

# SAGEBRUSH HEADLIGHT

Vol. 30, No. 2, 107th Ed.

THE NEVADA STATE RAILROAD MUSEUM  
An Agency of the Division of Museums and History  
Nevada Department of Cultural Affairs

Summer 2009

## Nevada's State Budget Compels Reductions at Museums

*By Frank Ackerman, Curator of Education/ Acting Museum Director, NSRM*

As of July 6, Nevada's state museums are open to the public a maximum of four days per week. The Nevada State Railroad Museum will be open **Fridays through Mondays**. Evening programs will resume in September on the second Monday of each month.

In deciding the days that each museum would operate, Peter Barton, Acting Administrator of the Division of Museums and History, took into account which days historically have had the most attendance. Days of operation for all of the State-administered museums are listed in the box below.

"Overall, the Department of Cultural Affairs will face the largest reduction in state funding of any department in the State at 33.6 percent," said Barton. "The Division of Museums and History is faced with a devastating reduction of state funding support of more than \$4.5 million for the two-year budget cycle that ends June 30, 2011. This represents a reduction of 35.5 percent."

Although Nevada's other state employees are being furloughed one day per month, museum employees have been placed in part-time status and will work 32 hours per week. These work reductions are in addition to reductions-in-force that have been implemented at almost every Nevada state agency.

The State's museums have had 79 employees. On June 30, 2009 twelve of these jobs were abolished. Were part-time employment not being implemented, more jobs would be eliminated and museums would be open to the public even fewer hours. Fifteen out of 54 positions were abolished at the Nevada State Library and Archives, which is now open to the public twenty hours per week.

You may well ask why reductions in service hours appear to be larger than reductions in staffing. There are several answers. Nevada's museums are small organizations. At NSRM there is one position of each type and every position calls for a different set of specialized knowledge and skills. Most behind-the-scenes activities require the same amount of time regardless of the number of hours the museum is open to the public.

Although the staffing reduction at NSRM is only one job out of thirteen, two of the twelve other jobs have been vacant for many months. Administrative Assistant John Frink's June 30 retirement added a third vacancy. Conversion to part-time employment, reduction-in-force, and vacancies will require the museum to function with 55 percent of its presently authorized staff. Clearly, the assistance of Volunteers will be of greater importance than ever before.

### *Days of Operation*

#### ***Nevada State Museum System***

#### **Wednesdays through Saturdays**

Nevada Historical Society  
Nevada State Museum – Carson City  
Nevada State Museum – Las Vegas  
East Ely Railroad Depot Museum

#### **Thursdays through Sundays**

Lost City Museum

#### **Fridays through Mondays**

Nevada State Railroad Museum  
– Carson City

#### **Saturdays and Sundays**

Nevada State Railroad Museum  
– Boulder City

*Continued on page 7*

**NEVADA STATE  
RAILROAD MUSEUM**

2180 South Carson Street  
Carson City, NV 89701-5999  
775/687-6953

[www.nevadaculture.org](http://www.nevadaculture.org)

Open 8:30 to 4:30 Fridays through  
Mondays, Except Dec. 25 & Jan. 1  
Admission: Adult \$4, Senior \$3  
Children under 18 and members of the  
Friends of the Nevada State Railroad  
Museum are admitted FREE



The museum is an agency of the  
**State of Nevada**

Jim Gibbons, Governor

**Department of Cultural Affairs**

Michael Fischer, Director

**Division of Museums and History**

Peter D. Barton, Acting Administrator

**Nevada State Railroad Museum**

Frank Ackerman,

Acting Museum Director

and Editor, **Sagebrush Headlight**

[GFackerman@nevadaculture.org](mailto:GFackerman@nevadaculture.org)

775/687-4942

The Nevada State Railroad Museum publishes the **Sagebrush Headlight** newsletter each quarter. The Friends of the Nevada State Railroad Museum distribute it as a membership benefit.

