offices & Collections (Building 122): The Art of Subtraction**

Originally a gymnasium housing an indoor running track and locker room facilities, Building 122 was later used to store cash and distribute military stipends. It became an arts center in the 1970s. It was then that a floor was inserted in the gymnasium, obscuring the original soaring and light-filled double-height space. At about the same time, an incompatible addition was constructed on the south-east corner of the building.

Now, the Walt Disney Family Foundation and Museum offices are housed on the first and second floors. A gallery for temporary exhibits, open to the public, will move into the gymnasium’s rediscovered double-height space. The Foundation’s collections are located on the secure, climate-controlled lower level. The building also accommodates art registration, scholarly research, education, and outreach functions. Our design meets strict Smithsonian Institution standards related to maintaining consistent temperature and humidity levels – in a building where groundwater intrusion was an ever-present issue before and during construction. Meeting these environmental criteria will enable the Foundation to accept collections from throughout the world.

When we look at repairing and rehabilitating significant historic buildings, we begin by assessing the impacts of our work to ensure that interventions don’t harm more than they help. Our approach here, unlike that at Building 104, tended more toward subtraction than addition. We removed non-historic additions and accretions and undid work that compromised the building’s historic integrity, repairing deteriorated masonry and wood windows, and revealing the magnificent volumes of space hidden in the building’s brick shell. Our goal was to subtract what needed to be subtracted and to emphasize clean, minimal, and contemporary interventions where needed in order for the building’s historic character, inside and out, to read as it did originally.

Tasks began on the gymnasium exterior, which required extensive conservation. We removed a two-story 1970s addition that obscured the original building’s south wall, and miscellaneous ducts, fans, stairs, and awnings were also jettisoned. We repaired and re-anchored unstable architectural elements. (See the keystone, for example, that is slipping, and the diagonal crack in the masonry below.) Contractors retooled and repaired the sandstone at the base of the building, which had severely delaminated, and cleaned brick that had been attacked by biological growth and was severely stained with mineral deposits. We retained and repaired almost all the existing windows, dealing with acoustical issues and heat loss through the addition of a secondary sash on the interior face of the windows.

Unlike Building 104, which had lost its historic finish materials, enough historic elements remained in Building 122 to enable us to rediscover its original interior character. The original lobbies opening off Riley Avenue existed on both the first and second floors, and historic plaster was restored in these areas. The original main stair and wood railings were likewise restored. The historic soft fir floors, marred and worn, are retained under all carpeted areas in the building. In other more public areas, new Sydney Blue wood flooring was installed. The new floor, durable and sustainable, provides the same warmth to the space as the original.

The gymnasium was rehabilitated and converted into a public gallery. The
space again rises to its full historic volume, from the ground floor through the second floor and rising to the exposed trusses and clerestory windows above. A new mezzanine around the perimeter of the room recollects the gymnasium’s old running track. Contemporary detailing sets the new mezzanine apart from the historic walls and trusses. Natural light once again floods the entire space, which will be used for temporary exhibitions, receptions, and musical programs.

**Physical Plant (Building 108)**

A small utilitarian structure built in 1940 for machine gun storage, Building 108 will provide emergency generator support, hot water, and conditioned air for the museum and collections buildings. Locating the bulk of the mechanical systems in this small building frees up more space in the main buildings and avoids further burdening them with infrastructure.

State-of-the-art technology was inserted in all three buildings, both as infrastructure and to support museum exhibits and collections. New mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems are combined with high-end security, information technologies, and audio-visual systems to support exhibits and interactive features. Temperature and humidity controls, along with glass that reduces the intrusion of ultraviolet light, protect sensitive gallery spaces.

As for the grounds, low-water landscaping is beginning to grow in and will offer a gathering space for visitors. A walking path through a grove of trees near Building 122 provides benches along the way and glorious views of the Golden Gate Bridge and Marin Headlands. Permeable-surface parking, which will return rain water runoff to the soil below, is supplemented by bicycle racks at both the museum and archives buildings.

