The “Halloween Flashlight Tour” – a fan-favorite is coming back in full force to “Fright Nights” and can only be experienced this time of year. Since her death, millions of people have visited Sarah’s home and many have reported sighting ghosts. Do the phantoms she communed with in life, or perhaps Sarah herself, still lurk nightly in the maze-like corridors of the Winchester Mystery House? You’ll tour the rambling, mysterious mansion with only the moonlight, a souvenir flashlight, and your imagination to provide illumination through the bewildering labyrinth of rooms and stairways.

Updates on “Fright Nights” will be available at WinchesterMysteryHouse.com and also on Twitter and Facebook, as Creative Director Brett Tomberlin reveals a running chronicle of exclusive information.

Fans are also invited to follow Brett Tomberlin on Twitter at: twitter.com/WinchesterHouse

Winchester Mystery House announces all new ‘Fright Nights’ Haunt Beginning September 30, 2011

STEP IN TO AN ALL-NEW HORRIFYING, MULTI-SENSORY AND INTERACTIVE REAL-LIFE EXHIBIT RIVALING ANY HOLLYWOOD STUDIO

Winchester Mystery House, the world-famous mysterious, rambling and potentially haunted home of Sarah Winchester, will present “Fright Nights,” a special event with all-new thrilling attractions beginning September 30, 2011.

On select nights in September and October, the grounds of the Winchester Estate will be transformed into the world’s most terrifying Halloween experience. Filled with haunted walk-through attractions, roaming scare performers, and nightmare inducing tales, “Fright Nights” will be an open house visitors won’t want to miss!

“We are so excited for our first-ever ‘Fright Nights’ at Winchester Mystery House featuring heart-pounding attractions and compelling characters,” said Brett Tomberlin, Creative Director, Winchester Mystery House and President, Imagination Design Works Production Company. “This will be an unrivaled with truly horrifying happenings in a setting that was named one of the scariest places in America.”

CURSE OF SARAH WINCHESTER MAZE

For the first time, guests at “Fright Nights” will have the exclusive opportunity to experience the all-new “Curse of Sarah Winchester Maze” – an interactive, multi-sensory gateway between Heaven and Hell which will be opened exclusively for visitors of “Fright Nights experience bone-chilling creatures and blood-curdling moments as they find themselves trapped inside the mansion empowered by the undead.
Experience this Glass Art and Grapes Event in your day trips – Annieglass Studio, Watsonville, CA.

I discovered an unusual event this month and added this specific glass art to my likes. It is the Summer of Love featuring grapes and glass, at the well-known Santa Cruz county company, Annieglass.

The event is Annieglass – Summer of Love with Grapes and Glass – you will go on a tour of their glass art design production studio and enjoy wine tasting with a local winery. Their free production studio tours are offered at 11:30 a.m. and 2 p.m. on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday. Wine tasting is from 12 p.m. – 4 p.m. (there is a fee for wine tasting) Be sure to include time for shopping!

Exciting announcement: These studio tours and wine tasting have been extended through December this year! This is much different than normal glass blowing I have been to. Thumbs up and I do recommend telling your guests, clients, and friends to take one these tours.

Annieglass Studio tours

Most people are acquainted with Annieglass – either buying glass art for their tables from prominent department stores or directly meeting this Smithsonian Artist, entrepreneur and business leader, Annie Morhauser, who opened her studio in 1983. Yes, there are glass pieces on display at the Smithsonian in Washington D.C.

The inside secret which makes Annieglass design “different” is a process called “slumping.” I won’t go into the technical details, I did watch Joseph, my guide, actually cut a small piece of glass before he walked me through the entire studio (15,000 square feet) and explain about each of the machines, tools, and processes where Annie and several artists make each individual piece Monday thru Friday. All pieces are inspected and have an authentic signature with name, number, and date.

Don’t forget the wine tasting

A bonus was getting acquainted with the Assistant Winemaker from Windy Oaks Estate Winery, Corralitos, CA while tasting their Pinot Noir and Chardonnay wines. I enjoyed listening to his stories of the crush wine process and how they started their winery - from tech workers to winemakers story. You may visit their new wine tasting room on Saturdays from 12 p.m. -5 p.m.

There may be a different winery participating when you go to this grapes and glass event. Helpful hint is to include a visit to Windy Oaks tasting room on your day trip.

Contact me if you would like to set up private tours of this studio for an unusual meeting. Something different in Silicon Valley!