**Board of Trustees, Friends of the  
Nevada State Railroad Museum**

President: Bill Kohler - 2009

[kolrxing@clearwire.net](mailto:kolrxing@clearwire.net)

Vice President: Ron Allen - 2011

[frontieradjusters@pyramid.net](mailto:frontieradjusters@pyramid.net)

Secretary: Kurt Dietrich - 2011

[kurtdmail-nsrm@yahoo.com](mailto:kurtdmail-nsrm@yahoo.com)

Treasurer: Darlene Berry - 2011

[bberry@pyramid.net](mailto:bberry@pyramid.net)

Jerry Barth - 2009

Stan Cronwall - 2009

Christopher MacMahon - 2010

John Schilling - 2010

Barry Simcoe - 2010

*Terms of office end in December of year listed.*

Correspondence may be sent to:

Friends of NSRM

PO Box 1330

Carson City, NV 89702-1330

Please provide submissions for the Summer issue of the  
*Sagebrush Headlight* by Monday, September 7, 2009.

**NEVADA STATE RAILROAD MUSEUM  
Forthcoming STEAM-UPS**

**Saturday/Sunday, August 1 & 2**

**Saturday/Sunday, August 15 & 16 V&T Railfest**

**Saturday/Sunday/Monday, Sept. 5 - 7: Labor Day**

**Saturday, October 31: Nevada Day**

**Friday/Saturday, November 27 & 28: Thanksgiving**

Trains depart from Wabuska Depot, 10:00 am till 4:00 pm.

Steam Train Fares: Adults- \$5.00, seniors (65 and above)-

\$4.00, Children 6-11- \$3.00, Five and under FREE

FNSRM Members, with Membership Card, HALF FARE.

**Saturday/Sunday, December 12 & 13: Santa Train**

Trains depart from Wabuska Depot, 9:00 am till 4:00 pm.

All Seats \$2.00.

**NEVADA STATE RAILROAD MUSEUM  
MOTOR CAR OPERATIONS**

**TC&GB Motor Car No. 401 will operate**

**every Saturday & Sunday through Sept. 27,**

departing from Wabuska Depot, 10:00 am till 4:00 pm,

**except when the Steam Train is operating.**

Motor Car Fares: Adults- \$4.00, seniors (65 and above)-

\$3.00, Children 6-11- \$2.00, Five and under FREE

FNSRM Members, with Membership Card, HALF FARE.

**NSRM Welcomes Museum Attendant Lara Mather**

With the primary duty of administering the Museum's volunteer program, the newest member of the NSRM staff began work on May 20. Lara, a southern California native, has lived in Carson City since 1994.



She will soon complete her MA in Anthropology and Museum Studies at UNR and has worked part-time at the Nevada State Museum and interned at the 4th Ward School Museum in Virginia City. In summer 2006 Lara was a technician for the V&T Scales Section Camp archeological excavation at American Flat.

Lara worked for a decade at the Carson City Sheriff's Department before resigning to pursue her college education full-time. At the Sheriff's office, she rose to the level of Management Assistant VI and supervised a staff of seven.

The 38th Annual Nevada Railroad History Symposium will take place in Carson City Friday through Sunday, October 16 - 18, 2009. This year's theme is **Notable Nevada Passenger Trains**. Please register using the form that follows **page 4 of this issue**. There will **not** be a separate mailing of Symposium materials.

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

The approach of summer has brought about significant changes at the Nevada State Railroad Museum. Unfortunately, many are negative. State budget reductions have cut deeply into NSRM operations and staffing. Not all news is bad, however. The Friends funded materials for a concrete motor-car loading platform for tour groups. We thank Brian Sheldon, NSRM Buildings & Grounds Supervisor for building it. The pad is located between the Annex and the Interpretive Center.

NSRM initiated the "Your Hand is on the Throttle" program during the Memorial Day Steam-Up. This program was developed by the Friends and, if the initial participant's enthusiasm is any sign, it will be a great success. The museum offers a ten-percent discount to Friends members who participate. This would make a great gift to the wannabe engineer in your family. For highlights of our first participant's experience, please read Russ Tanner's article on page 6.

Board of Trustees elections are upon us. Once again, I encourage all members who would like to offer a pair of "fresh eyes" to the Friends organization to please submit a resume. Like any group, the Friends need fresh ideas to progress and grow. Each year three positions on the board are open for election so there is always an opportunity for new Trustees to join in the decision-making of the Friends. Please consider running for the board. The time involvement is minimal as the board meets only six times during the year. The article by Nancy Humphries on page 6 explains how to submit your resume.

