



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

Orange County Chapter

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## THE COMMENTARY

April 2010 Edition

A Newsletter of the Society For Design Administration  
Orange County Chapter

## President's Corner

By Natalie Newman, SDA



**HAPPY NEW YEAR!** We've survived the first quarter of the new year, and we are all STILL asking the same question: What is the forecast for 2010? For SDA/OC... we are going to work towards increasing our Membership and Sponsorship in 2010, and I'd like each and every one of you to take a part in that resolution.

How can you help, you ask? Well to increase our Membership this year, the Board has decided to have a little competition amongst our members. For each potential member/guest you bring to a lunch seminar this year, you will receive one (1) chance to win a \$100 South Coast Plaza gift certificate. For each guest who you bring that actually signs up as a new member, you will receive five (5) more chances. We will keep track of your participation through our monthly RSVP lists and the sign-in sheet at the monthly programs. In one year, you can earn at least nine (9) chances to win by attending each monthly seminar and bringing a guest/potential member with you. Drawing will take place during the November lunch seminar.

Since there are thousands of A/E/C firms in Orange County who have not heard of the Society for Design Administration, please forward the monthly program announcements to administrators who you deal with every week at other architectural, engineering, and design firms or those who serve the industry, and introduce them to SDA by inviting them join you at a seminar. And to add another incentive... when you introduce a new firm to SDA, they may attend their first monthly seminar at the reduced rate of \$25!

How can you help with Sponsorship? The Board has mailed out Sponsorship letters and applications to our current and past sponsors. You can help out by forwarding this letter and application to your company contacts and outside companies/vendors who you do business with.

Continued on Page 3

## Upcoming Events

### April 2010

**April 1**      **Business Meeting 5:30 pm**  
Meeting will be held at RNM Design.

**April 15**      **"Roundtable Roundup" from the Industry Experts.** Topics will include Payroll Services, Disaster Preparedness, Morale Boosters on a Shoe-String Budget, and More.  
Wyndham Hotel, Costa Mesa

### May 2010

**May 6**      **Business Meeting 5:30 pm**  
Meeting will be held at Danielian Associates.

**May 18—22** **EdSymposium 10**  
Planet Hollywood Resort & Casino, Las Vegas, Nevada

**May 27**      **Luncheon Meeting 11:30 am**  
**"What We Learned." Re-Cap of Seminars from National SDA Convention.**  
Wyndham Hotel, Costa Mesa

### June 2010

**June 3**      **Business Meeting 5:30 pm**  
Meeting will be held at Dougherty + Dougherty.

**June 17**      **Luncheon Meeting 11:30 am**  
**Meeting Speaker and Subject to be Announced.**  
Wyndham Hotel, Costa Mesa

### Looking Ahead

**Sept. 12**      **Project Playhouse, Irvine Spectrum**

**Sept. 19**      **Canstruction Gala Awards**  
South Coast Plaza

## 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 [nickless@integrity.com](mailto:nickless@integrity.com).

# HAPPY BIRTHDAY



January 13	Susan Crook
February 2	Tracy Doering
February 16	Ellen Mogasemi
February 25	Cindy Loomer
March 12	Dee Jackson
May 23	Diane Sommerville
May 28	Helen Palermo
June 16	Marcy Fields

## PRESIDENT'S CORNER

(CONTINUED)

Continued from Page 1

Our SDA Mission Statement is: *"To promote the exchange of ideas and to educate its members in the related disciplines of design firm administration"*. Sponsorship for our chapter means being able to offer educational scholarships to our members to attend the National Conventions and Western States Regional Conferences. These educational events and programs offer the latest information in their areas of expertise - which can be taken back to the office and applied immediately to your daily operations.

The Orange County Chapter already has some great ideas for programs scheduled in 2010, but we would like to hear from you on what topics you would like to be covered. Email me on any ideas you have, any seminars you've enjoyed in the past, and any contact information you would like for us to follow-up with.

Here's to a successful year for the SDA/OC, and wishing you and yours a happy and fabulous 2010!

