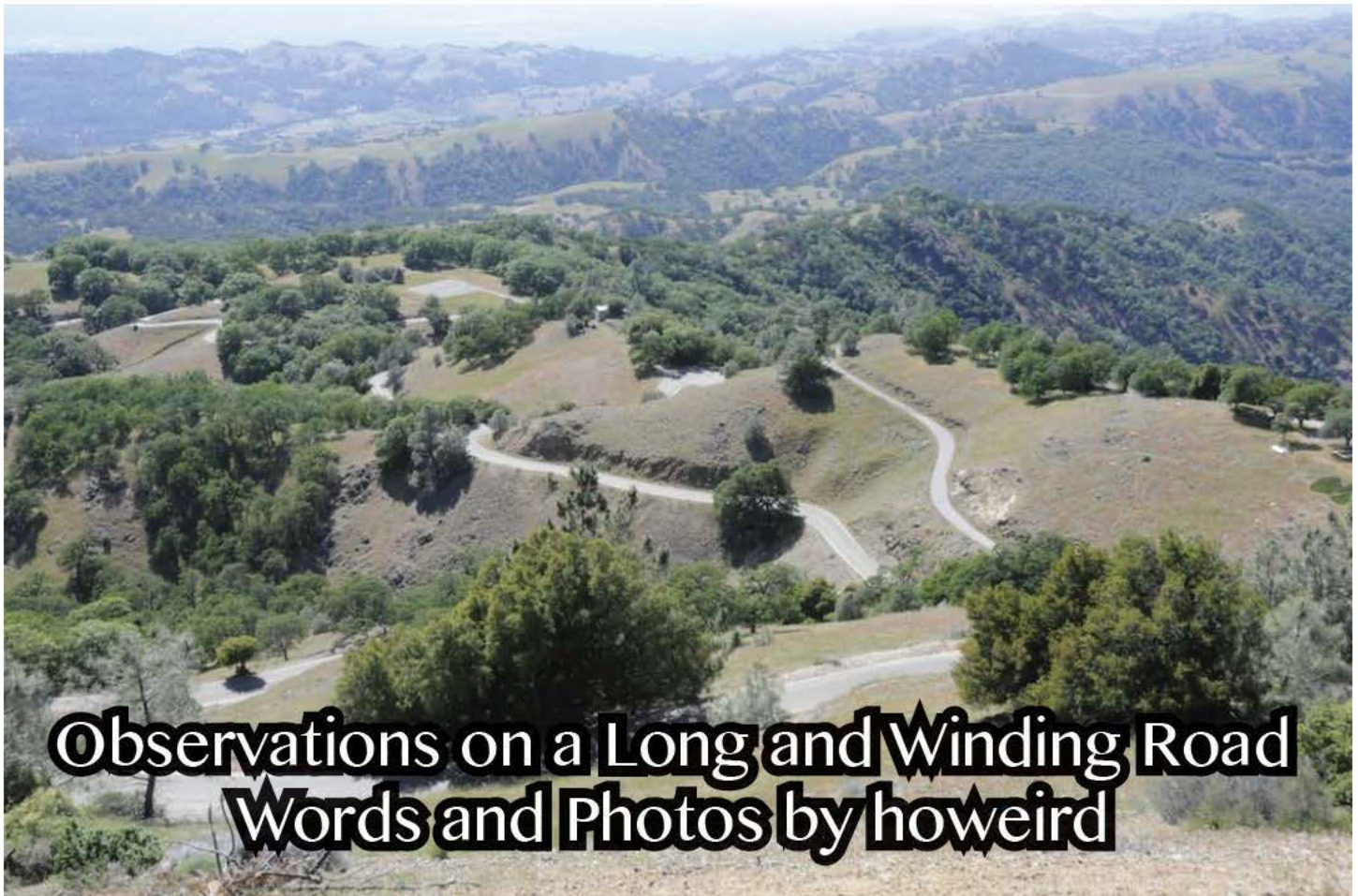




The Drink Tank 3/4



2014 MyStarkey
Cover by Mo Starkey!



It's a long, steep and winding road up Hwy 130 to 4,209 feet above sea level and 7281 Mt. Hamilton Rd. The one time I tried to drive it 20 years ago I gave up half an hour out of San Jose. But recently a friend who is not afraid of heights and sheer drop-offs volunteered to drive me up there so her adopted twin niece and nephew could see what the domes on top of the hill were all about.

Until a couple of years ago I had very little idea what they were either, until I was in a production of "Babes in Toyland" and one of the other ensemble members was Dr. Elinor Gates, an astronomer who works at Lick Observatory. I had told my friend about "Dr. Ellie" and the original plan was to see if we could get a personal tour, but it was a work night for her, so that didn't happen. One of Dr. Gates' jobs is to aim the big laser pointer, which requires contacting Space Command (<http://www.afspc.af.mil/>) for clearance. And for reasons beyond my control we didn't get there until an hour before closing time, so I didn't get many photos from inside the buildings. And the twins were being children, so we didn't take the walk to any of the other buildings.

Closing time? At an astronomical observatory? Why yes, they are only open to visitors Thursday through Sunday, noon to 5 pm. Night time is for the working astronomers. Besides, that road would be pretty treacherous in the dark.

It's worth the trip for several reasons. It's free. The view from the parking lot is spectacular. The main building, which dates from 1888, still has its original oak and marble interior and is gorgeous. There is a gift shop (<http://mthamilton.ucolick.org/GiftShop/>) with a wide range of Lick and general astronomically themed sweat-shirts, T-shirts, mugs, wineglasses, photos, posters, educational toys, whoopee cushions and dribble glasses. Okay, maybe not those last two items, but there is so much packed into that room it wouldn't surprise me.

