Fifteen years of volunteer service with The Los Angeles County Museum   
of Art has given me many wonderful experiences of variety, but none   
quite brought 'personality-to-personality' as have my commitments at   
The William S. Hart museum. In large museums, there is always a rather awesome aura as one 'mills' around the artifacts of different cultures,   
ages, and eras. Quite unlike that particular sensation, I was privy to   
several interesting revelations, what some humans might think, 'eerie' -   
meetings with the one whose mansion bears his name, William S. Hart, the   
late Shakespearean actor, and, eventually, a Western actor and producer,   
his former home now a museum which houses his heirlooms.

Sunday duty as a new docent had me stationed at a spot on the second   
floor, waiting for a group of tourists, when standing non-gregariously,   
I, overwhelmingly, felt a presence at my side. Unexplainably (at that   
time), I leaned slightly back and to my side, proceeding to move my hand   
back and forth as if stroking something. Despite the fact there was no   
one else around, I, suddenly, found myself embarrassed - not understand­ing why I was acting in this manner. Simultaneously, my group was approa­ching, and for the time diverting my mind from the alien behavior.

Driving home, following my stint, I was 'nagged' by the question as to   
why I had made the motion after the feeling of 'non-aloneness'. Although   
reluctant to share the incident with anyone, I did, after several days,   
relate to my husband what had occurred, at the risk of his thinking me to   
be a bit strange. In any event, not too long later, one day in concluding   
the last tour, I was met by the Tour Leader on the very spot where I had experienced the enigma. She and I were alone in the museum, and having   
finished our respective duties, began to chat, she revealing to me

certain unusual things, that in her years at Hart, had happened, none of   
which remotely related to my episode. Listening to her review, I, now,   
felt free to share my experience of a relatively short time previous.   
Concluding my 'story', She asked, "Was the presence a human being?"   
whereupon, surprisingly, I immediately answered, "No", momentarily   
wondering why I had responded so spontaneously, and negatively. She said,   
"Come down to my office." Following her to the files, she took out a sheet   
of paper, handed it to me, saying, "Read this." Puzzled as to what this   
was all about, I took the paper, read the contents, which, among other   
things, stated that after Mr. Hart's death seven psychics had 'studied'   
the 'house', all of them having felt the presence of an animal. Not with-out a strange, but warm, feeling, I had my answer in realizing that that  
certain day on the second floor, I had been stroking the back of   
one of Mr. Hart's beloved dogs. Never before had I been a part in that   
kind of atmosphere; however, ensuing events only verified that, indeed,   
my imagination, so-to-speak, had not 'run away with me', when on several   
occasions, Mr. Hart, himself, vividly appeared.

One afternoon, again, the last tour of the day was completed and I was   
midway through the upstairs patio where the gun collection is displayed.   
Suddenly, I did an 'about-face', returning to his bedroom, stopping and   
facing the chair, which in front of, were placed his boots - this time   
the boots very-much filled with 'The Man' himself. Standing motionless,   
I continued to look at him, with a mutual stance from him. A brief   
moment of shared silence, I turned and left, not so affected as I had been at my first encounter with a pleasant, if intangible, presence, that, I believe remains after all these years.

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Sundays as a rule were my scheduled days, and, as such, since there was   
a shortage of docents, frequently I worked solely, as was the case one   
Sunday afternoon, when finished with my last tour, I met "Nicky", the   
security officer, in the hallway leading to and from the guest quarters.   
She was doing her 'house check' before closing the museum. Having had a   
busy day, I was rather weary and when detecting a strong aroma of   
freshly-brewed coffee, I made the comment that I could really use a good   
cup of coffee at which she responded, "There is no coffee." Persisting, I   
said, "Well, I smell fresh coffee. Someone must have made it." Further   
she informed me that no one could have made coffee since she and I were   
the only ones in the building. Checking in the docent room (to make sure)   
I had to concede that there was no freshly-brewed coffee. "Nicky" had   
not smelled coffee. I HAD! Interestingly enough, at a Christmas party,   
someone told of a like-experience. I had not, up to that time, shared   
with anyone, my detection.

There have been numerous times that, comfortably, Bill Hart was close to me in his home, but when he appeared in my home one Sunday evening upon my returning from museum duty, his following me around as I attended to home 'musts', I do confess did, lend to my discomfort, which, perhaps, led to his rather quickly leaving.

There are those who may deduce that my imagination works overtime, but I   
can assure you I am not given to fabricate nor wildly imagine. I was as   
surprised as anyone who might read or hear of the experiences I have just   
shared. In my opinion, Bill Hart's spirit (not ghost) lives in La Loma   
de Los Vientos, the home he loved so much, as we, who work among his   
treasured belongings, also do!

by Lucille Evenson, Volunteer