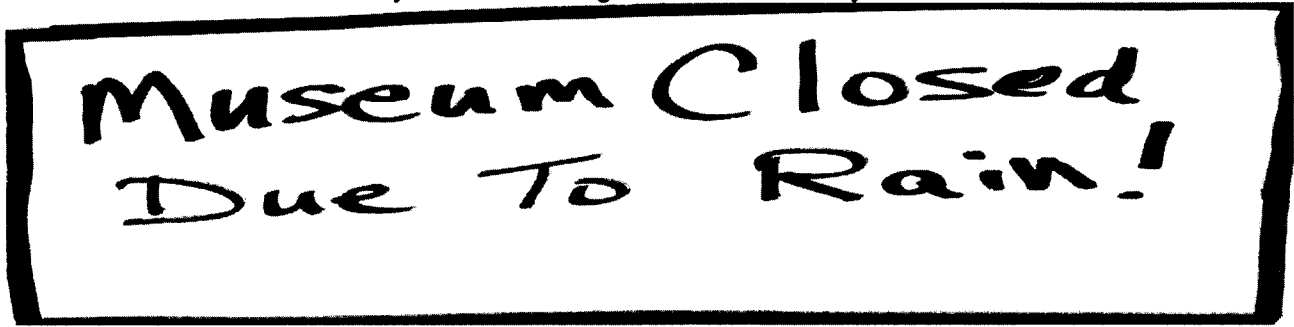


Chapter 5: Raiders of the Southwest Museum

A Report from the Friends of the Southwest Museum Coalition

Fifth in a series of flyers to Los Angeles Conservancy Members and Friends



Sign on the Front of the Southwest Museum, Spring 2004

The 1914 Southwest Museum founded by Charles Lummis is under attack by the Gene Autry Museum in Griffith Park. Los Angeles Conservancy members can help save Los Angeles's First and Most Historic Museum by writing the City.

And now, the latest Chapter of "Charles Lummis and the Raiders of the Southwest Museum"

Roll Opening Credits and Recap: In the first four episodes of our fictional "film" called **Charles Lummis and the Raiders of the Southwest Museum**, we learned that Jackie Autry, the Widow of Singing Cowboy Gene Autry, and her band of Board Members, have obtained control of the graceful 13-acre Southwest Museum campus and priceless 220,000 piece Southwest Museum Collection through the signing of a Merger Agreement. Mrs. Autry's museum paid ZERO (\$0) dollars to merge with the Southwest Museum. The Merger Agreement she signed said that BOTH the Southwest Museum and Gene Autry Museum would be operated *as separate museum locations* under the umbrella of something called the "Autry National Center."

In the Southwest Museum Merger Agreement, Mrs. Autry and her Board Members promised the People of the State of California (through the Attorney General) that she would assume the "trust obligations" of the former Southwest Museum Board and that means she promised the Southwest Museum would continue to be operated at the expense of the Autry National Center unless a Master Plan showed otherwise. **THAT PROMISE** was what Autry "paid" to get title to the Southwest Museum and its contents, once estimated by Southwest Museum Director Duane King to be worth close to a Billion (\$1,000,000,000) Dollars.

After merger, studies performed for Autry by Historic-Architect Brenda Levin showed the Southwest Museum can be operated within museum industry norms and an independent museum expert hired by the Friends of the Southwest Museum concluded that the Southwest Museum could easily be operated by Autry. Ever since, CEO John Gray has claimed to the press that the Autry Board has "concluded" the Southwest Museum is not "feasible." However, covering the cost of running the museum is precisely what Autry promised in the Merger Agreement as a condition of getting title to the Collection and buildings! In last week's episode, John Gray started claiming on Public Radio that the "preservation community" supports *adaptively reusing* the Southwest Museum. However, this claim makes no sense because Autry has no project proposal to evaluate and for anyone to support adaptive reuse is to support Autry's breach of its Merger promise to keep the *historic use!*

Chapter 5: "A Fiddler on the Roof and a Bug's Life in the Basement"

SCENE ONE: Door of Southwest Museum Tunnel after a winter rain in 2004. Hand made sign is posted on the door: "Museum Closed Due to Rain." Member of SW Museum Coalition driving by spots the sign and stops car. Member: "Hmm, even during the El Nino rains of several years ago, I never saw the Southwest

(over for more of *Charles Lummis and Raiders of the Southwest Museum*)

Museum closed 'due to rain.' Now that the Autry has merged with the Museum, I wonder if this 'rain closure' will be later used to try to justify moving away from Mount Washington? Hmmmm." **Member drives car away.**

SCENE TWO: Sometime in 2004. Third Level of the Caracol Tower of the Southwest Museum where the Collection is being cleaned. Pest control management team has just completed a review of the building.

