



Society for Design Administration
An Affiliate of The American Institute of Architects

Orange County Chapter

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Connie McKenna, SDA/CDFA
Natalie Newman, SDA
Wendy Woolsey, SDA/CDFA

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THE COMMENTARY

January 2012 Edition

A Newsletter of the Society For Design Administration
Orange County Chapter

President's Corner

By Nancy Burt, SDA

I would like to start out 2012 by reminding us of some of our accomplishments in 2011:

- We offered seven hours of continuing education with our speaker-led lunch seminars and provided two roundtable discussions.
- We were able to offer a scholarship for one member to attend EDSymposium in Charleston, South Carolina.
- Our membership increased 25% over the course of the year.
- Four informative newsletters were sent to our membership and associates.
- We participated in our 4th annual CanStruction event and our 20th annual Project Playhouse event.
- Long-time former member Judy Merrill was awarded the distinction of Honorary Member of our Chapter.

As you can see, we were busy and we have just as much in store for this coming year.

I am honored and pleased to begin my second term as President of the Orange County Chapter of SDA and am delighted to welcome our newest Board member, Penny Nelson from Douglas Pancake Architects, who is taking on the position of Corresponding Secretary. I am pleased that we have four returning Board members this year: Helen Palermo as Treasurer, Cheryl Mathes as Recording Secretary, and Diana Dubich and Betsy Nickless who will share the Co-Vice President position.

(Continued on Page 3)

MEETING LOCATION CHANGE

Effective with our February luncheon seminar, our meeting place will change to the Lutron Experience Center, 2458 Dupont Drive, Irvine, CA 92612. The Center is located between Von Karman Avenue and Bardeen. The change is taking place in order to lower the cost to members for attending our monthly seminars while maintaining the quality of our programs. Come join us at our new location!

Upcoming Events

January 2012

January 5 Business Meeting 5:30 pm
Meeting will be held at Lesley,
Thomas, Schwarz & Postma, Inc.

January 19 Luncheon Meeting 11:30 am
Microsoft Lessons—Come learn
Tips and techniques for Microsoft 7
And Office 2010.
Microsoft Store, South Coast Plaza,
Costa Mesa

February 2012

February 2 Business Meeting 5:30 pm
Meeting will be held at Wells Fargo
Insurance Services

February 16 Luncheon Meeting 11:30 am
Bryan Lorenz from Wells Fargo
Insurance Services will present
“Everything you ever wanted to know
about Cyber Liability”
Lutron Experience Center, Irvine

March 2012

March 1 Business Meeting 5:30 pm
Location to be announced.

March 15 Luncheon Meeting 11:30 am
Roundtable—Any topic open for
discussion including HR, insurance,
systems (IT, Accounting, etc.), out-
sourcing, recruiting, and others.
Lutron Experience Center, Irvine

Looking Ahead

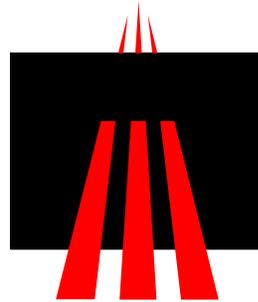
May 2—5 EDSymposium 2012
SDA National's 42nd annual
educational conference
Portland, Oregon

Job Board

Did you know that SDA maintains a Job Board? This includes persons looking for work as well as firms looking for qualified personnel in the A/E industry. Most of the positions are for administrative staff, as AIA maintains its own job board for licensed architects. If your firm is looking for a person with certain qualifications or if you know someone who is looking for a position in an A/E firm, please contact Betsy Nickless by e-mail at betsyn@msa-arch.com.

SDA's Mission:

To promote the
exchange of ideas and
educate its members in
the related
disciplines of design
firm administration.



January 13	Susan Crook
February 25	Cindy Loomer
March 12	Dee Jackson

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

(Continued From Page One)

I encourage each of you to attend our monthly Business meetings. They are held the first Thursday evening of each month at a member's office. This is a great way to learn about the inner workings of our organization and to have your voice heard in what we offer in terms of seminars, events and networking opportunities.

