



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

Orange County Chapter

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THE COMMENTARY

April 2012 Edition

A Newsletter of the Society For Design Administration
Orange County Chapter

President's Corner

By Nancy Burt, SDA, President

Spring is in the air, and that means fresh, new opportunities for each of us - time to plant new seeds and nurture and care for the old ones. Maybe it's time to do some spring cleaning – out with the old and in with the new. Whatever it is, now is the time to think change and transformation.

Try making a change and stepping out of your comfort zone where SDA is concerned. If you are not currently a member, join our membership. Come to a lunch seminar or attend one of our monthly evening business meetings. Learn something new, meet new people and share new experiences - this kind of change will reap only positive benefits for you and your firm.

Consider demonstrating your enthusiasm, dedication and knowledge of the A/E/C industry by becoming certified. SDA offers a credential that recognizes your achieved administrative and management expertise. Go to www.sdadmin.org and click on "Certification" under "Member Resources" for more information on the CDFA (Certified Design Firm Administrator) credential.

Want another new opportunity to take advantage of? Join us in Portland from May 2-5 for EDSymposium 12, SDA's annual networking and educational conference (open to members and non-members). There will be close to 20 hours of seminars and workshops devoted to topics that A/E/C firm administrators deal with on a daily basis. There will also be some down time for tours, meals and networking. This is a wonderful opportunity to meet other administrators from around the country and Canada.

Please see other areas of our newsletter and the Orange County website www.sdaoc.org for further details on dates, times and places of meetings and seminars, and then plan on attending. Spring forward and do something new - the more you participate, the more you benefit.

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

Upcoming Events

Job Board

April 2012

April 5 Business Meeting 5:30 pm
Meeting will be held at Dougherty + Dougherty Architects

April 19 Luncheon Meeting 11:30 am
“When’s Your Lunch Break? Meal and Rest Period Requirements” (See more details on Page 5) presented by Erick Becker, American Consulting Group
Lutron Experience Center, Irvine

May 2012

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

Business Meeting date to be determined.

May 17 Luncheon Meeting 11:30 am
Re-cap of EDSymposium seminars and workshops reported by our Chapter attendees
Lutron Experience Center, Irvine

June 2012

June 7 Business Meeting 5:30 pm
Meeting will be held at Douglas Pancake Architects, Inc.

June 21 Luncheon Meeting 11:30 am
Subject and Speaker to be announced
Lutron Experience Center, Irvine

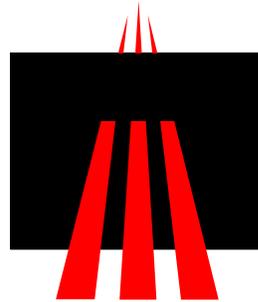
Looking Ahead

Sept. 1—23 Construction 2012
South Coast Plaza
Sept. 16 Construction Gala

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.



May 6
May 23
May 28

Gail Dyer
Diane Sommerville
Helen Palermo

June 16
June 16

Brittany Choisnet
Marcy Fields

Orange County Chapter Members Step Up!

By Nancy Burt, SDA

Please join me in acknowledging Natalie Newman who was recently recognized as one of four winners of a \$1,000 grant from the Past Presidents Council Professional Development Grant program to attend EDSymposium12 in Portland, Oregon.

Natalie submitted in the Highest Scoring SDA Member category and was recognized as the highest scoring applicant.

Congratulations Natalie!



I would also like to take a moment to recognize Betsy Nickless who submitted her name and is now a candidate for the office of SDA National President-Elect for 2012-2013. Betsy currently serves as the National Treasurer and Chapter Co-Vice President.

As a founding member of our Orange County Chapter, Betsy continues to go above and beyond for service to our local SDA Chapter, as well as the National SDA.

Thank you Betsy for all you do for SDA!

What's Construction Got to do with Me?

