**Happenin's 'Round the House**

*by Margi Bertram, Museum Administrator*

Cowboy Festival at the Hart Museum

Once again we are looking forward to hosting Cowboy Festival visitors at the William S. Hart Museum! As we did last year, we are using an open house format for touring the museum. This will allow guests to explore the house at their own pace, taking as much or as little time as they want. Volunteers will be stationed around the house to answer questions. The Festival will again be providing shuttle service up and down the hill, something everyone loved last year! As a reminder, last year we had over 750 visitors each day of the Festival. There is a remarkable kind of energy with crowds like that, and we look forward to a similar experience this year.

One thing that happens when we offer this different format for our visitors, they have some control over their experience. They are not confined to a half-hour circuit of the house. Some really just want to walk through and get a general sense of the place, remind themselves of what they saw many years ago, or see if anything has changed. Others want to linger and look carefully at some of the details. All visitors are freer to ask the questions that most interest them, rather than those that most interest their guide.

What are some of our favorite or common questions?

* This sweet little boy probably about seven years old raised his hand politely and asked “Did Fritz die in the flood?” His face showed great relief when I told him no, that Fritz died after a long happy life.
* “If Mr. Hart loved animals that much, was he a vegetarian?” Our response is that there is no indication he was. However, it is easy to imagine he might be if he were living today.
* Is the house haunted? Are there ghosts?
* You say he loved animals, then why does he have a bear skin rug in his Living Room? Is the bear skin real?
* What kind of heating system did Hart have?
* What kind of wiring was used for the electricity?
* Is that a waffle maker or a crepe maker?
* Why didn’t he leave this place to his son?
* He slept in that bed? How tall did you say he was?
* Didn’t Hart stuff his horse and his dog?
* Why did Hart retire from films in 1925?

Come join us this year for Cowboy Festival, and ask your questions too! We promise to answer with every answer we know the answer to!