Donna West
Creative Meetings and Fun Incentive Trips

*Permission granted to use all images from Annieglass for this article

Annieglass Production Studio
310 Harvest Drive
Watsonville, CA 95076
(831) 731-2041
http://www.annieglass.com/

Windy Oaks Estate Winery
380 Sweetwood Way
Corralitos, CA 95076
(831) 786-9463
http://www.windyoaksestate.com/
Congratulations to our sponsors for the recent Silicon Valley Concierge Association Spring Variety Show held at ComedySportz. Psycho Donuts and Poetic Cellars are being filmed for a "proposed reality television pilot."

**“DUNK DOUGHNUTS IN CAB, NOT COFFEE”**
By Shanna McCord

"Wine and cheese are a perfect pair. Doughnuts and milk go together without saying.

But a doughnut with your pinot?

Poetic Cellars, a winery tucked in the hills of Soquel was the site for the recent filming that matches wines of different varieties with doughnuts chock full of sugars and jellies...

About 20 wine tasters lined up at the counter to try the doughnut creations, matched with four wines from Poetic Cellars, each bearing a poem written by the winery’s co-owner Joseph Naegele. Psycho Donuts owner Jordan Zweigoron whipped up a four-prong doughnut for the tasting, which he dubbed ‘The Poetic Psycho.’ Taster Chanelle Takemoto exclaimed after the taste test, ‘I love doughnuts, and I love wine. I normally eat doughnuts with milk, but this is better.’

Following that story, San Jose Mercury columnist Sal Pizarro wrote that Psycho Donuts was offering a wine and doughnut pairing with J. Lohr Wines in honor of NATIONAL DONUT DAY.

In addition, the annual FANIME CON, which celebrates Japanese-style anime art, was in town. Psycho Donuts had "created the 'Psycho Psushi' for the convention. It was a plate of pastries that looks just like sushi, complete with edible iced chopsticks!"

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**TOURING WITH MARIA**

News from the North (Mountain View, Los Altos, Palo Alto and Menlo Park)

Just two more Thursday’s left to enjoy Thursday Night Live in Downtown Mtn. View, August 4 and August 18. You can enjoy Castro Street sans traffic. Take Light Rail or CAL Train. Enjoy live music, shop the Farmers Market, and cruise the classic cars on display.

Check out some of the new restaurants; Steak Out, for fabulous burgers on the best buns ever, Morocco’s for food and entertainment and Ephesus for Greek dining.

Los Altos has a new OPA restaurant. Loved the one in Willow Glen on Lincoln, but this is closer to home on Main Street. If the Saturday night I ate there is any indication, they are off to a great start.

Another new restaurant opening in Los Altos is Plates on State St. I am looking forward to trying their international cruising. Los Altos also hosts a Thursday Framers Market on State St. from 4:30-8pm.

Nice article about Palo Alto’s Garden Court Hotel in the last issue of the Los Altos Town Crier. [www.losaltosonline.com](http://www.losaltosonline.com). Their pet friendly policy has brought many famous people to the newly remodeled boutique hotel.

The Menlo Grill Bistro & Bar in Menlo Park, in the lovely Stanford Park Hotel, recently hosted our SVCA group for drinks and appetizers. The food was delicious and they served some refreshing and interesting drinks, which hit the spot after spending most of the day in the hot sun watching tennis at the annual Bank of the West Tennis Tournament at Stanford University.

Maria Lange
mlange206@aol.com
About becoming the victim of the “Digital” age........or “Anti-Social Networking”.

The July 4, 2011 issue of the SJMN in its Technology section had a headline that read: “Hotel Digital – Hospitality: Hotels turning to virtual concierge services, providing their guests a variety of location-specific information.”

In the New York Times in the April 17 “Styles” section, David Carr wrote a column entitled: “Keep your Thumbs Still When I’m Talking toYou.” In response to it, reader Kyle Hayes from S.F. wrote: “I really hope that we can start to change this behavior. I think one of the biggest problems in our society today is isolation, and our being tied to our phones instead of engaging with people who are right in front of us only reinforces the sense of being cut off…”

It seems to me that many of us can relate to this. For instance: ATMs have replaced bank tellers; at Home Depot, Safeway, and other stores, customers are encouraged to check their purchases out themselves; when I try to converse with fellow Fitness Center members, I need to invoke sign language to attract their attention because most of them are plugged in to their music, talking on cell-phones, listening to news, etc.