By Betsy Nickless, SDA/CDFA

We hope by now that you know what Construction is. (SDA/OC is co-hosting the Fifth Annual Construction Design/Build competition this year). If you don't, picture giant sculptures built entirely out of canned foods. Things like Hello Kitty, the Up House, a life-size kitchen, Angel Stadium. Then imagine the smiling faces of the architectural/engineering/construction firms who spent many months designing and building those structures, as they see all of their cans (usually 3,000 – 8,000 per structure), being hauled off to the Orange County Food Bank after their structures have been on display at South Coast Plaza during the month of September.

So you say to yourself, "I'm not an architect, I don't know how to build structures out of cans, I don't even LIKE canned food. So what's this got to do with me?"

We're glad you asked!! Construction needs many hands to make every event successful.

- **We need teams!** Would your company be interested in building a structure? It's a great team-building activity, provides volunteer hours for intern architects towards their licensing, and gives your company some GREAT exposure at South Coast Plaza when the structures are on display in September.
- **We need money!** Do you know of a generous donor, or even an individual or company with a few dollars to spend, or something to donate for the raffles and silent auction to be held at the fund-raising awards gala?
- **We need people!** SDA is responsible for putting on the awards gala, and it takes a village.

To learn more, go to www.constructionoc.org.

To Enter: Download an entry form from the website (although the early bird entry deadline is April 9, the deadline has been extended to April 20 for firms with an SDA member).

Got Money (or know someone who does)? Download and forward the Sponsorship Information Forms and share them with any- and everyone. All proceeds go directly to the OC Food Bank.

Want to volunteer to work at the gala? Let Karen Henderson, the Gala Chair, know. She can be reached at khenderson@griffinstructures.net.

We will be looking for silent auction and raffle items soon, but don't wait. If you have something or know of someone who has a service and/or merchandise to donate, contact Betsy Nickless at betsyn@msa-arch.com.

Anything else? Contact Co-Chair Betsy Nickless betsyn@msa-arch.com

Get involved – you won't regret it, and you'll be giving back.

WHEN'S YOUR LUNCH BREAK?

MEAL AND REST PERIOD REQUIREMENTS

After the Brinker Decision

Thursday, April 19, 2012
11:30 AM - 1:00 PM

The question of whether employers must ensure employees take breaks, or must simply provide breaks has been a source of significant litigation in both federal and state courts. On April 12, a final ruling is expected in Brinker v. Superior Court. Learn what you need to know about the court's meal and rest breaks ruling. One of SDA's favorite speakers, Erick Becker, will have answers to the following, and more:

- Must employers simply make meal breaks available or must employers ensure the meal break is taken?
- What is the timing of the meal break? Are employers obligated to make a meal break available for every five consecutive hours of work?
- How many rest breaks are required?
- When must employees take their rest breaks?

SPEAKER INFORMATION

Erick Becker
American Consulting Group

Erick Becker is experienced in all areas of labor relations. Formerly an attorney with the law firm of McLaughlin and Irvin in Los Angeles, he has represented numerous clients in wrongful termination, employment discrimination and ERISA lawsuits in both the federal and state courts. Mr. Becker also has extensive experience in handling matters before the NLRB and other administrative agencies. Mr. Becker received his Bachelor of Arts degree in Political Science from the University of California Santa Barbara. He continued his education at the University of California at Berkeley, graduating from Boalt Hall School of Law, where he was Managing Editor of the Industrial Relations Law Journal. He is a member of the California Bar and is admitted to practice before the United States District Court, Central District of California.

SDA/OC is a registered AIA continuing education provider.

This seminar qualifies for one LU.

RSVP now: pennyn@PancakeArchitects.com

SDA/AIA Members \$25

Non-Members \$35

Please indicate if you prefer vegetarian meal

NEW MEETING LOCATION!!