Best always,

Natalie

## SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS!

By Natalie Newman, SDA

**Announcing the scholarship winners who will attend the 2010 SDA National Convention - EDSymposium10 at Planet Hollywood in Las Vegas on May 18 – 22<sup>nd</sup>.**

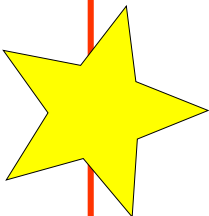
The Orange County chapter scholarship program was created to provide financial assistance for the convention Registration and Banquet to qualifying members for the express purpose of participating in educational programs during the 2010 SDA National Convention.

The winners representing our chapter are **Cheryl Mathes** with HRP Studio and **Diana Dubich** with HMC Architects.

There are also national scholarships available to our members each year. And I am pleased to announce that **Betsy Nickless** is one of two recipients of the \$1000 2010 Past Presidents Professional Development Grant to attend the EDSymposium10.

On behalf of the Society for Design Administration and your fellow chapter members, CONGRATULATIONS and we hope you three truly enjoy this educational opportunity.

## AIMEE MANDALA EARNS CDFA DESIGNATION



The Orange County Chapter is pleased to announce that Aimee Mandala has recently earned the credential of Certified Design Firm Administrator ("CDFA") after successfully completing the CDFA exam developed and administered by the Society for Design Administration. "Earning the CDFA designation clearly demonstrates a commitment to personal excellence to the A/E/C industry," said Melodee Futch, SDA National President.

See more information about Aimee on Page 11 of this newsletter under *Member Profile*.

# SDA OFFICERS FOR 2010



**Natalie Newman, SDA  
President**

Natalie Newman has worked in the architectural field since 2000 and has been an SDA member since October 2002. She started her active member career writing 'Member Profiles' and other articles for the chapter newsletter, then joined the board and has held the positions of Corresponding Secretary, Vice-President, and President. She also volunteers for different SDA and AIA/OC events.

Natalie will be serving her fourth term as Chapter President in 2010 and will work towards her certification, providing first rate educational programs, and increasing the chapter membership. The best part of SDA for Natalie is "the education I have received. What I've learned from being a member of the SDA has enriched my career remarkably."

Natalie hobbies include painting, playing board games & card games, cooking, and reading. She has been married to Jason Newman for 8 years, and they love to do weekend get-aways. Her two favorite people in the world are her son Drew, 25, and her daughter Brittney, 24.

Cheryl Mathes has worked in the A&E industry for 21 years. Currently she is the Branch Controller for HRP Studio, a Landscape Architecture and Planning firm located in Santa Ana, CA. HRP Studio is a branch of the ValleyCrest Design Group which performs standalone landscape architectural services, and integrated design-build services. The Landscape Architects, installation crews and maintenance professionals at ValleyCrest 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 participated on the local Board, monthly seminars, and committees.

Cheryl enjoys being active whether it's kayaking, wine tasting, dancing, or just spending time with her amazing parrots.

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 2010

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.

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. Currently, she serves as the National Bylaws / Governance chair and on the National Publications Committee. She also proof-reads all SDA/OC Chapter publications and announcements for correct grammar and punctuation, attends all Board 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.

Betsy enjoys Five Crowns and Bistango for dining, and her favorite music is Contemporary Christian. She met her husband, Steve, of 28 years 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, CDFA  
Co-Vice President**



**Karen Henderson, SDA  
Co-Vice President**

Karen Henderson is a Senior Marketing Coordinator for URS, a leading provider of engineering, construction and technical services with the capabilities to support every stage of the project life cycle around the globe. Except for a two-year hiatus in the mid-1990s, she has been a SDA/OC member since 1988. Karen has been an active Orange County chapter member, serving as Secretary, Vice President and a three-term President.

"To me the Society for Design Administration is a valuable organization, both professionally and personally."

# SDA OFFICERS FOR 2010



Diana Dubich, SDA  
Corresponding Secretary

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 throughout California and Nevada. The Firm offers a wealth of architecture, design, master planning, and interior design services.