Motor Car Crew Chief Paul Martineau has asked me to remind you that opportunities to become a motor car conductor or motorman are there for the asking. Paul needs additional people to operate the motor car for tours and scheduled weekends. Volunteers who have passed the safety test will be assigned to on-the-job training with an experienced crew for as long as is needed: usually takes only a couple of days. If you would like to participate Paul encourages you to call him at 775-852-2290.

On behalf of the Board of Trustees I would like to thank everyone for their support and hope you have a great summer. We are all keeping our fingers crossed for a rapid economic turnaround and will do everything in our power to support the Nevada State Railroad Museum during these rough times. Don't forget to send in your resume for a position on the board.

--Bill Kohler

## Spotlight on Nancy Humphries

Nancy has volunteered at the Museum in many capacities since the mid-1980s. Nowadays she works most often at Admissions or the depot ticket window, and assists with many of the arrangements for the Nevada Railroad History Symposium. She has been FNSRM elections registrar for twelve years.

Nancy was born in Hollywood, California, but didn't stay long. Her father was in the US Army and the family relocated to Austria when she was five. She attended Junior High School in Des Moines, Iowa, and graduated from High School in Anchorage, Alaska. At age 20, Nancy met her husband, Bert, while playing poker with friends on the beach in San Francisco. Theirs was a "military marriage" three months later, since she was an Army brat and her husband was career Navy. When Bert retired in 1973 he and Nancy decided the Carson Valley was the place to be. She worked for the State of Nevada in Information Technology from 1973 until she retired in 2002. Nancy has two children. Her daughter Wendy is a teacher in Virginia City, and her son Jason is a commercial driver for Silver State Distributing. Her first grandchild, Natalie, is three months old.

In 1997 she decided to attend Private Pilot ground school at Western Nevada College. Soon after completing the class she took the next step and earned her pilot's license. She's a member of the Reno High Sierra 99s.

Nancy is an active volunteer, dividing her time between NSRM, the Douglas County Master Gardener Program, Nevada Rock Art Foundation, as well as being a site steward for the State Historic Preservation Office, when she's not wearing her secretary's hat for the Carson Valley Sertoma Club.

--Lara Mather



## Cleanup Activities After the August 12, 1939 *City of San Francisco* Derailment West of Carlin, Nevada--the Ceragioli Snapshots

*Abstracted by Frank Ackerman from the museum archives document by Steve VanDenburgh*

In January 2008, Rudolph Ceragioli of Carson City donated eleven small photographs to NSRM. The snapshots, which had belonged to his father Guido, show cleanup activities following derailment of the streamliner *City of San Francisco* in Palisade Canyon between Carlin and Beowawe.

Guido, who was born in Tuscany in 1890 and immigrated to the United States about 1912, died in 1980. A Southern Pacific car-repair specialist at Sparks, he was among the workers assembled to clean up the train wreck and rebuild the damaged right-of-way.

This was not a minor accident. All three of the diesel-electric locomotive units and eleven of the fourteen cars behind them derailed and a bridge over the Humboldt River was demolished, killing 24 passengers and crew members and injuring more than a hundred. Subsequent investigations concluded that sabotage had been the cause. Seven decades later, however, the guilty party or parties have not as yet been brought to justice.

Ten of the pictures are 3¼-by-2¼-inch, vertical-format images; the eleventh is slightly larger, and horizontal in format. Although Guido's name is written on the backs of the smaller photographs, Rudy Ceragioli – who was 14½ years old at the time of the wreck – is certain that his father wasn't the photographer. Guido didn't own a camera; or, for that matter, an automobile.

Published photographs of the wreck scene before cleanup efforts began were compared with these pictures in order to determine their probable sequence. The presence or removal of the cars *Chinatown*, *Embarcadero*, *Fishermans Wharf*, *Golden Gate Park* and SF-101 (see table, p. 5) and the degree of completion of a temporary bridge suggest the order in which the photographer probably took them.

Sparks relief crane No. 7011 appears in three of the snapshots, and both it and crane No. 7007 appear in another three. The fact that crane No. 7011 appears in so many of the images suggests that the photographer may have been a member of the Sparks relief crew.

Many photographers captured numerous images of the wreck scene within 24 hours of that horrific accident. Almost all of those cameramen had departed before major cleanup activities began, however.

As a result, few published views illustrate those challenging efforts. Thus, the Ceragioli snapshots are of considerable value because they help to document

the cleanup equipment, procedures and sequence of tasks.