Next door is a gallery of photos of the observatory, and some other exhibits. At one end of the building, under the big dome, is the 36" Great Lick Refractor, at one time the world's largest telescope. The dome itself is an amazing sight, all dark wood, with the scope mounted on a mechanical pedestal which makes it seem to float

in mid-air. The floor looks something like it could host a Foucault pendulum. They offer a free, informal talk inside that dome every hour, which covers the life and times of James Lick, the history of building the observatory and the telescope.

If you go all the way to the other end of the building, a door out the back leads to a small garden and a cupola displaying a bust of James Lick. You will also find the cleverly hidden second parking lot, guarded by an enormous wind-blown tree. The building off to the left has a Star of David on it. Looking at the map (http://mthamilton.ucolick.org/techdocs/practical_info/lick_map.html), it appears to be a dorm, not a synagogue.

Down the road a bit is the Shane Dome, where you can view the 120" reflector telescope from the visitors' gallery. There are also displays about that telescope and its use in the search for extrasolar planets.

Besides educating the twins, I wanted to see the observatory myself, because it may not be possible to do so Real Soon Now. Lick is part of the UC astronomy program, and the new UC president Janet Napolitano (remember her from Homeland Security?) has announced plans to de-fund the site, with no University funding past 2018. As it is, the observatory, which at one time was a small town with its own grade school, and nine telescopes, seems almost deserted. Some of this is from budget cuts, but some is also due to the advent of the Internet. Astronomers from around the world can control many of the telescopes by remote computer.

But the equipment can't be maintained or modified from afar.

There is a thorough write-up on the history, accomplishments, equipment and current projects at Lick on the "Save Lick" site http://www.ucolick.org/SaveLick/what_is_lick.html. I'll steal a few highlights:

- Perfected deep-space astronomical photography in the early 1900s
- Developed the first digital detector in 1971, which revolutionized astronomy by replacing photographic plates.
- Performed the first laser bounce off the Moon in 1969, measuring the distance precisely for the first time.
- Pioneered the Doppler radial-velocity technique for finding extra-solar planets
- Developed the first laser-guide star for adaptive optics. Adaptive optics (AO) removes the blurring by the Earth's atmosphere from astronomical images and permits ground-based telescopes to see as sharply as if they were in space.
- The Lick eclipse expedition to Australia in 1922 was the first scientific measurement to convincingly verify Einstein's theory of General Relativity.
- Lick users range in age from undergraduates to the most senior and eminent astronomers in the University of California. At any given time, over 100 observers are pursuing science programs at Lick.

Information for visitors can be found here:

<http://www.ucolick.org/public/visitors.html>

There is no gas station or restaurant on top of the mountain, but there is a candy machine and a soda machine at the other end of the hall from the 36" telescope dome. The gift shop sells hot cocoa and Starbucks bottled products. Even on the hottest of days, it gets chilly and windy up there, so bring a jacket. It was highly amusing watching some very fashion-conscious tourists turning blue out in the parking lot.

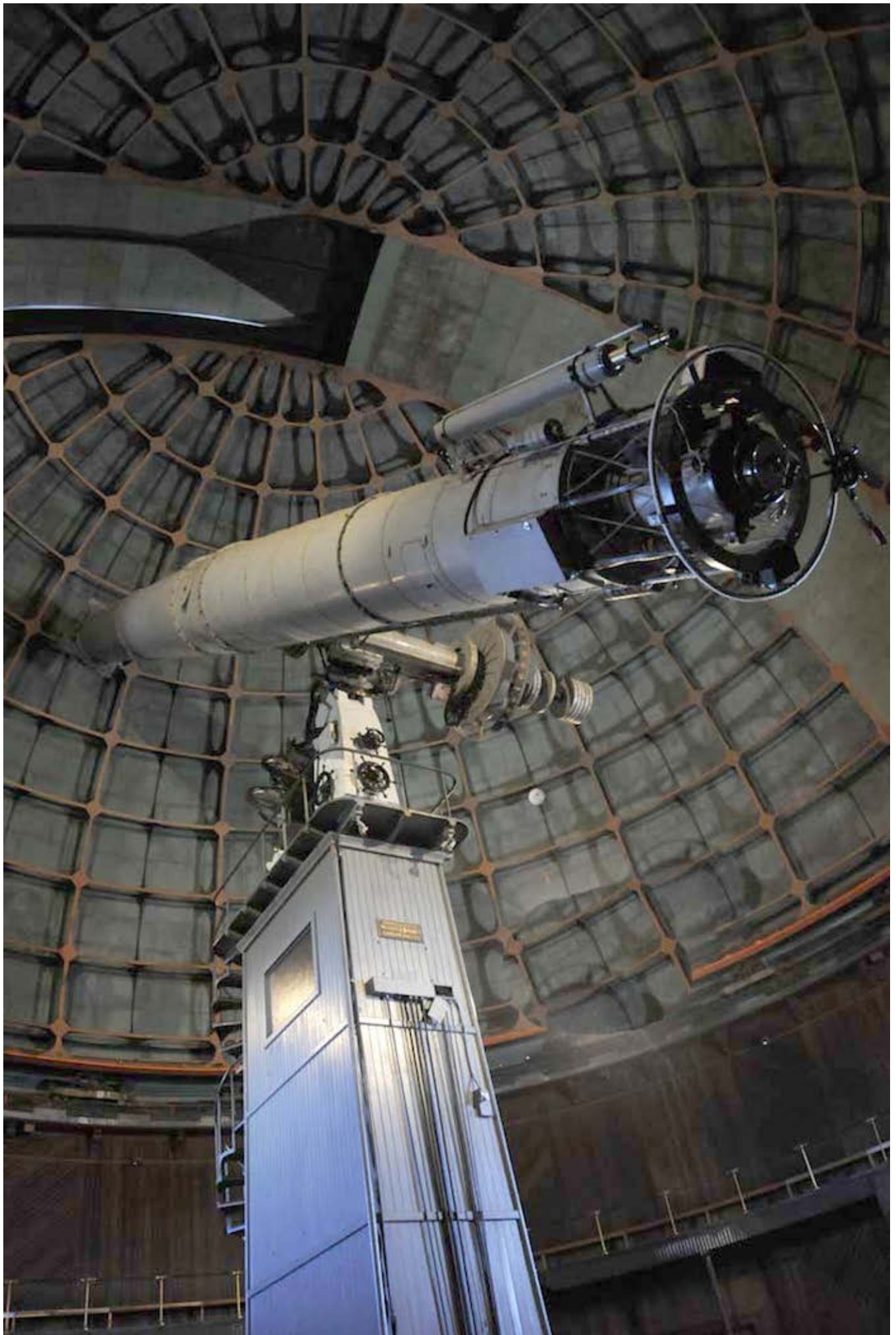
Other links of interest:

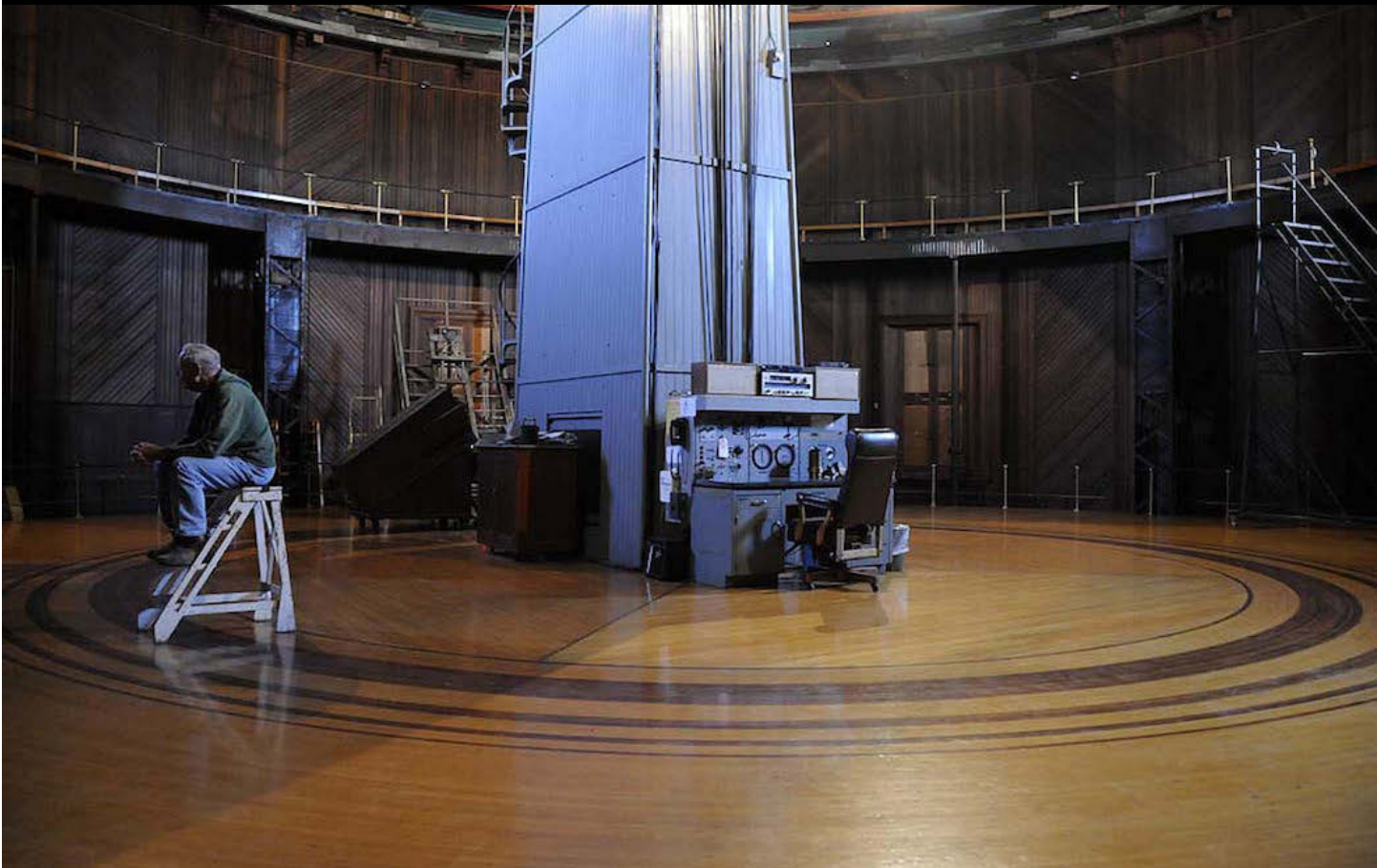
<http://dailybruin.com/2014/04/15/ucs-lick-observatory-might-soon-shut-down-operations/>

