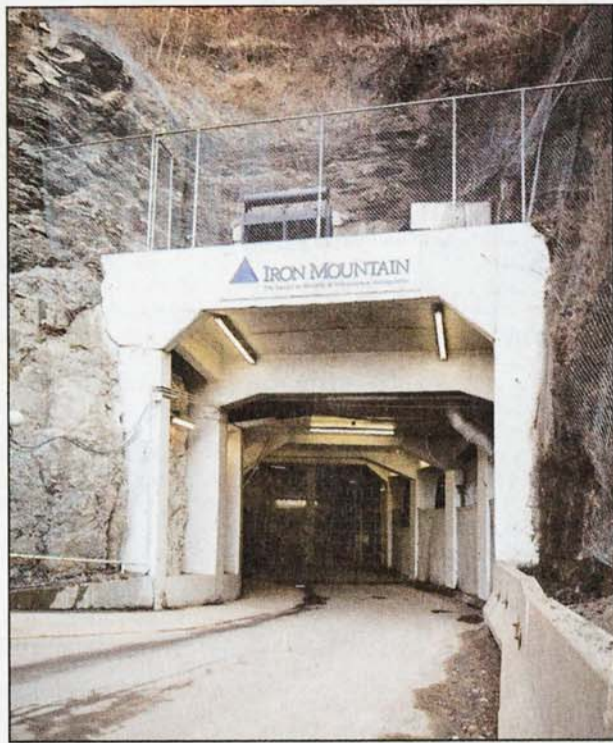


Preserving the Past



Security is tight at the main entrance to Iron Mountain, which is housed in a former limestone mine near Boyers. It offers record management and document storage services for private companies and government agencies.
 SUBMITTED PHOTO



Corbis employee Sarah Kubiak looks through the insulated door that separates the storage space from the offices at the Corbis Film Preservation Facility in Iron Mountain. The vault that houses the images is 10,000 square feet and kept at a 45-degree temperature.



Spotlight touches image archive, Iron Mountain

By Eric Freehling
 Eagle Focus Editor

BOYERS — A short film documentary brings to light a photograph archive stored 220 feet below ground in Butler County. The Bettmann Archive is stored in the Corbis Film Preservation Facility at Iron Mountain, 1137 Branchton Road. Corbis is owned by Microsoft founder Bill Gates. The company's assets include the archive, which is said to contain 19 million historically important images.



The documentary
 "The Invisible Photograph," shown last month at the Film Kitchen screening series in Pittsburgh, focused on the image archive. The series features regional, independently made short films and videos. Film producer and cameraman David D'Agostino, commissioned by the Carnegie Museum of Art, said, "I heard rumors that there was a cave in the Butler area where they hid politicians during 9-11. I also knew about the Corbis-Bettmann Archive but didn't know it was in Pennsylvania."

The archive
 Accessing the Corbis facility was an unusual experience for the filmmakers. Iron Mountain is housed in a former limestone mine. It offers record management and document storage services, and security is tight because government agencies store records there. "I was most surprised at how quickly you forget you are over 200 feet underground, with only one exit, controlled by armed guards. I tried as a filmmaker to emphasize the feeling of a science fiction film, but the amount of visual history in the Bettmann Archive is far more impressive than the shock factor

Work by documentary photographer Peter Turnley is part of the Bettmann Archive, stored at the Corbis Film Preservation Facility. The archive contains millions of historically important images. of the mine," said D'Agostino. "Once past the armed guards, and safe in the hands of collections manager Ann Hartman, the archive is an incredibly hospitable and accessible environment. It's pretty normal, as far as office environments go, aside from the rock walls. The coffee is still bad and the carpet is still brown," said D'Agostino. "The science fiction feeling really came after walking through the airlock into a giant refrigerator containing our visual history as earthlings, neatly alphabetized into hundreds of beige file cabinets," he said. The archive began as the contents of two trunks Otto Bettmann took with him when he left Nazi Germany for the United States in 1935. Bettmann worked as a librarian in Berlin where he developed the idea of creating a photo archive. Images of U.S. history included in it date to the Civil War.



Collections manager Ann Hartman, above, is in the vault 220 feet below ground where millions of photographic negatives and prints are stored at the Corbis Film Preservation Facility at Iron Mountain. At left, she holds a 5x7-inch glass plate negative.

Photography by Dave Prelosky/Butler Eagle

The collection grew over the years with the eventual merger with the news photo library of United Press International. The collection contains such iconic images as Albert Einstein sticking out his tongue and Rosa Parks seated in the front of a bus. Today, archive images are available for licensing online at www.corbisimages.com. Filmmaker D'Agostino said, "Anyone can go online and type in a keyword and be overloaded with tons of images. But there is something very different about the printed physical image that somehow makes it more, I don't

POTPOURRI

Tanglewood hosts book sale

LYNDORA — Tanglewood Center, 10 Austin Ave., will have a book sale from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Oct. 16 and 17. Bag day will be from 9 a.m. to noon Oct. 18.