Also, please plan on attending our monthly lunch seminars (held the third Thursday of each month) to take advantage of the many tools we have to enhance your knowledge. This year we will be changing the venue for our lunch seminars so please keep an eye out for the e-blast invitations as they will contain all the details.

We have many new educational and networking opportunities planned for 2012 - I hope you will take advantage of these offerings to further your career, enhance your worth to your firm and for your own personal growth. And don't forget to regularly visit the SDA national website (www.sdadmin.org) for the latest news, forum discussions, webinar offerings, the SDA Market, information on certification (CDFA), and more.

Please see other areas of this newsletter and our Orange County website www.sdaoc.org for further details on dates, times and places of meetings and seminars and plan on attending. I don't want you to miss out - the more you participate, the more you benefit.

Thank you in advance for your continued support of SDA and I look forward to seeing you at our next event.

GENERATIONAL SAVVY

For the first time in history, we have four generations working together in the workforce. Employers need to have generational savvy in order to provide harmony among these truly diverse groups:

Traditionalists—People in their 60s, 70s, and 80s: Loyalty is important. They can survive on as little as possible. They are the true "waste not, want not" generation. They believe that a person should do an honest day's work for an honest day's pay. Comfortable with delayed gratification.

Baby Boomers—People in their late 40s, 50s, or early 60s: They are true workaholics of the modern workplace. Goal oriented, independent. Boomers believe there are no shortcuts to success. One must pay one's dues.

Gen X—People in their late 30s and early 40s: Gen X is notoriously skeptical, value work/life balance. Display casual disdain for authority and structured work hours. Dislike being micro-managed. Loyal to people, not organizations. Ambitious and eager to learn new skills but on their own terms. Do not like interaction with boss.

Gen Y—People in their 20s and early 30s: Tech-savvy. Constantly connected. Tend to focus more on individual careers than the company. Guided by supersized career expectations, a need to see ongoing progress. Achievement oriented, high expectations of employer, not afraid to question authority, team oriented. Love interaction with boss.

Contributed by **Nancy Burt** from her notes from Workforce Strategies at Employment Practices Seminar 11/15/2011.

SDA DUES

Just a short reminder that the SDA dues are due no later than January 31, 2012. If you are looking for a bargain, pay your 2012 and 2013 dues now and receive a 15% discount on the National dues (that's a savings of \$33.75).

SDA OFFICERS FOR 2012



**Nancy Burt, SDA
President**

Nancy spent many years in administrative positions in the architecture industry and is now the Human Resources Manager/ Firm Bookkeeper for a CPA firm, Lesley, Thomas, Schwarz and Postma. No matter the industry, SDA continues to provide multiple educational and networking opportunities. Nancy feels there are many benefits to being a member of SDA: one is the ability to query members around the country on any number of topics such as insurance costs, payroll problems and employment-related issues; but the other is by far the greatest benefit and that is the local networking and group of loyal friends that have been made during her membership. Nancy's eleven-year involvement with SDA has included serving as Co-Vice President, Treasurer and Corresponding Secretary as well as with Newsletter and Conference committees. Nancy enjoys walking, reading and travel (which she does not get enough of!), and she and her husband Kevin have two sons in college.

Cheryl Mathes has worked in the A&E industry for 25 years. Currently, she is the Controller for ValleyCrest Design Group, a landscape architecture firm located in Santa Ana. ValleyCrest Design Group is a branch of ValleyCrest Landscape Development, which performs standalone landscape architectural services, and integrated design-build services. The Landscape Architects, installation crews and maintenance landscape architects at Valley-Crest collaborate on all aspects of a project, from inception all the way through installation and maintenance.

Over the years, the SDA has been an integral part in her professional career. The programs offered by the SDA give her the opportunity to meet other administrative design professionals and glean vital information. She has attended National and Regional conventions, as well as continual participation on the local Board, monthly seminars, and committees. She enjoys participating in the community outreach programs, such as Project Playhouse and Canstruction, especially participating in the Annual Canstruction Awards Gala.