**A Model for Adaptive Rehabilitation**

Our clients envisioned creating a place to honor Walt Disney and to share his interest in inspiring creativity in others. That led our team to aim to design a place that activates the life work of one of the greatest place-makers of the 20th Century. We thought collaboratively through a world of design possibilities. More than 20 sub-consultants joined us.

Building rehabilitation and adaptive reuse are gaining momentum in the Main Post community. We hope that our team’s pioneering rehabilitation efforts can serve as a model for future adaptive reuse on the Presidio’s Main Parade Ground.

In the San Francisco community and beyond, we would like to see the conversation continue about what constitutes appropriate change to historic structures. It is only through an exchange of ideas that we learn to value good design, whether that recognition celebrates a landmark building, an addition to an historic structure, or a cutting-edge contemporary building.

Carolyn Kiernat, AIA, Principal at Page & Turnbull and member of the San Francisco Architectural Heritage board of directors, has managed the Disney project since 2005. Lada Kocherovsky, Associate Principal, led the design of the museum and is currently involved in construction administration at the site. Page & Turnbull has completed diverse projects at the Presidio of San Francisco since 1977, when the practice completed a four-volume inventory and maintenance manual detailing more than 800 historic resources located in the park. Currently, the firm serves as preservation architect for the Presidio Lodge; architect for the rehabilitation of the Interfaith Chapel, including installation of the McDonald Windows; and preservation consultant on rehabilitation of the Public Health Service Hospital.

**The Project Team**

The prime consultants who worked with Page & Turnbull on the design of the Walt Disney Family Museum included: WSP Flack & Kurtz, Mechanical, Electrical and Plumbing Engineers; Degenkolb, Structural Engineer; The Office of Cheryl Barton, Landscape Architect; Auerbach Glasow French, Base Building Lighting Design; and Fisher Marantz Stone, Museum and Exhibit Lighting.

D. R. Young Associates is managing the project, Rockwell Group designed the exhibits and the museum interiors, and Plant Construction is the general contractor.
You may not have met long-time Heritage volunteer Marie Raphael, but you’ve definitely seen – or smelled – her handiwork: for the past three years, Marie has been creating the beautiful, fragrant flower arrangements that bring the Haas-Lilienthal House to life. Before she took up with Heritage, Marie coordinated the volunteer staff at On Lok Senior Health Services, taught kindergarten and first grade, and lectured at De Anza Junior College in the teacher training program. We talked to Marie about her Heritage story, her San Francisco secrets and her life outside the Haas-Lilienthal house.

How long have you been volunteering with Heritage?
I spent five years as a docent before my current three years of floral arranging.

How did you first learn about Heritage and decide to get involved?
Learned about Heritage on line via the Volunteer Center of SF web site.

Are you a San Francisco native?
No, I’m from Brooklyn, N.Y. I came to California in 1956.

What do you do when you’re not volunteering with Heritage?
Tennis, travel, enjoy my seven grandchildren.

What’s your favorite thing in the Haas-Lilienthal house?
The black walnut table off the dining room where William Haas ran his business after the ‘06 earthquake.

Which Haas-Lilienthal story do you find the most compelling?
Hearing stories, in person, from family member Frances Stein. In particular, how she managed to slide down the banister as a child and was chastised for it.

What’s your best-kept San Francisco secret?
Mammy Pleasant and her life here, particularly the still-standing trees she planted on Octavia and Bush streets.

Describe your perfect San Francisco day.
Walking on Crissy Field to the Golden Gate Bridge with a stop sitting on the bench under the trees watching the birds, boats, and swimming dogs; dinner at Ristorante Milano on Pacific; watching the hand-gliders at Fort Funston; just hanging out with my husband.

Tell us something your fellow volunteers would be surprised to learn about you.
At age 65+ I rafted the Zambezi River in Zimbabwe through class five rapids and then climbed up and out a 70-foot gorge.

If you could offer one piece of advice to your fellow volunteers, what would it be?
Use a lot of humor in your presentations and respect all of the questions asked.