Diana is excited to serve her first term on the Orange County Chapter Board and looks forward to involvement with the numerous SDA events throughout the year. She has previously attended 2 Western Regional Conferences, has become 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*.

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 Bachelors 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 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 board as chapter treasurer and is looking forward to what this increased involvement has in store.



Helen Palermo, SDA  
Treasurer

# TWEETING!

By Natalie Newman, SDA

## Would You Like to Stay Connected with EDSymposium10?

If you can't make it to this year's convention, or if you'll be there but can't get to every session, or maybe you just don't want to have to take your own notes... SDA's Connections Committee will be 'tweeting' throughout the sessions to keep everyone in the loop with the informational tidbits that will be shared at EDSymposium10 in Las Vegas!

You should be able to pick up an idea of what people are saying, the sort of advice the speakers are offering and the questions people are asking. It is even possible to 'tweetback' with your questions for someone at the conference to ask on your behalf. Twitter can help you get a taste of what you're missing and tap a truly expert source.

## So What Is Twitter?

Twitter is a real-time short messaging service that asks one question, "What's Happening?" Answers must be under 140 characters in length and can be sent via the web, mobile texting, or instant message. SDA members can use Twitter to stay connected with co-workers and friends, as well as keep up with real-time developments in the A/E/C industry.

## Getting Started

**How to sign up.** Creating a Twitter account is simple.

1. Visit [www.twitter.com](http://www.twitter.com), and click the "Sign Up Now" button. Fill out the form with your information. As always, if any of this is confusing, we on the Connections Committee are ready to give assistance; just ask.
2. See if your friends are on Twitter. This step allows Twitter to access your e-mail accounts to help you find your friends. Click "skip this step" if you're uncomfortable with Twitter accessing your e-mail accounts.
3. Look to see who else is on Twitter. Start following them! When you first open your account, Twitter will suggest users who you may be interested in following. When you follow a user, you will receive their real-time messages in your Twitter feed. Click "skip this step" if you don't like any of the recommendations.
4. Customize your account. Choose "Settings" from the menu at the top of your page. Click through the various tabs to choose a profile photo, change the design of your profile page, make your account private, and much more.

In the months leading up to EDSymposium10, the Connections Committee will continue to provide how-tos and answer any questions you might have regarding the whole tweeting process. A new hashtag has been created for this event **#sdanational** (not case sensitive). A hashtag is a simple way to catalog and connect tweets about a specific topic. They make it easier for users to find additional tweets on a particular subject, while filtering out the incidental tweets that may just coincidentally contain the same keyword. So set up your twitter account now (<http://twitter.com>), and maybe even download tweetdeck (<http://www.tweetdeck.com>) to help you follow #sdanational.

For more detailed information, there is a really good article in the March 3 issue of *SDA Today* called *What Is Twitter?* or contact Dana Sather, Connections Committee Chair at [D-Sather@sp-land.com](mailto:D-Sather@sp-land.com).

# SUCCESSFUL PRESENTATIONS

By Diane Sommerville, SDA

So you've taken the plunge by raising your hand to volunteer to make a presentation. Now what?

First of all, congratulations! You've taken the first step. Secondly, there are a number of steps you can take to make your presentation a worthwhile event for both you and your audience. Here are some great tips taken from the National SDA web site.

1. **Prepare.** Do your research. Write out your presentation. Design your Power Point slides and above all, PRACTICE.
2. **Consider Your Audience.** Make sure you keep your audience in mind while writing your presentation. What can you teach them? What do they already know? What do they want to get out of this?
3. **Proofread.** If copies of your presentation will be given out to your audience, make sure that there are no typos or grammatical errors.
4. **Dress Appropriately.** This is the perfect time to wear your suit. If you want to be taken seriously, dress the part.
5. **Turn Off Your Cell Phone.** If you don't and you get a call in the middle of your presentation, your audience will not take you seriously.
6. **Breathe!** This is a very simple way to calm your nerves and slow your heart rate.
7. **Do Not Rush.** Take your time to make your point. Don't drag out your message, but don't rush through it so that people are left wondering what you just said.
8. **Do Not Read Your Presentation.** Nothing is more annoying than listening to someone read their PowerPoint slides.
9. **Fake It.** You might be extremely nervous, but do not show it. Act confident. Envision someone you admire, and pretend you are that person.
10. **Enjoy Yourself!** You know the subject matter better than your audience, so convey a valuable message, crack a few jokes, and relax.