Cheryl is a proud supporter of the SDA and enjoys participating in all that the SDA has to offer.



**Cheryl Mathes, SDA
Recording Secretary**

SDA OFFICERS FOR 2012

Betsy has been in the design profession for more than 25 years and was the 2008 recipient of SDA's National Lifetime Achievement Award, the highest honor bestowed by the Society for Design Administration.

Currently, she serves as SDA's National Treasurer. She has held positions on committees for the National SDA, as well as served as an officer of the Orange County Chapter continuously since the Chapter was founded in 1983. She also proof reads all SDA/OC Chapter publications and announcements for correct grammar and punctuation, attends all Business Meetings and SDA Conventions, and provides all of us with the background and historical information that only a founding member of our Chapter would know.

She has been a member of the Orange County Construction executive board since its inception in 2007, and is the Co-Chair for the 2012 event.

Betsy enjoys Five Crowns and Bistango for dining, and her favorite music is Contemporary Christian. She met her husband of 30 years, Steve, at the car races where she was in charge of timing and scoring and he was doing PR work for one of the teams. They have two grown children.



**Betsy Nickless, SDA/CDFA
Co-Vice President**



**Diana Dubich, SDA
Co-Vice President**

Diana Dubich is the Administrative Manager at HMC Architects, Irvine Office. HMC is one of the largest planning and design firms headquartered in California, with 9 offices located in California, Nevada, Arizona, and internationally. The firm offers a wealth of architecture, design, master planning, and interior design services.

Diana is excited to serve her third term on the Orange County Chapter Board and looks forward to involvement with the numerous SDA events throughout the year. She has previously attended two Western Regional Conferences, has been involved with Construction, attends as many monthly educational seminars as possible, and is anticipating her first SDA National Convention experience at EDSymposium in May. Diana feels that the knowledge and insight gained from peers in the A/E industry through SDA is priceless!

During her spare time, Diana enjoys wine tasting, warm-weather activities, and spending time with her "child", a 4-pound dwarf rabbit named *Comet*.

SDA OFFICERS FOR 2012



**Penny Nelson, SDA
Corresponding Secretary**

Penny Nelson is the Director of Finance for Douglas Pancake Architects, Inc. in Newport Beach. Douglas Pancake Architects is a boutique architectural practice serving the senior housing and healthcare industry across the Western United States.

Penny is looking forward to serving her first term on the Orange County Chapter Board and looks forward to involvement with the numerous SDA events throughout the year. She previously attended the Western Regional Conference in Denver, and is anticipating attending her first EDSymposium in her hometown of Portland, Oregon. As a relative newcomer to the design industry, Penny feels the knowledge and insight the SDA resources provide has been the key to successfully negotiating this new environment.

During her spare time, Penny enjoys spending time with her husband and two (almost) grown children, camping, and visiting Disneyland.

Helen has been working in the accounting field for almost 40 years, ever since her first job. That first job prompted her to study accounting, resulting in a Bachelor's degree from CSUF in Business Administration with an emphasis in accounting, all while working full time and raising her daughter. Her experience in the engineering arena began in 1989, and she moved into the architectural field in 2003 when she joined Dougherty+Dougherty Architects as their Business Manager.

Helen and her husband of three years share a passion for historic preservation – both having restored bungalows built in the early part of the 20th century prior to their marriage, and they are now in the process of restoring their mid-century ranch-style house. After the completion of the exterior painting of her 1912 bungalow, neighbors began asking for her assistance with their color selections and a small color consulting business was born. She has been a member of the Historic Preservation Committee for the City of Anaheim for many years.

When they're not working on their house, Tom and Helen enjoy going on home tours, scouring antique flea markets and salvage yards for period items, and walking their two dogs, Dallas and Raisin.

After sitting on the SDA sidelines for a number of years, attending the occasional lunch seminar, she was recruited to join the SDA Board as chapter Treasurer in 2010 and is looking forward to continuing her involvement in 2012.