What keeps you coming back to share your time with us every month?
Floral arranging is my most creative outlet. How can you miss when you are helping to make the house more beautiful than it already is? While working in the kitchen with the flowers I feel the presence of Mrs. William Haas, as well as those others who worked on the flowers who came before me.
In the first parlor, hanging in a place of honor over the fireplace, is a landscape painting by the Scottish-born artist William Keith (1838-1911). Most docents know that Keith was based in San Francisco and Berkeley and that his paintings are on permanent display at St. Mary’s College in Moraga and at the Legion of Honor. However, many of us are not aware of the interesting details of Keith’s life and personality, and how he influenced and was influenced by social movements of the time.

Keith emigrated to New York with his family, and in 1859 arrived in San Francisco and was apprenticed as an engraver, later opening his own engraving business. He did not attend art school officially, but began studying with the Realist still life painter, Samuel Marsden Brooks, who had a studio on Clay Street. Brooks said that art should be “a correct representation of nature, warts and all” (Hjalmarson, p110) and here Keith began to develop the realist style that he practiced during much of his career. He continued his studies in Germany, France and Boston, before returning to San Francisco in 1872 to open his first studio at Bush and Montgomery Streets.

Keith soon met the naturalist John Muir, who had a profound influence on the subject matter of Keith’s work. The two took many trips together into Yosemite and other parts of the Sierra, risking life and limb to explore the remotest parts of the California wilderness. The idea of forming the Sierra Club was first discussed in Keith’s studio. Muir’s influence, Keith’s training with Samuel Marsden Brooks and his experience as an engraver all led to Keith’s devotion to realism in his landscapes.

This devotion was tempered in 1880 by a new friend - Joseph Worcester, the pastor of the Swedenborgian Church in San Francisco. Keith became a devotee of Swedenborg, and painted four murals in the rustic Swedenborgian Church of San Francisco. Keith’s spiritualism began to be reflected in his art. His work became looser and more impressionistic, reflecting “the spiritual reality that lay beyond the surface forms of nature” (www.stmarys.com). At this point his friend Muir chided him, “Why in the deuce don’t you imitate nature?” (Hjalmarson, p. 117).

Keith became amazingly prolific, painting as many as three canvases in a morning. This was perhaps a result of his move towards impressionism, as he told his friend Worcester, “…a blotch of color will stand for a tree—no drawing” (Hjalmarson, p118) He began to work in his studio in San Francisco, rather than painting outdoors, “en plein air,” which must also have contributed to his impressive output. He took in students, all of them women, and entertained potential purchasers with a show that involved hiding his canvases behind black velvet curtains and theatrically revealing them, one at a time, dramatically lit from hidden sources.

Keith became one of the richest and most successful artists in the United States by the early 1900’s, and one or more of Keith’s pastoral landscapes decorated the walls of most of the well-to-do parlors in San Francisco, including that of the Haas family. One story that I sometimes tell tour patrons is that Keith became so wealthy that at one point he asked one of his businessman friends how he should invest his money. The friend replied, “Buy Keiths.” (Lewis, p. 221).

William Keith’s artwork was a victim of the 1906 earthquake, when his studio burned down, taking with it hundreds of paintings and prints. Keith applied his unflagging energy to rebuilding his supply of Keiths. Working first at his house...
Spotlight on a Docent: ESTHER SUEN

On Tuesday and Wednesday mornings for several months of the year, a cheerful racket fills the Haas-Lilienthal House – it’s the sound of San Francisco schoolchildren discovering the wonders of the museum as they tour it on a Heritage Hike. For years, Heritage has offered this free educational program to third-graders in the city’s public school. Long-time volunteer Esther Suen first encountered the House when she was the teacher on a field trip! Today, she helps run the Heritage Hikes program, leads tours for school groups and also volunteers as a docent during general museum hours.

How did you first learn about Heritage and decide to get involved?
As a classroom teacher I attended a workshop at Heritage with another third-grade teacher from my school. We both found it a fascinating place and were excited to bring our classes to this living history museum, where our students learned first-hand about San Francisco Victorian architecture and the history of the Haas family. It was always a highlight of my third-grade curriculum. After I retired from fulltime teaching in June of 2000, I ran into Olivia Fisher, whom I recognized as one of the Heritage Hikes docents. I told her I had retired and thanked her for all the wonderful tours over the years. She mentioned that the fall docent training had just started and that they could use additional docents. That encouragement was all I needed to enroll. It feels good to pay it forward and continue to be connected with Heritage and the children.