We are grateful to the unidentified photographer, to Italian immigrant Guido Ceragioli, and especially to his son Rudy for preserving and donating these rare images from the aftermath of Nevada's worst railroad disaster.

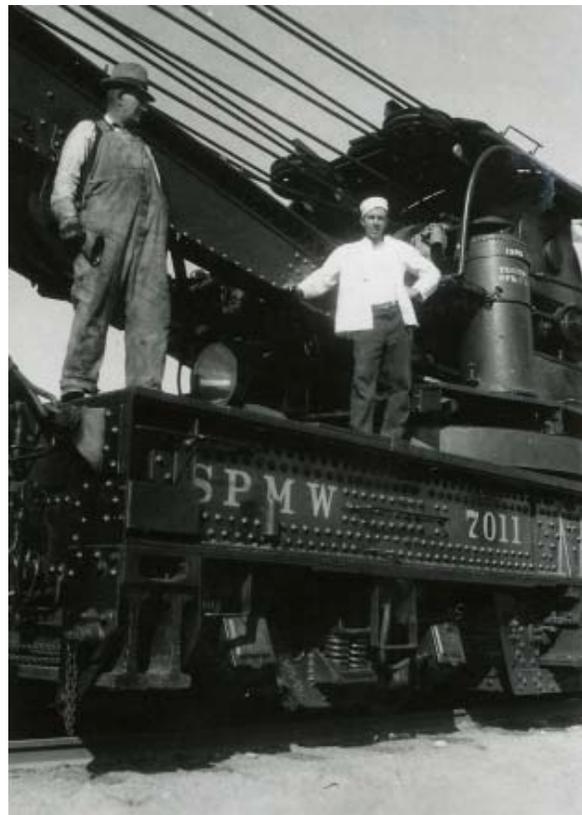
**Below:** *Wreck scene at site of demolished bridge, looking southeastward; shows sleepers Golden Gate Park (upper left), Fishermans Wharf (mid-view, right) and Twin Peaks (beyond legs of man in white cap), along with pile driver (far left).*

**To right:** *Relief cranes from Sparks (left) and Carlin lift sleeper Fishermans Wharf; remains of dorm-lounge Embarcadero at lower left.*

**All images:** NSRM collection, gift of Rudolph Ceragioli; photographer unknown.



*Steve VanDenburgh is a Museum volunteer and charter member of FNSRM. At the 38th Annual Nevada Railroad History Symposium this October, Steve will talk about the wreck of the City of San Francisco seventy years ago.*



**Above:** Guido Ceragioli (left) and co-worker (perhaps relief-crew cook) pose on Sparks crane.

Sequence	Number/name	Description
1 <sup>st</sup> locomotive	SF-1	Cab unit (E2-A), 1800 hp
2 <sup>nd</sup> locomotive	SF-2	Booster unit (E2-B), 1800 hp
3 <sup>rd</sup> locomotive	SF-3	Booster unit (E2-B), 1800 hp
1 <sup>st</sup> car	SF-101	Baggage; auxiliary power; crew dormitory
2 <sup>nd</sup> car	<i>Market Street</i>	Recliner chairs
3 <sup>rd</sup> car	<i>Presidio</i>	Coffee shop; kitchen
4 <sup>th</sup> car	<i>Mission Dolores</i>	Dining
5 <sup>th</sup> car	<i>Embarcadero</i>	Crew dormitory; lounge
6 <sup>th</sup> car	<i>Twin Peaks</i>	Drawing rooms, compartments
7 <sup>th</sup> car	<i>Chinatown</i>	Section berths
8 <sup>th</sup> car	<i>Fishermans Wharf</i>	Drawing rooms, compartments
9 <sup>th</sup> car	<i>Golden Gate Park</i>	Section berths
10 <sup>th</sup> car	<i>Seal Rocks</i>	Double bedrooms
11 <sup>th</sup> car	<i>Union Square</i>	Section berths
12 <sup>th</sup> car	<i>Telegraph Hill</i>	Roomettes
13 <sup>th</sup> car	<i>Portsmouth Square</i>	Bedrooms, duplex rooms
14 <sup>th</sup> car	<i>Nob Hill</i>	Stewardess bedroom; barbershop; lounge-observation

**Note:** Cars 3 and 4, 6 and 7, 8 and 9, and 10 and 11 were articulated pairs. Cars 3 through 7 were demolished or damaged beyond repair during the August 12, 1939, derailment.