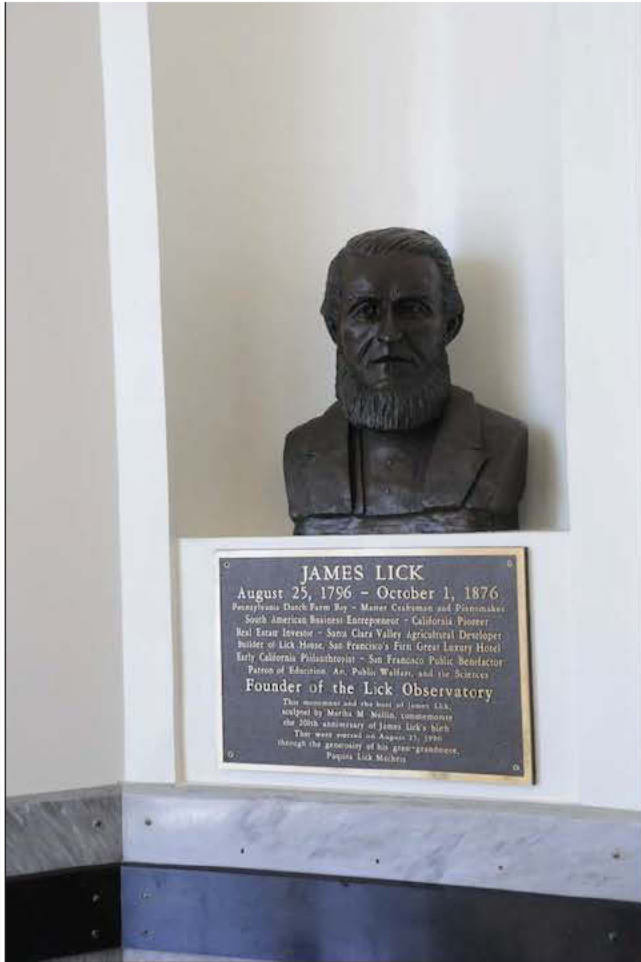
<http://dailybruin.com/2014/04/28/napolitano-discusses-uc-budget-affirmative-action-policies-with-the-bruin/>

<http://www.ucolick.org/SaveLick/>

<http://www.ucolick.org/>

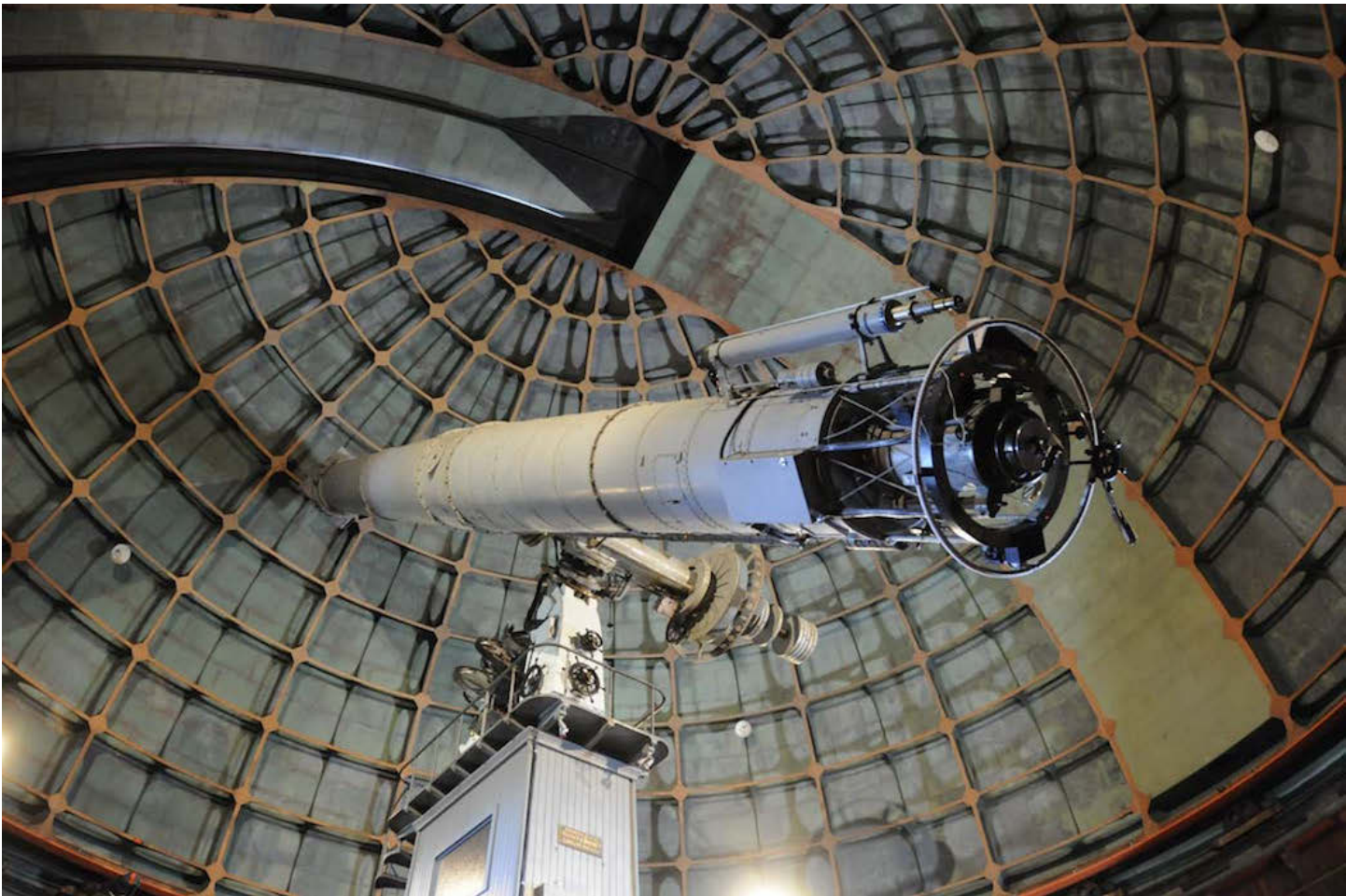






Lick Observatory







A Visit to the Antiques Roadshow

Words and Photos by Christopher J Garcia

A Week or so ago, the good people at PBS's The Antiques Roadshow came by the museum to film a couple of segments, and then they had a party! It was good fun, and they gave the museum a special pair of tickets. I was most pleased when I heard, and I tried to score them, but alas, someone was faster. As luck would have it, I DID end up with teh tickets after the other young woman couldn't attend! Vanessa and I packed up and headed to the Santa Clara Convention Centre (where BayCon had happened just a couple of weeks ago) and Vanessa grabbed two things - an antique boxed glass set (lovely and green tinted, which made me think Absinth set) and a statue of Ganesh. I brought the original trailer to Grease on 35mm and Daryl Zanuck's Masons card.