Are you a San Francisco native?
No, I was born in Oakland and raised in San Leandro.

What do you do when you’re not volunteering with Heritage?
Right now I am spending a lot of time caretaking my mother, who is dying of cancer. I am with my mom a good portion of the week. I feel blessed to have the opportunity to be with her. I also continue to substitute teach, and I take piano lessons and garden. When things aren’t so busy, my husband and I will resume traveling.

What’s the most memorable experience as a Heritage volunteer?
Most moving is seeing the expressions on the faces of the children. Their look of delight and fascination as they see and experience things on the house tour. They have a hard time comprehending living in a simpler time without computers, video games, TVs, DVDs, telephones, Ipods and all the other modern day devices. They find it amazing that people didn’t have vacuum cleaners, washers, dryers and all the other labor saving devices we take for granted. And they always gasp with joy at seeing the train room.

What one Haas-Lilienthal story do you find the most compelling?
I like the story of the Haas children looking out of the Master Bedroom window and watching the lamp-lighters lighting the gas lanterns on Franklin Street.

What’s your best San Francisco secret?
I don’t think it’s a secret, but I love doing the S.F. Stairway Walks, in the book of that title by Adah Bakalinsky. You get great exercise and marvelous views.

If you could offer one piece of advice to your fellow volunteers, what would it be?
Enjoy yourself and your tour will be enjoyed by your audience.

Tell us something your fellow volunteers would be surprised to learn about you.
I am very shy – I usually don’t like to talk in front of people. But now that I am a docent I really enjoy it.
Winter Term at Oberlin College in Oberlin, Ohio, is the January break between fall and spring semesters when students are given the opportunity to develop their own projects and complete them before the end of the term. Projects may be completed on campus, off campus and abroad, and this year (after traveling to South Africa during my first Winter Term) I decided to fulfill my Winter Term credits at the Haas-Lilienthal House, back at home in San Francisco.

In Oberlin I participate in the work-study program, which allows students to work for local organizations earning a salary provided by the college. Through this program I decided to work at the Oberlin Heritage Center, a small museum adjacent to the college campus, accredited by the American Association of Museums. Having been my first time working in a museum, I was a bit nervous about handling some of the historical materials, but as I continued my work updating the archives I realized how much I enjoyed working in the museum. I found myself doing my own research on Oberlin’s research and became very excited about becoming more experienced with the materials and people I was interacting with.

My excitement over my work at the Oberlin Heritage Center sparked more of an interest in History as well as Anthropology, which remain my prospective majors. I also realized the importance of museums, especially in small towns such as Oberlin, whose histories are so easily forgotten or erased. I have been in the office multiple times when townspeople have come in with old pictures of relatives they can’t name or recognize, and have been assisted by the numerous records of people who have lived in the town and surrounding areas. My interest in museums and their role in the community lead me to apply for an internship at the Haas-Lilienthal House.

In the beginning I thought this internship would be challenging because I hadn’t had much experience working in the heritage center, and the Haas-Lilienthal House was a part of such a larger organization than the Oberlin Heritage Center. Soon after being introduced to Cate, Bill, Heather, Jack, Barbara, Dana, and multiple other docents and volunteers for the House, I felt right at home and ready to work.

For the first two weeks of my Winter Term project I was simply getting familiar with the museum (which included taking a walk through the house) and helping out Cate Conny with some office work around the volunteers. Eventually, I met with Cate about developing my own project. After having the opportunity to visit other historic houses, I was intrigued by the environments of the houses. One house, the J. Gilbert Smith House at the Los Altos History Museum in Los Altos, had soft music playing in the background, which guided the tour along. I realized that the Haas-Lilienthal House didn’t have any music playing during the two tours I took and I decided to take on music as my special project. My goal was to perform proper research and find era-appropriate music to have playing in the front parlor and ballroom of the House, along with two descriptions of the recordings and the overall music of the era.