For more information, call 724-287-0021 or visit www.tanglewoodinc.org.

Auxiliary craft, garage sale set

The South Butler Ladies Auxiliary will host a craft and garage sale from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Oct. 18 at South Butler Fire Hall, 98 Old Plank Road.

For more details or vendor information, call 724-283-4190.

Church fall festival scheduled

SAXONBURG — Saxonburg Memorial Presbyterian Church, 100 W. Main St., will host its annual fall festival from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. Oct. 18.

The event includes a flea market, Chinese auction, crafts, quilted items, chicken dinner, homemade apple butter, grandma's pantry and baked goods.

For more information, call 724-352-2888.

Costumed dogs will raise money

ADAMS TWP — The Bark for Books Dog Walk will be at 10 a.m. Oct. 18 at Adams Park. The event supports the Mars Public Library.

Prizes will be awarded for the dogs with the best Halloween costumes. Participants will receive gift bags and hot dogs.

For more information or to register, visit the Mars Public Library, 107 Grand Ave., or call 724-725-9048.

Mars Library craft Mondays planned

MARS — Mars Public Library, 107 Grand Ave., will host Make-a-Craft Mondays from 3 to 7:30 p.m. beginning Oct. 20.

All ages can participate. For more information, call the library at 724-625-9048.

Domestic violence theme of art

VOICE will collaborate with the Art Center for the Associated Artists of Butler County, 344 S. Main St., for an art show to recognize Domestic Violence Awareness month in October.

There will be an artists' reception and candlelight vigil from 7 to 9 p.m. Oct. 24. Viewing will be from Oct. 22 to 25 and Oct. 29 through Nov. 1.

For more information, call Gloria at VOICE at 724-283-8700.

Oktoberfest date moved to Oct. 11

JEFFERSON TWP — Concordia Lutheran Ministries has rescheduled its annual Oktoberfest celebration for 4 to 8 p.m. Oct. 11 at Haven I, 112 Marwood Road.

For children, there will be a balloon artist, games, crafts, hayrides, a bounce castle and more.

The Concordia food service staff will prepare a German-themed menu. There also will be a quick food tent and a traditional beer tent.

Free parking and shuttle service will be available. Guests are encouraged to arrive well before the 7:45 p.m. Zambelli Fireworks display.

The event is free. For more information, call Concordia Public Relations at 724-352-1571, Ext. 8266.

Notices should be sent to the Focus Department P.O. Box 271, Butler, PA 16003, or focus@butlereagle.com.

Preserving the Past

Archive

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know, actualized — there is probably a German word to describe it."

"You can go to their website, type in a word, for example; justice, or obese, or abnormality, or whatever, and it will lead to a physical thing that you can hold. And not just one image but any variety of images that are only connected by a keyword," he said.

"It's a site for inspiring creativity and showcasing incredible images," said Hartman, senior manager, library and records management at the archive. "People have access to and use images from the Corbis website."

Uses today

Archive images are licensed for use as book illustrations and covers, magazines and television shows and movies.

Hartman said, "When the movie 'Gangs of New York' was being made, they asked us for scenes of Boss Tweed's gang at Five Points to get the look of the streets and clothing."

"Every day we look for images for clients," she said. The archive gets 30 or more requests a week for images and about 150 are scanned.

The physical sources of those images are in Corbis' climate-controlled vault.

It's estimated the archive holds 19 million photographs, negatives

and glass plates, as well as other images, according to Hartman.

"Sure you can Google it, but to hold, for example, the original 35-mm strip of film exposed to the light from a battle scene in Vietnam, I guess I knew this, but being there, holding these images, I realized how important it is to preserve them," D'Agostino said.

"Something about seeing an image on a glowing computer screen removes you from the image," D'Agostino said.

Working down under

The preservation needs of the archive require Hartman and Corbis production control coordinators Leslie Stauffer and Sarah Kubiak work in a sunless environment.

"It's entertaining to say the least," said Stauffer. "It's also dark. We don't get a lot of sunlight down here, but the collection is amazing."

"We have these Verilux lights to get the vitamin D that you don't get," said Stauffer.

Kubiak said tracking down an image using the archive's vast filing system can prove a challenge. The collection, before coming into Corbis' hands, used to lend out negatives and plates and didn't always have them returned.

"They are lost to the ages," said Kubiak. "We are very meticulous with our filing."