Team leader: "OK, guys. Autry hired us to identify a good integrated pest management plan." **Member:**

"Well, the situation is pretty much what we see at any older museum. As part of the rehabilitation of the building for continued museum use, the Autry just needs to use standard techniques such as caulking holes foundations, weather-stripping on doors and windows, and seal the building against pest incursion." **Team leader:**

"Yeah, these recommendations prevent pest entrance into the building. Then, Autry just needs to conduct regular trapping and analysis of pests to determine what treatments are needed on an ongoing basis." **Member:**

"Oh, just like the Autry's bug control program over in Griffith Park, once this building is secured against new pest incursions, the pest control programs at both sites will be about the same."

SCENE THREE: Autry Museum in Griffith Park. Camera passes over Gene Autry's cowboy outfit and zooms in to the microscopic level. Theme music from movie "A Bug's Life" on soundtrack and large munching sounds. Two gross looking bugs with multiple legs and antenna are lounging on Autry's hat.

Bug 1: "Oh, man. Gene's hat is swweeeet!" **Bug 2:** "Yeah, it's a great life here in the basement of the Autry.

You heard that Autry is talkin' about getting' permission from the City Recreation and Parks Board to expand this building UNDERGROUND?" **Bug 1:** "No! Really?" **Bug 2:** "Yeah, I hear they are going to build a

HUUUGE new 100,000 square foot building, some underground! Then they're going to bring the Southwest Museum Collection over here for good!" **Bug 1:** "Cool! More for our grandchildren to munch on." **Bug 2:** "No

matter what the Autry does to control pests here, they can never get rid of all of us!" **Bug 3, pops up out of a**

crack in the cement block wall, laughing manically: "That's right! We can't ever be "controlled!" Every

museum in the world has to have pest control programs! **A shadow moves across them all. It's the regular**

visit by the exterminator. The Bugs scatter. Bug 2: "Head for the cracks in the wall!"

SCENE FOUR: Spring 2005. Meeting of Friends of the Southwest Museum Coalition at local coffee shop. Everyone is reading LA Times article about leaks and pest infestation of the Southwest Museum.

Chair: "Well the LA Times is lapping up the Autry's hysteria about the Southwest Museum." **Member 1:**

"When I saw the Autry close the museum last winter because of rain, I somehow knew Autry would use it an excuse that the Collection must be moved!" **Member 2:** "I hear from the Conservation staff that there are just

two leaks on the top of the Museum's Caracol Tower. Are the water leaks are huge exaggeration?." **Chair:**

"Well, the merger was touted as an opportunity for the Autry to properly protect the Collection. I would think the first job would be get on the darn roof and fix the known leaks to protect the Collection now under Autry

stewardship." **Member 1, dryly:** "Seems as if we have a Fiddler on the Roof." **Member 2:** "Yeah, John Gray

plays a fiddle on the roof while allowing water to continue to leak and then uses the Autry's own breach of

fiduciary duties as the reason the Collection should move out." **Chair:** "Autry has no feasibility study for the

relocation of the Collection to Griffith Park. And, they refuse to produce a comprehensive master plan for the entire institution that truthfully looks at the feasibility of building new Collection storage on the current site or

any other options. Remember before the Merger, Southwest Museum had raised \$3.5 million to build a new

storage building? When we bring this up Mr. Gray has turned red-faced and yelled at us." **Camera pulls away**

as Coalition members shake head in disgust. See more at www.friendsofthesouthwestmuseum.com.