**Lutron Event Center
2458 Dupont Drive, Irvine
(between Von Karman & Jamboree)**

Monthly Seminar Highlights

January 2012: Working with Microsoft 7 and Office 2010
Presented by the Microsoft Store Staff in South Coast Plaza
Notes Contributed by Sharon Gunther, SDA

Here are a few of the pointers that we received:

Windows 7 Operating System:

Snap allows you to view two windows side-by-side on your computer at the same time.

Click and drag the top bar of one window to the left side of the screen.

Click and drag the top bar of the second window to the right side of the screen.

Voila! Both windows show up side-by-side!

Peek allows you to see your desktop instantly minimizing all programs at one time.

Move cursor to the far right bottom end of the task bar and hover over the small rectangle.

Left click to make all windows disappear so you can easily get to that file on your desktop.

Now left click again to make your windows reappear.

Peek allows you to see your desktop instantly!

Shake allows you to focus on a single window in one simple motion.

Left click the top of the window and shake side to side and all the other windows are instantly minimized

Then, left click the top of the window and shake again to bring the other windows back

Shake is a fast and easy way to minimize windows!

Microsoft Office 2010:

In place of menus and tool bars is the RIBBON, a long-wide strip at the top of the screen designed to put the tools you use in plain view.

There are now TABS: 8 TABS across the top that encompass all the work you are used to doing.

Each tab has several groups that show related items together.

A command can be a button, a drop-down list, or a box to enter information.

The Quick Access Toolbar is the small row of icons in the upper left, above the ribbon that contains commands that you use over and over every day: **Save**, **Undo** and **Repeat**. You can add your favorite commands to it so that they are available no matter which tab you are on.

What happened to the file menu? It was replaced with the **File** tab.

February 2012: Cyber Liability
Presented by Bryan Lorenz, Wells Fargo Insurance Services USA, Inc.
Notes Contributed by Nancy Burt, SDA

What is Cyber Liability Coverage?

- Protects from and for computer attacks, network security breaches, loss of personal information, failure of network security
- Cyber extortion – investigative costs from threats of extortion demand relating to computer attack or infliction of virus
- Coverage can also include: business interruption loss, notification costs and credit monitoring expenses

Why is this not covered elsewhere?

- **Commercial GL** Insurance usually covers damage to “tangible” property. Data and software are considered to be “intangible.”
- **Property Insurance** typically responds to “direct physical loss by a covered peril” (fire, windstorm, etc.).
- **Professional Liability** insurance typically covers financial loss arising out of professional service to others. Computer attacks do not fall within the provision of “professional services” and some E&O policies will exclude coverage caused by “unauthorized access.”

(Continued on Page 7)

Monthly Seminar Highlights (Continued)

(Continued From Page 6)

Costs/Exposures:

- Trouble-shoot the cause (hire independent IT consultant)
- Re-secure the data
- Remediation costs: notification and credit monitoring (legal and mailing costs)
- Fines and penalties
- Regulatory reporting to state and federal agencies
- Loss of reputation
- Law suits to defend

Per survey conducted in 2010, the average cost per compromised record was \$214

Legislation has now imposed affirmative duties on companies on how they handle data. This includes California SB1386 which requires companies to notify their California customers and employees of computer security breaches. The law applies to any business that stores customer and employee information electronically; even if the company is not based in California.

What can be covered under a Network Security and Privacy Policy:

- Breach of security
- Invasion of privacy
- Identity theft
- Internet media
- Business interruption
- Data asset coverage

March 2012: Roundtable Discussion Notes Contributed by: Nancy Burt, SDA

Cloud Computing

Is it like virtual?
Cost is an issue

Newforma

Organizes documents, email
Calendaring and schedules

Hiring

Resumes – keep for one year if you solicited for position; throw out if you did not solicit for position
Send auto response stating “we will only contact you if you meet the qualifications.”
Craig’s list, Ceridian, Taleo
Ask at beginning of interview if you have their permission to take notes

Background checks

Jan 1 new law – specific reasons - be very careful
Call references – listen to what is NOT being said

Contracts

Instead of crossing out or red marking the client contract, add a one page addendum with your requirements. Comes across as more “agreeable.”