## FRIENDS ELECTIONS ARE COMING!

**Show your support for the Friends and the Nevada State Railroad Museum!**

Annual elections for the Board of Trustees of the Friends of the Nevada State Railroad Museum will be occurring this summer, with results to be announced at the 2009 Symposium in October.

Here's your chance as an active member of the Friends to support the museum and its Volunteers. Become involved by being a candidate for the Board of Trustees. Each term is for three years, and there are six meetings per year.

Each year, three of the nine Trustee positions are open for election; or re-election of a member eligible to run again.

Please consider this notification in the *Sagebrush Headlight* as my invitation to submit your resume so you can help the Friends provide very valuable support to the Museum. Include your name, mailing address, telephone number and email address (if applicable),

and information about your interest in railroading, any NSRM volunteer participation, and why you would like to serve as a trustee. Send resumes to:

Friends Registrar  
c/o Nevada State Railroad Museum  
2810 South Carson Street  
Carson City, NV 89701-5999  
or email to: [rrglyph@clearwire.net](mailto:rrglyph@clearwire.net)

**All resumes must be received by the Registrar no later than Saturday, August 22, 2009.**

Thank you for your support of the Friends and NSRM. I look forward to including your name on the ballot.

--Nancy Humphries,  
Elections Registrar, FNSRM

### Your Hand Is On the Throttle

On Sunday, May 24<sup>th</sup>, Virginia and Truckee 4-6-0 No. 25 slowly made its way along the trackage at the Nevada State Railroad Museum. Suddenly, a cry rang out: "Stop, there's a dolphin on the tracks! Stop! Stop!"

Quickly Eddie Chase, the Student/Engineer, closed the throttle, engaged both the independent brake and the train brake and brought the locomotive to a stop avoiding a dolphin disaster. He looked at Engineer/Instructor Barry Simcoe to see what was happening. Barry explained that an engineer must always be ready to make an emergency stop. This one was well done. And, after all, the migration of marine mammals through Carson City was imaginary – a figment of Simcoe's fertile imagination.

Interviewed later, Mr. Chase admitted that in spite of having participated in several other 'Engineer for an Hour' programs this was the first time he had made such an emergency stop. Although it was an important experience, it was not the funnest part of his participation in NSRM's first *Your Hand Is On The Throttle* program. He enjoyed the opportunity to operate a locomotive that was well over one hundred years old and he said that he looks forward to another chance to participate after NSRM No. 8 is brought back into service. His second day as a student included helping to hostle the engine and several trips pulling the museum's passenger train while he was at the throttle. A good time was had by all.

The *Your Hand Is On The Throttle* program is new at the Museum this year. It allows the student to have an hour of class and an hour of hands-on experience in the operation of a classic steam locomotive. Details of the class are available online at [www.nsrml-friends.org](http://www.nsrml-friends.org). The cost of the program is \$500.00 with a ten percent discount for members of the Friends. For 2009 only twelve classes have been made available and three of those are already taken. Anyone over the age of 18 is invited to take advantage of this program.

What is the one job every railfan wants to try? Engineer, of course!

--Russ Tanner, Conductor at the time of the dolphin dilemma

*Continued from page 1*

The Museum also will be taking measures to reduce costs wherever it can. For instance, this *Sagebrush Headlight* consists of only eight pages. A Symposium registration-brochure mailing will not take place this year. Instead, the Symposium program announcement and registration form are included in this issue of the *Sagebrush Headlight*. Please note: Symposium fees are the same as 2008, except for the general-public price

for the banquet, which has reduced by ten dollars. Because NSRM will be closed Thursdays, it will not be possible for Symposium participants to check in at the Museum on October 15. Alternative arrangements will be provided. Participants will be apprised of details in their registration-acknowledgement letters.

Regardless of constraints, Museum staff and volunteers will continue to do our best to serve you.