As we stood in line, and the lines were LONG, we saw and talked to people. The folks behind us had some great stuff, including a Whistler print! There were so many great things, and sadly, before you go into the Inner Sanctum, they make you turn off your cell phone, and thus, no photos. There were things like a 1920s Long Board that happened to have an image of the current owner's grandmother carved into it. The guy in front of me had a general ledger from San Francisco from 1900 to 1912, which included notes about the "San Francisco Fire of 1906" and various labour unrest. The guy behind nearly got mugged by me when I discovered that he had an old Pathe portable movie kit, including projector, screen, splicing kit, etc. It was amazing, and in really good shape. He also had Nitrate Film with him, which was a No-No! Another guy in line had an original, 1977 Star Wars Fan Club membership pack! Sadly, he, like many, decided not to wait through the entire line.

The things we had - well, they turned out OK. Even though Vanessa's glass set wasn't complete, including a new container probably built in the 50s, it was still worth a couple of hundred dollars! She swapped out Ganesh for two Roman Rings at the last minute (the Asian Art line was HORRENDOUS!) and though I thought one of them was fake, it turned out both were authentic! One was 10th century Iranian, and the other, the one with what we thought was Roman glass, turned out to be 1st Century and likely Garnet! Awesome! Each about \$100!





~ A True Highlight of the line ~
18th Century Colonial Family Chest!



Classics of S-F at Westercon by John Hertz

We'll discuss three classics at Westercon 67, one discussion each. Will you be there?

For our starting definition, "A classic is a work that survives its own time. After the currents which might have sustained it have changed, it remains, and is seen to be worthwhile for itself." If you have a better one, bring it.

This year's Worldcon is the 75th anniversary of the very first, in 1939. We gave no Hugos that year, so Loncon 3 can and will present Retrospective Hugos for work of 1938 (see Section 3.13 of the Constitution).

The Retro-Hugo ballot has been announced. We'll take up three of the nominees.

Each is interesting in a different way. Each may be more interesting now than when first published.

Have you read them? Have you re-read them?

John W. Campbell, Jr. **"Who Goes There?"**

Terse – tense – it touches questions of identity pointed more explicitly by others decades later. It is of course a detective story, fifteen years before Campbell taunted Asimov into writing *The Caves of Steel*. See how he manages the hints, the personalities, the masterly sequence of Kinner – Dutton – Connant – Blair.