This and That

UI Changes for Spring 2012: Alternate Base Periods

Beginning in Spring 2012, the Employment Development Department (EDD) will be implementing a new California law allowing new Unemployment Insurance (UI) claims to be filed using wages in an alternate base period.

Claimants who do not have sufficient wages to file a UI claim using the “standard” base period, which is four of the last five completed calendar quarters at the time the claim is filed, may be able to use the wages in the most recently completed calendar quarter to qualify.

For further information, refer to the 2012 California Employer’s Guide (DE 44) or see the flyer at the following link:

http://www.edd.ca.gov/pdf_pub_ctr/de8714z.pdf

TRY SDA FOR 30 DAYS!

This trial will include a glimpse of the many benefits offered to our full members, including access to PEG pages and our online discussion forums. If you join SDA before your trial membership expires, you will receive a \$25 discount off your national dues. Explore the benefits of an SDA membership today with our free 30-day trial! [Sign up today!](#)

**The \$25 discount is only available if you are not taking advantage of any other membership discount.*

Spring Cleaning!

It’s official: Spring has sprung and it’s a good time for spring cleaning. And there is no better place to start than the place you spend most of your time anyway — at your desk. So let’s get organized by following these 2 steps:

CLEAR THE DESK. Remove all papers and other objects until you can actually see the surface of your desk.

SORT. When removing the papers off your desk, make piles on the floor. Designate a small space for the current projects you are working on and a drawer for ‘things that need attention’, ‘need to be reviewed’, or in the ‘somewhere else’ pile that belong to other people. If you don’t need it... pitch it in the recycling bin. Then file everything that ‘needs to be filed’..

You’re done! Now you have a workspace where you can work more efficiently and effectively in a tidy area.

Benefits: You’ll be able to relax more. You’ll have more time for yourself and your loved ones. You’ll feel good about your environment. You’ll do better professionally. And you’ll achieve more.

Contributed by: Natalie Newman, SDA

While you’re at it, why not clean out the Recycle Bin on your desktop, your keyboard, your mouse, and your monitor?

Right click on your Recycle Bin and select “Empty Recycle Bin”. For your keyboard, tip it upside down and shake it gently to remove debris. You can then use a soft paintbrush to dust off the keys. Your mouse (computer off) can be gently washed with a damp cloth. Use a Q-Tip to clean the laser light. For flat-screen monitors, unplug from the power source, then using a microfiber cloth, clean gently with 1/2 rubbing alcohol and 1/2 water.

- Ed.

Recently Completed Projects



Main Library Expansion City of Fullerton

Architect: LPA
Construction Manager: Griffin Structures, Inc.
SDA Member: Karen Henderson, Griffin Structures, Inc.

The Villas at Pacific Shores Huntington Beach

Architect: Mark Scheurer Architect
Builder: Christopher Homes
SDA Member: Betsy Nickless, Mark Scheurer Architect



UCLA Rieber Dining Hall Los Angeles

Architect: Johnson Fain
MEP Engineers: Gotama Building Engineers, Inc.
SDA Member: Natalie Newman, Gotama Building Engineers, Inc.



Leadership Effectiveness

Workplace leadership is an art. There are many different theories about how it should be done. The only one that matters is the one that works for you and your team. You probably do a good job as a leader, but you do not know for sure unless you get some honest feedback from your team. If you ask for their feedback from time to time, work hard at listening to it, and respond to what they have to say, your team will help you refine your leadership skills. Here are some questions to help you ask your team how they think you are doing. Ask one of them at your next one-on-one meeting with a direct report. Wait a few weeks and ask another one.