# VOLUNTEERING

By Natalie Newman, SDA

Through our chapter's chosen charity, HomeAid's Project Playhouse, and the national charity foundation Canstruction®, you have the opportunity to get involved in your community, meet new and exciting people, have a little fun, and develop essential leadership skills.

Volunteers from the SDA Orange County Chapter will be out in force to support HomeAid's Project Playhouse and Canstruction® and all we need are a couple hours of your time.

## Project Playhouse

For 19 years, SDA/OC has worked with HomeAid's Project Playhouse, a fun and unique fund-raising event. Each year we assist with ticket sales and peek-in tours in the village of custom playhouses on display at the Irvine Spectrum. And to make it a little more fun, SDA/OC volunteers are extended 'Free' entry to the Auction Party, where there is food, drinks, a silent auction, entertainment, and when the playhouses will be sold to the public at a live auction that evening!

HomeAid Orange County is a charitable non-profit organization that builds and renovates shelters for those in Orange County who find themselves homeless due to sudden job loss, catastrophic illness, spousal desertion and domestic violence. For more information, please visit: [www.projectplayhouse.org](http://www.projectplayhouse.org) or [www.homeaidoc.org](http://www.homeaidoc.org)

**August 26, 2010** - Project Playhouse VIP Party ~ 5 to 8pm ~ Irvine Spectrum in the Playhouse Village under the Ferris Wheel.

**September 12, 2010** – Ticket Sales and Peek-In Tours ~ 2 to 6pm at Irvine Spectrum. Auction Party 6 – 9pm.

To sign up for either day, please contact Wendy Woolsey, SDA/C at [cal.wendy@cox.net](mailto:cal.wendy@cox.net) or (714) 731-3557.



# Canstruction 2010

**By Natalie Newman, SDA**

Canstruction® is the most unique food charity in the world!

Canstruction® is owned by the Society for Design Administration and is a trademarked design/build competition currently held in cities throughout the United States, Canada, Columbia, Australia, and New Zealand. Canstruction® combines the fun of a design/build competition with an ingenious way to help feed hungry people. Since its inception in 1992, more than ten million pounds of food have been donated to aid in the fight against hunger.



For more information, visit: [www.canstruction.org](http://www.canstruction.org) or [www.canstructionoc.org](http://www.canstructionoc.org).

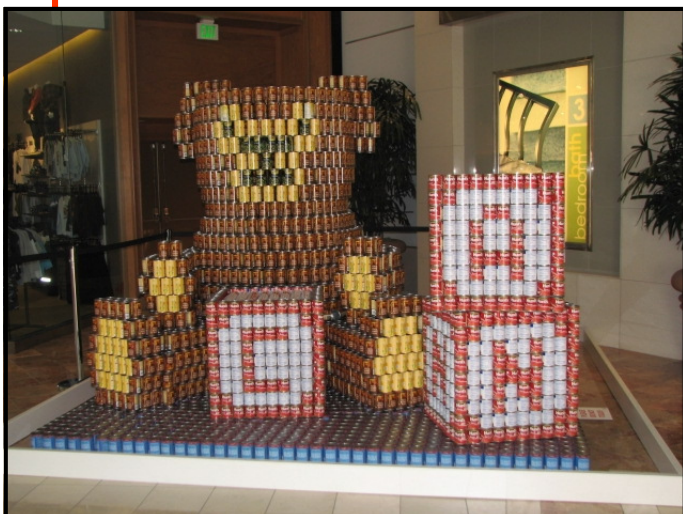
This will be our 3<sup>rd</sup> year of participation in this event where local prominent architectural, engineering, planning, and design firms, and students mentored by these professionals, create phenomenal structures built entirely out of canned food. The structures go on view to the public at South Coast Plaza in Costa Mesa each year throughout the month of September. At the close of the exhibition all of the canned food used in these structures is donated to the Orange County Food Bank, for distribution to shelters, soup kitchens and other emergency feeding programs. Industry professional associations that have partnered with the SDA in organizing this local competition include the American Institute of Architects, the Society for Marketing Professional Services, and the Festival of Children Foundation.