SCENE FIVE: Summer 2006. Dusk. Latest issue of "Convergence," Autry's Magazine for members flies through the air from Griffith Park toward the Southwest Museum. Ominous music plays and the wind

blows. The Cover of the magazine depicts a single white cowboy hat. Bugs swarm over the hat and it is

revealed to be a villainous black hat. The wind blows the pages to an inside article by the Collections

Manager on "Preservation" of the Collection. It articulates the Autry's thinly-veiled claims for

relocation to Griffith Park. The wind blows harder and the magazine pages blow to the last page's

article "Putting Trust in Our Trustees." The last paragraph claims that the Board's challenge will be to

"safeguard the collections" with no mention of preservation of Charles Lummis's Southwest Museum.

The camera pulls back as the Magazine closes with the black hat on the cover visible. It grows to a huge size looming over the Museum. The Magazine folds over and into the shape of a giant sledgehammer with the handle resting on the Caracol Tower. Autry Board members and CEO John Gray carrying a fiddle climb onto the handle of the hammer like getting on horseback. The huge hammer rises into the sky with wind blowing and the Board yipping. The hammerhead swings into the Southwest Museum roof smashing holes and rain begins to fall into the Museum. John Gray plays the fiddle and Jackie Autry tears up the Merger Agreement as the hammer rises again and again to smash the Southwest Museum and all of the Los Angeles history for which it stands.

Voiceover: "How can responsible trustees publicly disparage and trash in their own magazine the very assets for which they promised in the Merger Agreement to raise funds, rehabilitate, and continue to operate?"

Fade to black with wild gleeful laughter, howling wind blowing, and louder crashing music.

Final Episode Next Week: John Gray Serves Up A Breach Of Contract With A Cultural Center Bow!

YOU CAN WRITE THE NEXT CHAPTER OF "CHARLES LUMMIS AND RAIDERS OF THE SOUTHWEST MUSEUM"

The Mayor of Los Angeles, under the guidance of the Human Relations Commission, is now conducting a *public input process* to find out what people think about Autry's proposal to use City parkland to expand its building in Griffith Park in order to ENABLE the movement of the Southwest Museum's Collection, Exhibits, and Name into the Autry's museum building. **All comments must be submitted by July 15, 2006.**

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

1. **TELL THE MAYOR WHAT YOU THINK** - Write to the Mayor and other Elected Officials to express your support of the Southwest Museum's rehabilitation and creation of a vibrant and modern museum displaying the Southwest's vast collection. Over 7,000 people have signed the Coalition's petitions demanding that Autry sign a new agreement with the California Attorney General confirming its Merger Agreement responsibility to raise funds for and continue to operate the Southwest Museum in the Arroyo Seco AS A CONDITION of any City of Los Angeles permission to use more City parkland to expand the building in Griffith Park. The Mayor appoints the Recreation and Park Commission that will make this decision. Send your e-mail or letter to ALL of the following:

Mayor Villaraigosa:

mayor@lacity.org or 200 N Spring St., Room 303 LA, CA 90012

Councilmember Jose Huizar (Southwest Museum in his district):

councilmember.huizar@lacity.org or 200 N. Spring St., Room 425 LA, CA 90012

Councilmember Ed Reyes (Casa de Adobe portion of SW Museum in his district):

councilmember.reyes@lacity.org or 200 N. Spring St., Room 410, LA, CA 90012

Councilmember Tom LaBonge (Autry Museum in his district):

tom.labonge@lacity.org or 200 N. Spring St., Room 480, LA, CA 90012

Human Relations Commission, Gary de la Rosa (compiling comments for Autry):

gary.delarosa@lacity.org or 200 N. Spring St., Room 1625 LA 90012

Friends of the Southwest Museum Coalition (make sure we get a copy!!):

swmcoalition@pacbell.net or 755 Crane Blvd., LA 90065

2. **SIGN THE COALITION'S ONLINE PETITION** – Join others who have signed:
<http://www.petitiononline.com/SWM/petition.html> and sign electronically!

3. **EDUCATE YOURSELF ABOUT THIS CONTROVERSY:**

Charles Lummis – www.charleslummis.com

Autry National Center – Enter: www.southwestmuseum.org and see where it takes you.

Friends of the Southwest Museum Coalition – www.friendsofthesouthwestmuseum.com