Hartman said the air-



Production control coordinator Sarah Kubiak looks for a negative to fulfill a client's order at the Corbis Film Preservation Facility. Kubiak said tracking down an image can prove a challenge.

DAVE PRELOSKY/BUTLER EAGLE

lock-equipped vault storing the physical sources of the archive images is 10,000 square feet and kept at 45 degrees and 35 percent humidity. These conditions preserve aging film stock.

All photo materials degrade: emulsions fade, flake and peel; plastic film base can either liquify or dry out; and cellulose acetate — the most common film base — releases acetic acid as it decays which shrinks or distorts images.

The Corbis facility doesn't have running water because of the danger a burst pipe would pose to the materials, said Hartman, who has been with the archive since it moved underground in Boyers in 2002.

Making a movie

Usually only a handful of non-Corbis researchers visit the preservation facility, but the documentary

filmmakers weren't there to seek images but to create them.

"I like to know what makes a person tick. At one point, Jeffrey Inscho, Carnegie Museum of Art's Web and digital media manager, was having a fantastic conversation with ... Stauffer, and I just started rolling the camera," said film producer D'Agostino.

"She was self-conscious around the camera, but once we started rolling, she was already so passionately involved in the conversation, she forgot about the camera," D'Agostino said.

The Boyers location made the documentary perfect fare for Film Kitchen, said Matthew Day, curator of the film series.

"Everything screened in Film Kitchen has a local connection. Movies are either made in the region or by talented artists with a Pittsburgh connection,"

said Day. Film Kitchen is held the second Tuesday of each month at Pittsburgh Filmmakers' Melwood Screening Room, 477 Melwood Ave. in Pittsburgh's Oakland section.

When asked if there were plans to expand the archive into a full-fledged documentary, D'Agostino said, "The documentary belongs to the Carnegie Museum of Art. It is their project. You will have to ask them. Personally, I would love to have made the film longer."

"The museum wanted it only to be 5 to 10 minutes and said the Web audience would not watch the video if it was longer. I insisted on the length."

"I will say however, a feature-length video about an archive could get a little slow without any romantic scenes, or at least a little gunfire," he said.



Ann Hartman holds a favorite photographic category: 1920s New York City, at the Corbis Film Preservation Facility in Iron Mountain near Boyers.



Leslie Stauffer, Corbis Film Preservation Facility production control coordinator, works 220 feet underground. To make up for a lack of natural light, Verilux lights are used so that employees get needed vitamin D.

'PROJECT RUNWAY'

First ladies get fashion critique

By Associated Press

WASHINGTON — America's first ladies went under Tim Gunn's fashion microscope this week, and the results weren't always positive.

Style guru Gunn and a panel of experts cast a critical eye on first lady fashions at a National Archives forum, and not everyone fared as well as Michelle Obama.

The current first lady got top fashion reviews from Gunn and the other panelists, with Gunn rating her style sense as "divine."

But he wondered why Edith Wilson, wife of Woodrow Wilson, felt compelled to play amateur seamstress and remake her dresses over and over.

As for possible future administrations, Gunn took note that Hillary Rodham Clinton's been looking "rather presidential lately." But the panelists said it had taken Clinton some time to warm up to the idea that a first lady's style reflects on her husband's administration.

Valerie Steele, director of The Museum at the Fashion Institute of Technology, noted in the



days of Sarah Polk, wife to James K. Polk, women wanted to show off a tiny waist, hands and feet, but have "plump, voluptuous shoulders and a big, big butt."

"That sounds like Nicki Minaj, JLo and Kim K.," designer Tracy Reese

declared.

Reese eyed a picture of an ivory brocade dress of Polk's with a flouncy bottom and wondered aloud, "Can you imagine Kim Kardashian in that?"

Gunn sniffed: "I'd prefer not to."

The forum was held

Tuesday at the National Archives, which has "signature" items worn by Jacqueline Kennedy and Mrs. Obama on display as part of its exhibit, "Making their Mark: Stories Through Signatures."

Among the items on display: The black and

fashion guru Tim Gunn joins design experts for a forum on first ladies and fashion Tuesday at the National Archives in Washington, D.C. With Gunn, from left, are Tracy Reese, who has designed for First Lady Michelle Obama; Valerie Steele, director and chief curator at the Museum at the Fashion Institute of Technology; and Lisa Katheleen Graddy, deputy chairman and chief curator of political history and the First Ladies Collection at the Smithsonian National Museum of American History.

ASSOCIATED PRESS

red Narciso Rodriguez dress worn by Mrs. Obama on the night of the 2008 election in Chicago and a pillbox hat worn by Mrs. Kennedy.

The forum was presented in partnership with the White House Historical Association.