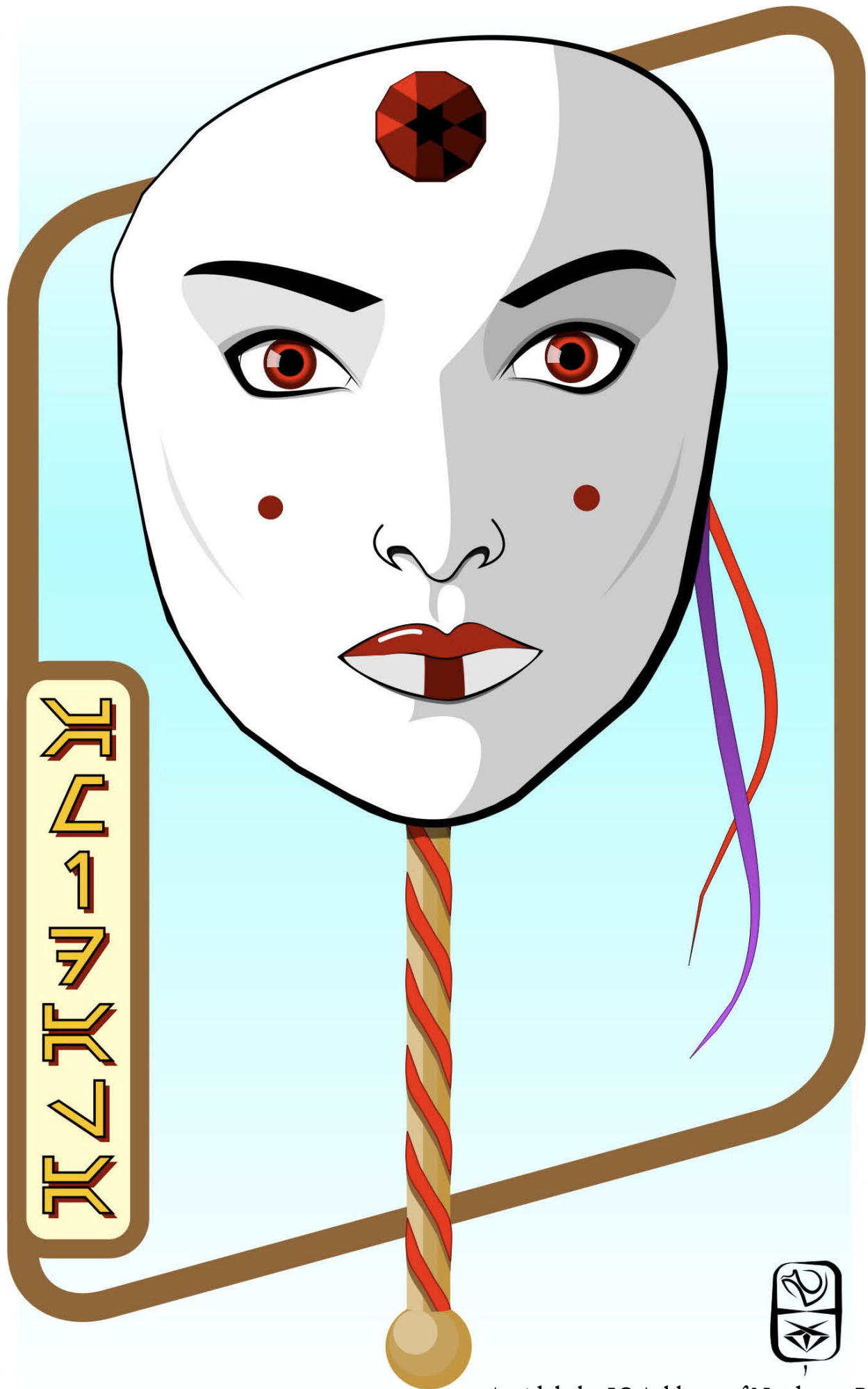
C.S. Lewis **Out of the Silent Planet**

We never do hear about the space drive. Weston, who clothes himself in the trappings of science, is a harsh caricature. Yet it is he who gets the party to Malacandra; who gets them, almost impossibly, back again. Theodore Sturgeon said "Science fiction is knowledge fiction." Chapter 9 says "The love of knowledge is a kind of madness."

E.E. Smith **Galactic Patrol**

Samuel Johnson said "The essence of poetry is invention"; *Patrol* has that. It struck fires still burning today. Its vitality, and its focus through all the coruscations, are remarkable. So is its thorough handling of its imaginary science. Characterization? Look at Kinnison's leaving footprints all over Blakeslee.





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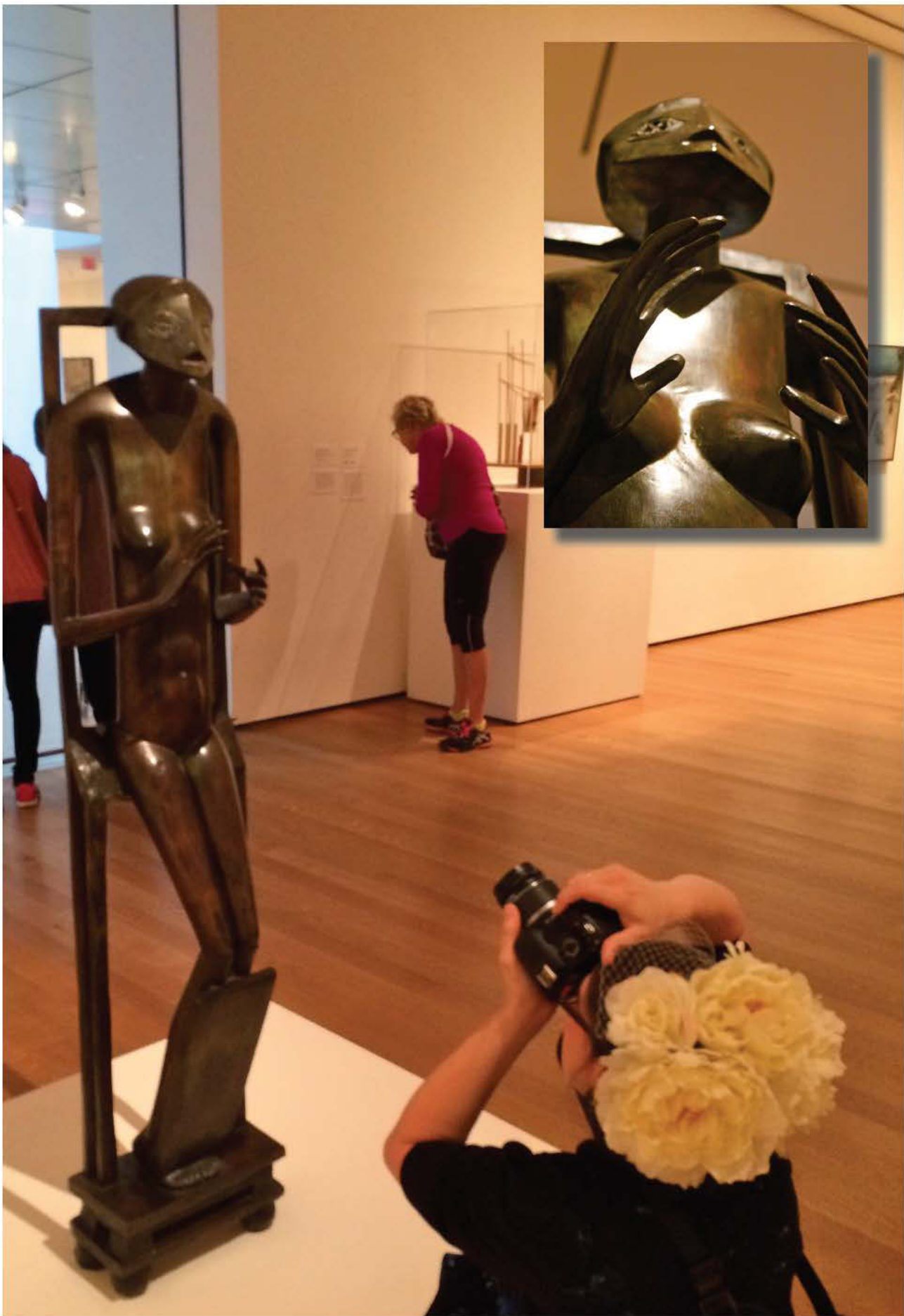
Amidala by JC Arkham of Nerdvana Podcast!



Chris and Nessas's New York Photo Adventures!