**Helen Palermo, SDA
Treasurer**

2012 HR UPDATES

Nancy Burt attended an Employment Practices seminar recently, and she shares with us her notes:

New laws that take effect January 1, 2012

- AB 22 - Prohibits most employers or prospective employers, with the exception of certain financial institutions, from obtaining consumer credit reports for employment purposes unless the job position is on list of permissible search positions (a position with the DoJ, managerial position, law enforcement, a person with regular access to bank accounts or credit card information, etc.);
- AB 469 – Employers must provide new hires a notice showing such items as rate of pay, overtime rate if applicable, paydays, employer name/address/phone, workers' compensation insurance carrier name/address/phone;
- AB 887 – Refines the meaning of “gender” for purposes of anti-discrimination and equal rights; requires employer to allow employee to appear or dress consistently with the employee’s “gender expression;”
- SB 299 – Employers must provide employees on pregnancy disability leave the same health coverage that they were provided prior to the beginning of the leave. The coverage must be maintained for 16 weeks;
- SB 272 - Clarifies existing organ donor law to provide paid leave of absence for up to 30 business days to an organ donor and up to five business days for a bone marrow donor;
- SB 459 – Prohibits “willful” misclassification of individuals as independent contractors.
- New IRS voluntary classification settlement program – Enables employers to resolve past worker reclassification issues – good way to “come clean;”
- New NLRB poster must be displayed starting January 31, 2012 informing employees of their right to form a union, discuss wages and benefits, take action with one or more co-workers to improve working conditions, etc.

Social Media

- NLRB reviewed 129 cases - most involving issues of employer having overbroad policies restricting use of social media or that an employer unlawfully discharged or disciplined one or more employees over contents of social media posts. Employers need to be very careful about taking any action against employees that post on Facebook and other social media sites.

Wage and Hours

- There are more class action law suits over wages and hours than any other;
- Employer cannot “contract” away an employee’s rights even if the employee agrees (For example, employee doesn’t want to take a lunch break after five hours so he/she can leave work early. The employer cannot agree to this violation of the wage and hours laws.);
- Overtime exemptions must satisfy both the salary and duties test.

SDA HOLIDAY PARTY 2011

The house was festive, the food smelled delicious, the mimosas were flowing, and all in attendance at the SDA Holiday Brunch were busy socializing.

Not only was this a great social occasion, but our hosts, Helen Palermo and her husband, Tom, shared with us their wonderfully restored mid-century bungalow, complete with two loving dogs in the back yard and three egg-laying chickens. They have been true to the home by filling it with furniture and accessories that are truly remarkable lending themselves to the period. (Remember your mom's Lazy Susan?) Helen has also done a remarkable job with her paint colors throughout the home.

After a wonderful meal contributed to by the members present, the 2012 Board of Directors was installed by July Merrill, Honorary SDA. Betsy Nickless was justly crowned Member of the Year by Nancy Burt, then the fun began.

The ornament gift exchange did not disappoint this year, as there wasn't a single ornament that didn't change hands at least once. The vintage car ornaments caught the attention of the men in attendance, while the girls went more for the ornaments with bling. A good time was had by all.



HOMEAID'S PROJECT PLAYHOUSE CELEBRATES 20 YEARS OF HELPING

By Wendy Woolsey, SDA/CDFa

Members of the SDA once again took up the call to volunteer for assisting at the Project Playhouse display at The Irvine Spectrum. The "sign-up sheet" was passed around during the October lunch seminar asking for volunteers to work as part of the SDA Team. Several members signed up to participate for this fun event, which we have taken an active part in since the very first year. This year was very special, however, as HomeAid was celebrating its 20th anniversary of their signature event, *Project Playhouse*.

The morning of November 6th dawned with dark clouds and drizzle – not the weather we were hoping for. However, having faith and commitment, plus jackets and umbrellas, our SDA volunteers showed up! Karen Henderson, Susan Crook, Sharon Gunther, Nancy Burt, Penny Nelson, Betsy Nickless, Sharon Gunther, Diane Sommerville and Cal and Wendy Woolsey, along with Julia Ung from HomeAid, spent the late morning and afternoon selling tickets to tour the Playhouse Village and keeping a watchful eye on the visitors.