It took some time to find accurate sources; I even ventured to the San Francisco Main public library multiple times to find records, compact disc, and copies of original scores. Eventually I created two rough drafts of the music to be played during tours of the Haas-Lilienthal Museum. I am so appreciative of the time I was able to spend at the museum and I look forward to exploring more work in museum studies as I complete my majors of History and Anthropology. I will always remember this Winter Term as a time in which I met wonderful, caring and helpful people, and expanded my knowledge of the importance of preservation.

“William Keith” Continued

in Berkeley, and later in a new studio on California Street, William Keith painted tirelessly until his death in 1911. In 1915 a room at the Panama Pacific Exposition in San Francisco was devoted to his work, and a brisk trade in Keiths continues to this day.

There may also be a second Keith in the upstairs sitting room, although some documents I’ve read attribute the landscape painting to Joe Greenbaum, Bertha’s brother. If anyone can shed light on that question, it would be appreciated!


William Keith Collection. 03 March 2009 <http://www.stmarys-ca.edu/arts/hearst-art-gallery/william-keith-collection.html>

Heritage’s black-tie fundraising event will take place on Saturday, April 19 at the Fort Mason Herbst Pavilion. Guests will begin the evening at 6:30 pm for cocktails and the start of the silent auction. At 8:00, guests will enjoy a seated dinner by McCall Associates. Following dinner, the silent auction continues, along with casino gaming for premium prizes and dancing to the Richard Olsen Orchestra. Guests will also have the opportunity to preview a selection of photographs from Port City, a Heritage book project currently in progress. The gala ends at midnight. To receive an invitation, contact Barbara Roldan, 415.441.3000, ext. 14, or broldan@sfheritage.org.

Historical Overview
Fort Mason is an important national cultural resource, as recognized by its inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places and by its designation as a National Historic Landmark District. Prior to becoming Fort Mason in 1882, the site served as the “Post at Point San Jose,” a fortified military base established in 1863 to defend against a Confederate attack. In the aftermath of the Civil War, the post became the headquarters of the 9th Infantry Regiment, a non-artillery role. During the 1906 San Francisco earthquake, the fort became a refugee camp and Army Relief Headquarters for survivors of the quake.

US Military History and Use
The Fort Mason Center (FMC) was developed originally as a US Army facility known as the San Francisco Port of Embarkation. Between 1910 and 1915, the US Army filled in the shallow cove along the site’s waterfront and constructed three large piers that extend into San Francisco Bay and four concrete, two-story warehouses. Designed by the architectural firm of Rankin, Kellogg and Crane of Philadelphia, the warehouses and pier sheds were among the first army structures in the San Francisco Bay Area built in the Mission Revival style and are considered excellent examples of military architecture of national importance. The entire site is recognized for its significant contribution to local and U.S. history:
In summary, from 1910 until its abandonment by the Army in 1963, Fort Mason served as the Army’s major West Coast point of embarkation for American military personnel in the Pacific during both wartime and peacetime.

Urban National Park
Following the conclusion of World War II and the Korean conflict, the advent of air transport made the function of Fort Mason obsolete and because of neglect and disrepair, the grounds and structures began to deteriorate. Partially in recognition of the need to protect the site from further disuse, Congress passed legislation in 1972 creating one of the first urban national parks, the Golden Gate National Recreation Area, which includes Fort Mason and the 13-acre FMC.

In response to the need to protect the buildings, the Fort Mason Foundation was created in 1976 to convert the former military buildings into cultural and recreational resources for the San Francisco Bay Area. In January 1977, FMC opened a broad range of activities to the public, from performing and visual arts to environmental concerns and wilderness adventures.