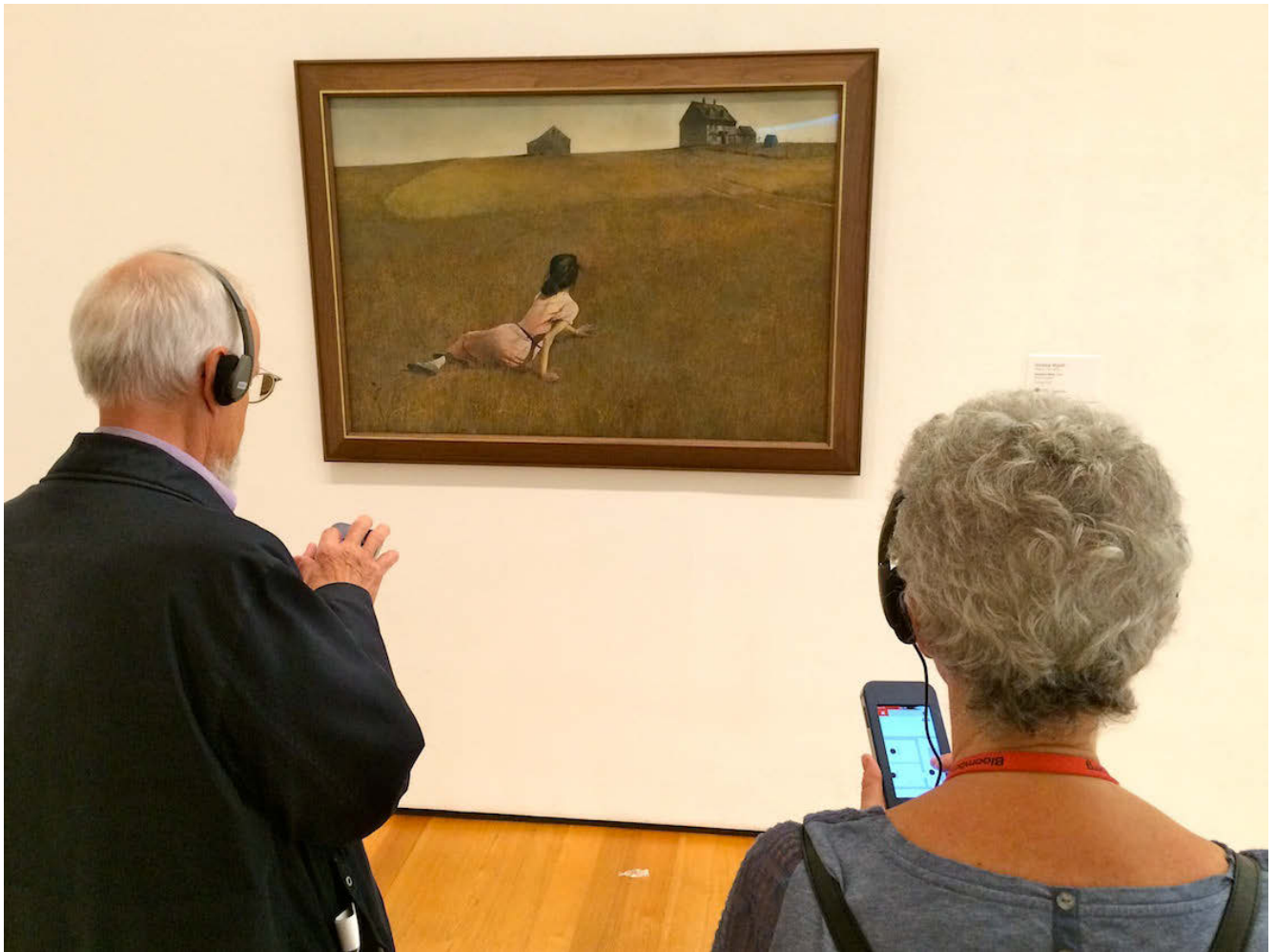






The Museum of Modern Art







Lunch at Moderne





Chris and Nessa Lookin' Good!