The SDA Project Playhouse Tradition is that we have always worked the last shift of the last day. Over the years we have seen this event go from simple playhouses the first year, when only one was fully furnished with furniture and toys, to elaborate mini-structures with running water, flat screen TVs and electric fireplaces. These custom playhouses are all unique, one-of-a-kind little beauties that are displayed for the general public to tour for a six-week period and then auctioned off to the highest bidder. In the past, there have been about a dozen playhouses in the Village. This year, with the downturn in the economy especially in the building industry, there were only four playhouses for tour and auction – but boy, were they something!



Twenty years and the ideas for playhouses just keep getting better and more imaginative! "Sir Lyon's Castle" was every princess's dream – and celebrated William Lyon Homes, Inc. as a playhouse provider for all 20 years. Shea Homes and their TradePartners provided a little taste of Italy with a lovely Tuscan-style playhouse built in

(Continued on Page 10)

PROJECT PLAYHOUSE 2011

(Continued From Page 9)

honor of Chuck Dreyer, the long-time auctioneer at Project Playhouse Auction Parties who died in late 2010. Nicholson Companies, a first time participant, provided a touch of Aloha! to the Village with their "Little Diamond Head," a wonderful Hawaiian-style playhouse even teens and adults appreciated. "Over the Rainbow Cottage" was built by Team HomeAid and it was not only a wonderful little playhouse full of Wizard of Oz toys and details, but the surrounding garden was fun, too!

Fate was on our side throughout the day, as the weather shifted from gloomy to sunny, and we never got rained on, although the threat of bad weather had an effect on public tour turnout. With fewer than normal people touring the Village, our SDA members took advantage of the time to visit with each other, getting to know newer members better and catching up with old friends, in between answering questions for visitors. Four-time Past President and Honorary SDA Member Judy Merrill and her husband, Dale, stopped by for a tour and to purchase "opportunity" tickets for the "Ultimate Kitchen Make Over." Yes, there was a change from the past this year in that since there were so few



playhouses, HomeAid was providing a kitchen redo, rather than a playhouse, to one lucky winner. Sadly, none of our SDA members was that lucky someone. At the end of the day, volunteers left with a feeling of doing something to help a great cause and continuing our SDA tradition. A few of us went out to dinner and continued the camaraderie of the day.



Rather than hosting the Auction Party in a huge party tent as had been past tradition, the Auction Party was held at the Balboa Bay Club for this 20th Anniversary. A special tribute to General William Lyon was presented, based on his company's participation all twenty years of Project Playhouse and his dedication to HomeAid. The sold-out event on 11-11-11 was a special affair and the 450 guests helped raise more than \$510,000 for HomeAid's mission of Changing Lives, Inspiring Hope, by helping to build or renovate shelters for the less fortunate. To find out more about HomeAid and to see a recap of this year's Project Playhouse, go to www.homeaidoc.org.

Thank you, again, to all the SDA volunteers. For all the time you have donated over the years, I am eternally grateful and proud of our SDA Chapter, how special Project Playhouse is to us and how very exceptional you all are!

O. C. CHAPTER RECEIVES AWARD

In 2010, the Orange County Chapter SDA was the recipient of an award from the National SDA called the **Chapter Excellence Award**.

The Chapter Excellence Award was developed to recognize a Chapter's excellence in promoting the mission of the SDA. The Chapter Excellence Award is a comprehensive recognition program based on exceptional overall merit demonstrated in each of seven categories. Those categories are: Membership, Chapter Governance, Education/Professional Development, Networking Events, Sponsorship, Communication, and Leadership. It also gives a comprehensive overview of a Chapter's achievement for the preceding year.

"Congratulations to the Orange County Chapter for winning this years Chapter Excellence Award. Your submittal blew the jurors away!" - Melody Futch, SDA National President

For those of you who did not attend the 2011 Holiday Brunch, here is a picture of the award the Chapter received that was on display at the Holiday Brunch.