There is no question that technology has opened up many new ways to communicate and there are a host of new devices that allows us to be in touch anywhere, anytime, almost without limits. Kyle Hayes observation that “one of the biggest problems in our society today is isolation” is not so far fetched. I would go so far as to say that technology is beginning to deprive those who have become dependent on it, from using their interpersonal skills such as body language, facial expressions (Skype™ notwithstanding); personal touch in response to questions etc.

The SJMN article gives a run-down of what various hotels have in place or plan to have in place to “de-personalize” concierge advice. Here is an excerpt: “Last year, Marriott International’s Renaissance hotels – there are more than 150 in 34 countries – introduced a program called Navigator that offers suggestions for dining, drinks, shopping and sightseeing. This information, generated by an online destination content provider, and by hotel employees, can be found on each hotel’s Web page and on an iPhone™ app. Guests can also ask Renaissance’s human concierges for help.-(Italics by the author)”

Mind you, all of this has, in my opinion, nothing to do with digital skills or fondness for gismos – it is part of a new world that de-emphasizes eyeball to eyeball communication and, so we are led to believe, provides for a streamlined, cost-effective rendering of services – sans trained, friendly, knowledgeable staff!

I dare any of the readers on future travels to request a “Human Concierge” for help. Chances are they may be given an Instruction sheet on how to use “GoBoard” the touch screen concierge service. It’s a Brave New World – isn’t it?

Gus Holweger
Contributing Editor to VAM and Board Member SVCA
gholweger@comcast.net
Your comments and suggestions are always welcome!

SVCA says “Thanks”!!

Being in the hospitality industry requires its members to be informed about events, available services, entertainment and local attractions. While the Internet provides much information in any one of those areas there is no substitute for concierges and those in the hospitality industry to personally check each one for them. Hotels, restaurants, museums, sightseeing locations have been very supportive in familiarizing SVCA members with their offerings. SVCA expresses its appreciation for the support it has received and continues to receive.

Here are two restaurants that are part of the SVCA support and network:

Amber India at Santana Row in San Jose

Here is what their web site says: “Located in San Jose’s newest urban neighborhood, Santana Row, Amber India has come to represent an inviting atmosphere of modern elegance, comfort and sophistication. An inspired menu boasts delectable Indian Cuisine of both traditional and contemporary dishes made with the finest and freshest ingredients. Award-winning check Vital Shetty strives to create food options that are authentic Indian with western adaptation. Exquisitely presented menu options, delicious dessert temptations, and friendly enthusiastic service ensure a memorable dining experience.”

For further information go to: www.amber-india.com or call tel.: (408) 248-5400

Hotel Los Gatos

This well-known hotel states the following on its web site: “This four-star hotel is the wonderful marriage of an intimate, small-town hotel and the modern sophistication that is Silicon Valley. Situated in the heart of beautiful Los Gatos, California at the base of the serene Santa Cruz Mountains, this Silicon Valley hotel captures the ambiance of this historic South Bay town.” In addition to the location and spa amenities, you will find the DioDeka restaurant with its renowned Greek cuisine.

For further information go to: www.hotellosgatos.com or call (408) 335-1700
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408-978-9543

The Tabard Theatre
www.tabardtheatre.org

Toll House Hotel Los Gatos
www.tollhousehotel.com

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svconcierge@mindspring.com

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mkhienkina@gmail.com

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Victor Solanoy
Donna West
Armando Garza

Web Portfolio: armandogarzajr.com

CONTRIBUTORS

EDITOR/PUBLISHER
Mori Mandis
svconcierge@mindspring.com

Gus Holweger (Insiders’ Track & New Faces)
gusholweger@comcast.net

Maria Lange (Touring with Maria) SVTGA
mlange206@aol.com

Donna West (Off the Beaten Path)
www.lighthouse-tours.com

SVCA Web-site
www.SiliconValleyConcierge.com

DEADLINE TO SUMBIT ARTICLES FOR E-MAGAZINE, IS THE LAST FRIDAY OF THE MONTH
NOTE: ARTICLES AND SPECIAL DATES APPEARING IN THE VAM ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT NOTICE

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Contact Information & Dues:
Anthony Aguilar
V.P. Communication & Marketing
65 Washington Street #113
Santa Clara, CA 95050

E-Mail: svcaemail@yahoo.com