---

**SELECTIONS FROM OUR MUSEUM STORE . . . .** *The store specializes in railroad books for adults and children, Nevada history books, train videos, audio recordings, toys, train models, hats and apparel, railroad pins and jewelry, train novelties and souvenirs, note cards, artwork and calendars. We encourage you to visit the store in person. For those of you who won't have an opportunity to visit soon, the new merchandise selections below, along with many others, are available by mail-order. Proceeds from sales are used by the Nevada State Railroad Museum to fund a variety of museum projects and public interpretive programs.*

---

**Southern Pacific's Slim Princess in the Sunset 1940-1960** (Morris) Item #101028. \$70.00.

This wonderful collection of photos, text and maps documents the 70-mile Keeler Branch during its last two decades of operation. The black-and-white and color photographs are from many noted sources including Donald Duke, Robert Hale, Fred Matthews, the Arnold Menke collection, James Saylor, John Shaw, the Southern Pacific Company, and Steve VanDenburgh. Whether you're a modeler, historian, dedicated fan of this lovely little railroad or just have a curious interest, it's a must-have for your collection. 328 pages. Limited availability.

**Diesel Locomotives of the Western Pacific** (Strapac) Item #142017. \$59.95.

This revised, hardbound edition of the long out-of-print *Western Pacific Diesel Years* (originally published 1980) has been overhauled extensively with new text, photographs and a review of the remaining preserved and operating locomotives some 25 years after the Union Pacific Railroad took control of the WP in 1983. The WP, arguably the most innovative and progressive railroad in the West, embraced the potential of diesel locomotives. A leader in many ways, the WP perfected the use of this new technology to compete against the mighty Southern Pacific for bridge traffic across the northern Nevada (Overland) route. In the process WP became the first fully dieselized railroad in the West. 200-plus pages, rosters, black-and-white photos.

**Nevada Copper Belt Railroad Hall-Scott Motor Car No. 22 Restoration Feasibility Assessment** (Drew & Wyatt) Item #146006. \$19.95.

NSRM's official report on the restoration feasibility of this unique piece of equipment. Black-and-white photos, 134 pages, wire-bound.

**John Mackay – Silver King in the Gilded Age** (Makley) Item #225001. \$34.95. From the early 1870s until his death in 1902, John Mackay was among the richest men in the world, and was, without doubt, the wealthiest man to emerge from Nevada's fabulous Comstock Lode. This 211-page hardbound book offers new insights into the life and achievements of this remarkable man and the extraordinary times in which he lived.

**Thomas the Tank Engine Story Collection** (Awdry) Item #127016. \$29.95.

Fourteen of the best-loved titles from Rev. Awdry's classic children's railway series. 500 pages, hardbound.

We have prepared a 12-page list of Railroad and Nevada History books available in the store, including out-of-print consignment titles. We anticipate posting it online at [www.nevadaculture.org](http://www.nevadaculture.org) soon. If you would like a printed copy in the meantime, please send \$1.00 to cover the cost of mailing to:

NSRM, Attn: Museum Store, 2180 South Carson Street, Carson City, NV 89701.

---

### TO ORDER BY TELEPHONE OR MAIL

*Please Call (775) 687-6953 (9:00 AM - 4:00 PM; Friday through Monday) or write to: Nevada State Railroad Museum, 2180 S. Carson Street, Carson City, NV 89701. Include your name, street address, city/ state/ zip code, and your daytime telephone number. Members of the Friends of NSRM are entitled to a 15 percent discount off all merchandise. Please add \$5.00 for shipping charges. If paying by either Visa or MasterCard, include your credit card number and expiration date.*

---

4216  
**NEVADA STATE RAILROAD MUSEUM**  
2180 South Carson Street  
Carson City, Nevada 89701-5999  
775-687-6953

**PRSRTSTD**  
**U.S. Postage**  
**PAID**  
**Carson City, NV**  
**89701**  
**Permit No. 15**

Address Service Requested

***2009 Nevada Railroad History Symposium registration form inside!***

## *UPCOMING EVENTS*

**Now is the time to register for the 38th Annual**  
**Nevada Railroad History Symposium**  
***Notable Nevada Passenger Trains. October 16-18, 2009!***  
**Your Symposium Registration Form is inside.**

### Monthly Monday Evening Programs

July & August      *Summer Break* -- No Programs

September 14      *Pullman Troop-Sleepers in the West During World War II*  
Presented by John Ryczkowski

Evening programs are held at the museum's Jacobsen Interpretive Center on the second Wednesday of each month except as noted. Programs begin promptly at 7:00 PM. Museum admission charges apply.