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## Calendar

### April - July

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| **THROUGH SUMMER 09**  
Exhibition: “Good Prospects: Life in the California Gold Fields”  
The Society of California Pioneers  
415.957.1849  
http://www.californiapioneers.org | **APRIL 30, 12:30PM**  
Talk: “Golden Lands, Golden Opportunity: a two-year effort to identify and protect the Bay Area’s key natural areas”  
SPUR  
415.781.8726  
http://www.spur.org | **JUNE 4**  
Event: Standing Ovations - ROCKIN’  
THE MINT: A salute to musical and creative talents  
San Francisco Museum and Historical Society  
415.775.1111  
http://www.sfhistory.org | **JUNE 27 - MARCH 28, 2010**  
Exhibit: “Tutankhamun and the Golden Age of the Pharaohs”  
De Young  
415.750.3600  
http://www.famsf.org |
| **APRIL 3-5, NOON TO 5:00PM**  
Exhibition: “San Francisco: Faces of the City”, Portraits by Elaine Badgley Arnoux  
San Francisco Museum and Historical Society  
415.775.1111  
http://www.sfhistory.org | **MAY 1, 8:20PM**  
Event: “PechaKucha Night-San Francisco v.33: presentations by famous and not-yet-famous designers”  
AIA-SF  
415.362.7397  
http://www.aiasf.org | **JUNE 12, 11:30AM**  
Tour: Ardenwod Historic Farm, Fremont  
Berkeley Architectural Heritage Association  
510.841.2242  
http://www.berkeleyheritage.com/ |
| **APRIL 4, 8:30AM - 6:00PM**  
Study Tour: “The Influence of China on West Coast Gardens: connecting to a strong cultural heritage”  
Garden Conservancy  
415.441.4300  
http://www.gardenconservancy.org | **MAY 16**  
Event: Art Deco Preservation Ball  
The Art Deco Society of California  
415.982.DECO  
http://www.artdecosociety.org | **JUNE 27 - MARCH 28, 2010**  
Exhibit: “Tutankhamun and the Golden Age of the Pharaohs”  
De Young  
415.750.3600  
http://www.famsf.org |
| **APRIL 8, 7:30PM**  
Lecture: “Robert Judson Clark on Bernard Maybeck”  
Berkeley Architectural Heritage Association  
510.841.2242  
http://www.berkeleyheritage.com/ | **APRIL 11, 7:00PM**  
Lecture: “Pierluigi Serraino: NorCalMod—Icons of Northern California Modern Architecture”  
Oakland Heritage  
510.763.9218  
http://www.oaklandheritage.org | | |
| **APRIL 9, 7:30PM**  
Lecture: “Pierluigi Serraino: NorCalMod—Icons of Northern California Modern Architecture”  
Oakland Heritage  
510.763.9218  
http://www.oaklandheritage.org | **APRIL 17-18**  
Exhibition: “Confronting Napoleon: European Culture at the Crossroads”  
Herbst Theatre, San Francisco  
415.391.9700  
http://www.humanitieswest.org | | |

### Heritage Tours

#### Haas-Lilienthal House Tours
Wednesdays 12 noon to 3:00 pm  
Saturdays 12 noon to 3:00 pm  
Sundays 11:00 am to 4:00 pm.

#### Walking Tours
- **Pacific Heights** Sundays, 12:30pm  
- **A Walk Along Broadway** Second Saturday monthly, 1:30pm  
- **Beyond Union Street: A Walk Through Cow Hollow**  
  Third Saturday monthly, 1:30pm  
- **Walk the Fire Line: Van Ness Avenue**  
  Fourth Saturday monthly, 1:30pm

Heritage tours are free to members and their guests, $8 for the general public/$5 for seniors and children 12 and under.

To arrange Group Tours call 415-441-3000 x24

Tour/Event Information  
Call 415-441-3004 or go to:  
www.sfheritage.org/events+tours.html

Heritage programs supported in part by City of San Francisco Grants for the Arts.
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Please enter my membership in the following category:

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- $75 Family
- $30 Young Professional (YP)
- $125 Contributing
- $250 Defining
- $500 Resource
- $1500 Landmark
- $2500 Monument
- $5000 Icon

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Address

City, State, Zip

Phone    E-mail

Make checks payable to:
San Francisco Architectural Heritage
2007 Franklin St., San Francisco, CA 94109

Or charge by phone:
415-441-3000

Contributions are tax-deductible.

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**HAAS-LILIENTHAL HOUSE**

A property of San Francisco Architectural Heritage, the historic Haas-Lilienthal House is a great venue for your wedding or your next corporate or personal event. The house can accommodate up to 150 guests.

For more information, call 415-441-3000, ext. 14.