The Awards Gala is a fun night of food, drinks, entertainment, raffle drawings, special guests, and of course, the awards presentation under the stars on the Garden Terrace at South Coast Plaza.

September 19, 2010 – Orange County's 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Canstruction® Awards Gala ~ 7 – 9pm ~ Garden Terrace at South Coast Plaza

To sign up, please contact Natalie Newman, SDA at [natalielnewman@yahoo.com](mailto:natalielnewman@yahoo.com) or (562) 481-7739.

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has." ~ Margaret Mead



# SDA Holiday Brunch 2009

**By Betsy Nickless, CDFA**

How many years has our chapter gathered to celebrate the end of the year and the holidays with our annual holiday brunch? I don't think we've missed a year yet, and I know it's been going since the mid-eighties. I'm sure there are incriminating photos somewhere...

This last holiday season, we returned to the home of Cal and Wendy Woolsey for our annual event. And as always, the food was delicious and abundant, the fellowship was delightful, and the ornament exchange was lively.

Installing officer, Jeffrey Gill, AIA (Principal at Lionakis, National AIA Board of Directors member, and former President of California Council AIA) generously gave of his time to recognize our incoming officers and appreciate those who served last year. (See elsewhere in *The Commentary* for this year's officers.)

President Natalie Newman presented appreciation gifts to members of the 2009 Board and welcomed new Board members Helen Palermo, Treasurer (Dougherty + Dougherty Architects) and Diana Dubich, Corresponding Secretary (HMC Architects). We are SO excited to have two members joining our board and offering their experience, expertise, and perspective.

The 2009 Member of the Year Award, always kept secret and chosen by the president, was presented to yours truly – what an unexpected surprise! So many members contributed to the chapter's success in 2009, and I truly honored to have been chosen.

The always-exciting ornament exchange wrapped up the morning. Bill McCullough was “thrilled” with his pink flamingo in a tutu. Well, not really, but he kept everyone amused trying to unload it.

Thanks to all who attended for making this year's brunch another successful chapter event.





# Member Profile—Aimee Mandala, CDFA

By Natalie Newman, SDA



**Name:** Aimee Mandala, CDFA, LEED AP

**Current Employer:** ENVIRON Architecture, Inc.

**Position—Description of Responsibilities:** Office Administrator: Human Resources, Finance, Marketing, Business Development, etc.

**Length of Time at Current Employer:** Two years

**Number of years as an SDA Member:** Two years

**Favorite things about SDA:** I enjoy the opportunity to learn from other professionals in my field.

**Name of Spouse :** Travis Mandala, been together for 10 years, married for one.

**Three (3) famous people (living or dead) with whom you would like to have dinner:** Johnny Depp, for obvious reasons. Barrack Obama. And Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis.

**Favorite Music:** I enjoy all kinds of music.

**Favorite Meal or Favorite Restaurant:** Mahe in Seal Beach has the best food ever!

**Favorite Color to Wear:** Green

**How You Keep Your Sanity When All About You Are Losing Theirs:** My boss's British wife introduced me to the phrase "Keep calm, and carry on." This was a motivational poster produced by the British government in 1939 during the beginning of WWI.

**Personal Interests/Hobbies:** Painting, drawing, writing poetry, spending time with my husband and my two new chocolate lab puppies, Raja and Guinness.