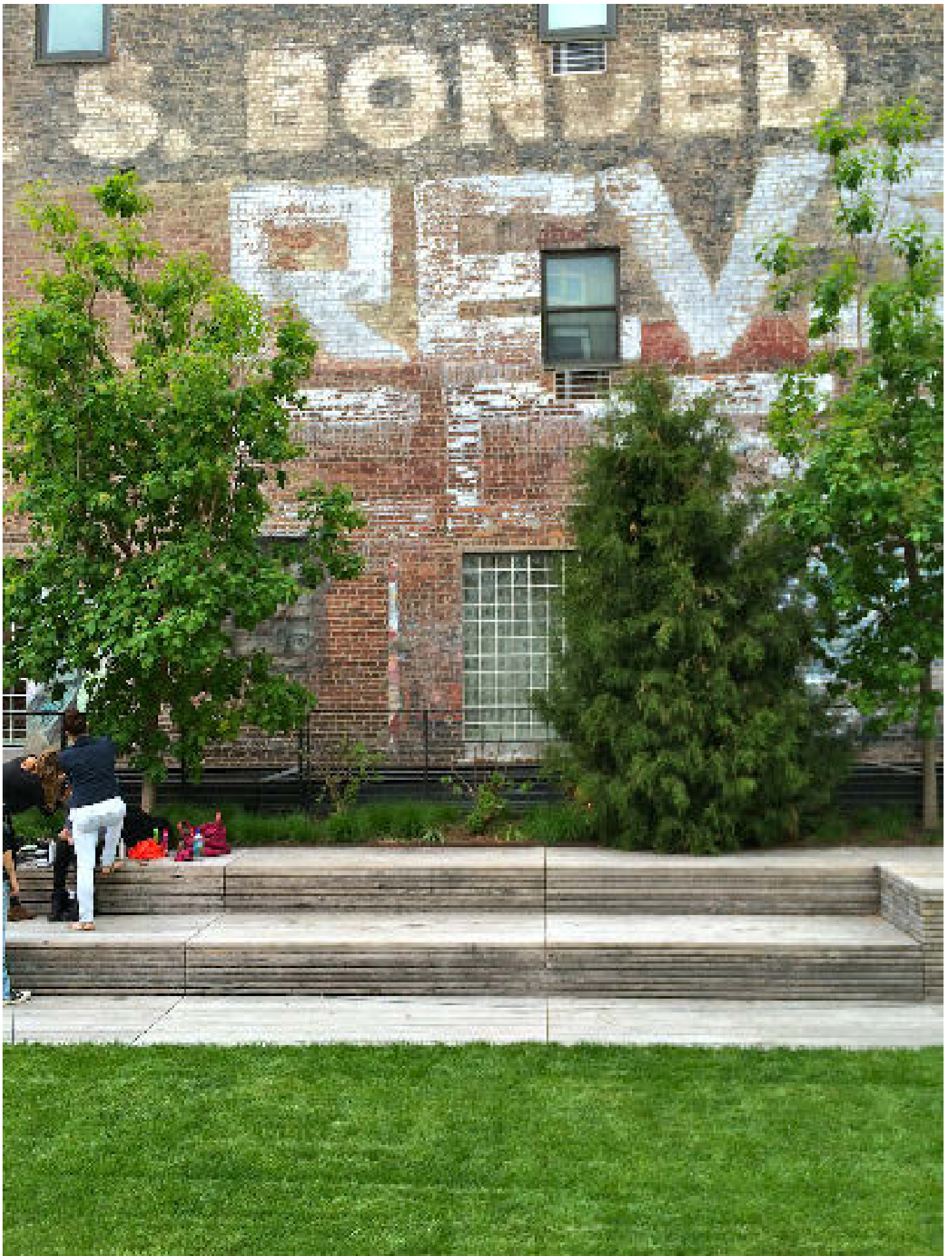


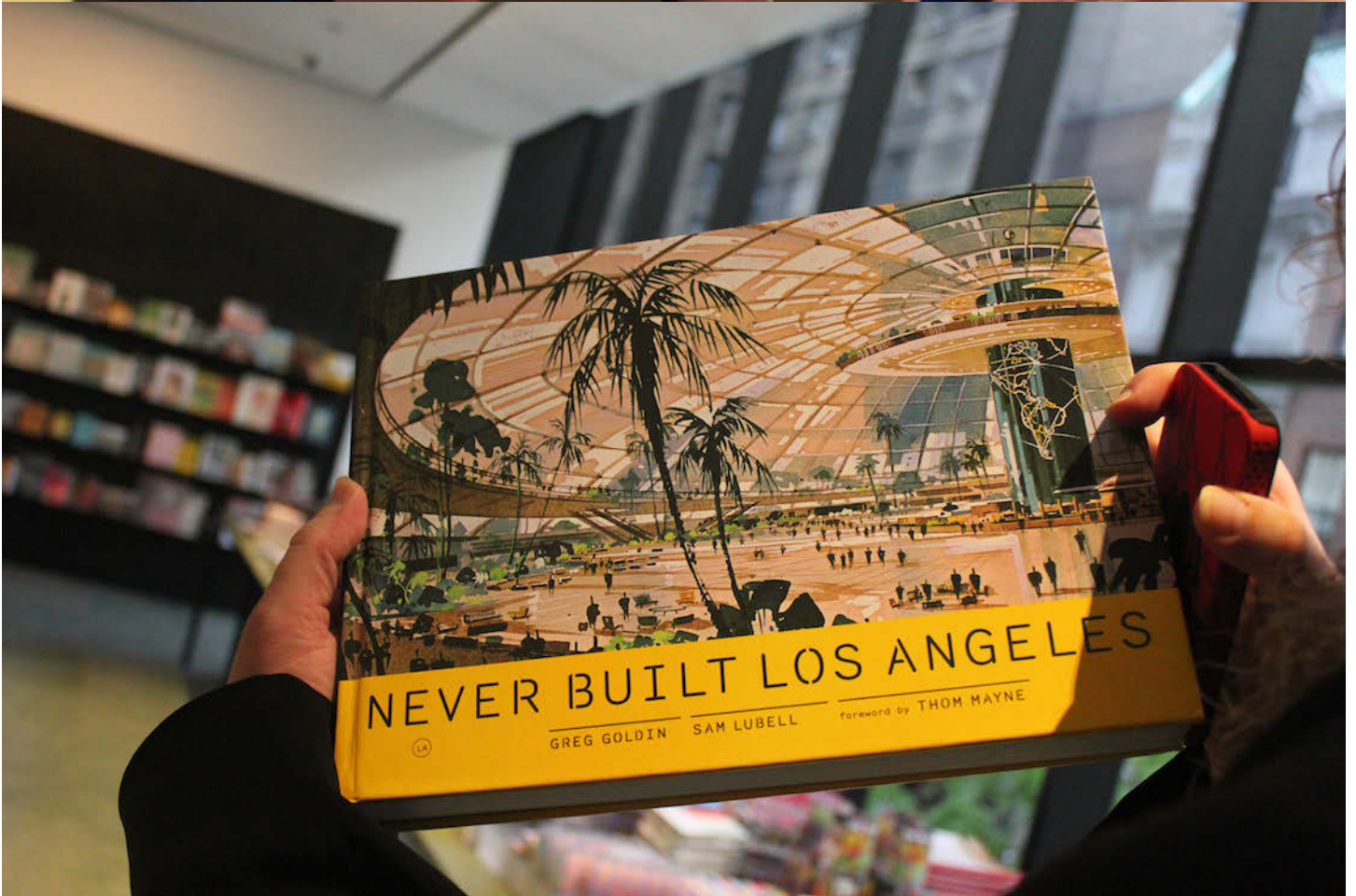












Photos Curated by Vanessa.