- What is one thing that I can do to help you do your job more effectively?
- Would you like me to spend more time with you or less time?
- What is one habit that I have that you would like to see me change?
- Can you think of a time when I "jumped" to a conclusion?
- On a scale of one to five, how much of a "micromanager" am I to you?
- What would you like to see me change about the way I give you feedback?
- If you had my job, what is one thing you would do differently?
- What would you like to see me change about e-mails?
- What do I do that helps you do your job?
- What is one thing I do not know about your job that I should?
- How do you feel about the way that I communicate with you?

What was the last question you wanted to ask me, but did not?

Do you think I am a morning person or an afternoon person?

Source: Mike Deblieux Leadership Concepts, www.deblieux.com. contributed by Nancy Burt.

“ADD ONE MORE”

Does your office have other administrators who benefit from SDA membership and are not currently a member? SDA would like to challenge current members to recruit a NEW member to SDA from within your firm. Feel free to look near or far, whether your firm has one office or many, all are eligible to participate. If there is no chapter convenient to your office locations, the administrator can become a Member-at-Large.

This concept will provide many rewards.

The NEW member from your firm will receive their 2012 SDA National Membership for only \$100 (please note that local chapter dues are not part of this offer).

The EXISTING member can choose a reward from one of the following:

- A complimentary webinar recording of your choice, valued at \$55.00!
- A \$50.00 discount off of your CDFA application if you apply within six months.

Share the SDA knowledge with all your administrators.

Everyone can benefit if we “**ADD ONE MORE.**”

Member Profile—Brittany Choisnet

Interview and Article by Natalie Newman, SDA

Upon joining KTG Y GROUP, INC. in 2003, Brittany Choisnet began her career as a receptionist conducting her supportive role in a professional and reliable manner. From the beginning she quickly advanced and acquired many responsibilities which have helped shape her into an impeccable team leader.

Today Brittany serves as the Controller and the Corporate Secretary of KTG Y. Using her keen sense of financial procedures, she has been instrumental in overseeing the accounting and billing departments as well as controlling the cash flow within the firm. As Corporate Secretary, she oversees the Administration, Accounting, Human Resources and Facilities departments and is a key player accommodating to all team members and shareholders in their day-to-day needs with various business matters.



As a fairly new member of the Orange County Chapter of SDA, Brittney hopes to be able to contribute more in the future, but for now, she is enjoying the relationships that she is beginning to develop with other chapter members and finds SDA a great advantage to have such valuable resources at her fingertips! On a personal note, Brittany has been married to Mike Choisnet, a Manager for Trader Joe's, for almost eight years. They have two children; a daughter Paige (6 years old) and a son, Vaughn (4 years old).

She likes rock or alternative music, but she has pop music in her CD player because that's what her daughter wants to listen to. She loves Mexican food, the spicier the better, and she loves to cook. Balancing work and family is always tough so she spends most of her time doing what interests her kids. If she had more spare time she would spend it reading (or maybe exercising!) and is looking forward to a couple of wine tasting trips that she has planned for this spring with her husband.

When asked what she does to keep her sanity when all about her are losing theirs, she says "In all honesty, I tell myself that I am not trying to save the world and that the day-to-day business decisions are not life-or-death situations. The only thing I can do is work to my full potential every day. Making mistakes is part of life and stressing out won't help. You fix what you can, move on and learn from your mistakes."

When asked if she could have dinner with three famous people, living or dead who would they be, Brittany said "Michael Pollan, Jamie Oliver and Exene Cervenka." A liberal foodie intellectual, a Naked Chef, and an 80's Punk Rock lead singer. And what kind of conversations does Brittany see taking place? "Well, of course with Michael and Jamie I would pick their brains about our food system and ask them where they see our country heading. I love Michael's books, and I love how Jamie is trying to raise awareness in our country by making people aware of what is actually in the food they eat. The conversation with Exene would be unrelated to that discussion. I have just always liked her and her music and would like to hear about her experiences. She is an artist, a mother and a punk, and she is still going strong in her late 50's. That is pretty amazing (especially considering she suffers from MS)".