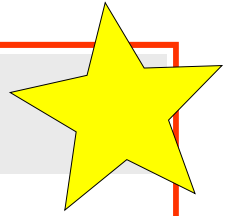
**Book You Are Currently Reading:** *Letter to My Daughter*, by Maya Angelou

**Music you have in your CD player:** Silver Sun Pickups, Wilco, Black Eyed Peas, Radiohead, etc.

**Most Exciting Place You Have Visited/Toured:** Costa Rica

**Any Other Interesting Tidbits Worthy of Print? Awards? Accolades?** Recently received my LEED Accreditation.

# Natalie Newman Star Award



By Betsy Nickless, CDFA

We are VERY pleased and proud to announce that Natalie Newman has been the first recipient of National SDA's Star Awards, given to members who are nominated by their chapter for going above and beyond. Here is an excerpt of the chapter's nomination of Natalie for the award and a message from the National Awards Chair, Pat Sauer. The award was presented to Natalie at this week's SDA educational seminar, and she will be recognized again at EDSymposium10 in Las Vegas.

## Nomination Excerpt:

Natalie has proven to be a shining example of what an exemplary SDA member is – dedicated, active, and involved, not only with our Chapter, but also on a National level by attending conventions and spearheading OC's involvement in Construction. Natalie takes on a lot of responsibility and does a very admirable job. Starting her fourth term as President, she has grown as a leader and deserves the recognition for her many efforts. She is a glowing star in the Orange County Chapter and her brilliance should be recognized!

Attached is the 2010 STAR Award certificate to be presented to Natalie who is first on the list to be acknowledged at the upcoming EDSymposium10. **To date, she is the one and only one** but hopefully there will be more to come within the next couple of months. Somehow I will incorporate the paragraph, or excerpts, you submitted for Natalie in the presentation.

Please extend my congratulations to Natalie on being the "star" for Orange County.

Thank you.

Pat Sauer, CDFA  
Awards Committee Chair





## O. C. Chapter Receives Award

Thanks to a small group of worker-bees in the Orange County SDA Chapter, a submittal was sent to SDA National for our chapter to receive the Chapter Excellence Award. The award is based on many categories, that are shown below. Every member of our Chapter should be proud to be part of this excellent Chapter.

### ANNOUNCEMENT...

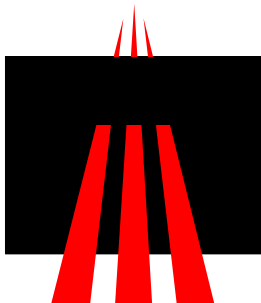
The Orange County Chapter of the Society for Design Administration  
**WINNERS of the Chapter Excellence Award!!!**

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 Juror's away!" - Melody Futch, SDA National President*

This year at the SDA National Convention in Las Vegas, our chapter will be honored as the winners of the Chapter Excellence Award. We will receive recognition at the Awards Ceremony and members attending from our Chapter will receive a special ribbon to wear during the convention identifying them as a proud member and winner of the Chapter Excellence Award. We have also received an early-bird registration (a \$400 value), and have decided to offer this as a scholarship to one of our members.

Orange County Chapter SDA members who wish to apply for this special **2010 Orange County Chapter Excellence Award Scholarship** needs to submit an application by Thursday, April 15, 2010.



#### **SDA's Mission:**

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

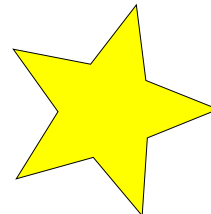
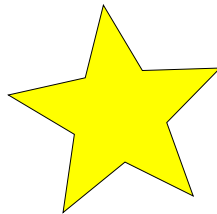
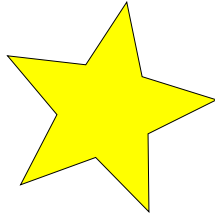


*An Affiliate of The American Institute of Architects*

## Contributors to the Commentary

Nancy Burt  
Natalie Newman  
Betsy Nickless  
Diane Sommerville

And thanks to our fabulous proofreader  
and photographer,  
Betsy Nickless!



## The Commentary

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Orange County Chapter

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