How did *Pinkie* and *The Blue Boy* at the Huntington end up on all kinds of weird merchandise?



: Railroad tycoon Henry Huntington made headlines when he paid an art dealer the highest price ever at the time for what some have called the most famous painting in the world. Thomas Gainsborough's 1770 masterpiece, *The Blue Boy*, was shipped to cowboy California, and the British lost their minds-90,000 came to say goodbye. Huntington placed the work near Pinkie, a portrait of a girl painted by Thomas Lawrence, and the world wanted a piece of the power couple. They were likely first sold as postcards in the museum's gift shop, then ornaments and playing cards. Disney dressed Mr. Toad as Blue Boy and as Pinkie: stars from abroad remade in Hollywood. The Blue Boy will be on loan to London's National Gallery starting in January. Let's hope the Brits give it back.

Q: Do the metal squares on all the old brick Hollywood buildings have a purpose?

A: Some architects call them smallpox or zits, but engineers call them exterior washer plates. They

help tie together unreinforced masonry buildings built before the 1933 Long Beach earthquake, which caused facades to peel off like the tops of sardine cans. Huge bolts attach the brick walls to wood floors

and roofs inside the buildings, and you see the bits that stick out. A 1984 law made the owners of 7,800 buildings retrofit them, and some owners "were not as concerned about aesthetics as much as speed," says architect Fran Offenhauser, who developed an invisible system for historic buildings to prevent the rods from piercing facades. Nobody wants to see an eye patch on a cherub.

1: How many folks are employed fulltime by the city?

A: L.A.'s economy is larger than that of Switzerland. More than 113,000 Angelenos work for L.A. County, the biggest institution in the public sector. Another 40,000 are employed by Kaiser, our largest private employer, but just as many work for Target and Ralphs. The top ten include classics like aerospace and movie studios, but we also have an insanely large number of private security guards-if all the L.A. rent-a-cops got together, they would almost fill the Hollywood Bowl. The municipal budget was almost halved for 2021, but in 2020, the City of Los Angeles was the fifth-largest public employer locally, paying out \$7.4 billion in salaries to 34,172 full-time employees. That's about what George Lucas is worth, split among the population of Beverly Hills. Sounds

like a party! ■

CELEBRATING 75 YEARS OF MEALS AND DEALS

Heavyweights from Warner Bros, Universal, and Disney have been cutting deals at Burbank's Smoke House for 75 years. The menu and décor haven't changed much, with waiters still serving up garlic toast and Steak Sinatra on white-linen-topped tables. The luxurious dark-woodand-red-leather interior looks much as it did when Bob Hope hung out there in the '40s or when the cast of Laugh-In partied there in the '60s and when George Clooney named his production company after the place. This month, stars will be among those celebrating the diamond anniversary at a bash on October 12. The party will be in the same lounge where Captain and Tennille were discovered singing "Love Will Keep Us Together." So will our love for the Smoke House.

