

## 2008 Officers

### President

Natalie Newman, SDA  
RNM Design  
949-752-1800  
[nnewman@rnmdesign.com](mailto:nnewman@rnmdesign.com)

### Co-Vice President

Betsy Nickless, SDA/C  
Steven Langford Architects  
949-833-9066  
[betsy@sladesign.com](mailto:betsy@sladesign.com)

### Co-Vice President

Karen Henderson, SDA  
Snyder-Langston  
949-412-2358  
[khenderson@snyder-langston.com](mailto:khenderson@snyder-langston.com)

### Recording Secretary

Debbie Kuhns, SDA  
MCG Architecture  
949-553-1117  
[dkuhns@mcgarchitecture.com](mailto:dkuhns@mcgarchitecture.com)

### Corresponding Secretary

April O'Neil, SDA  
Alliance Engineering Group  
949-202-5260  
[asoneil@allianceeg.com](mailto:asoneil@allianceeg.com)

### Treasurer

Nancy Burt, SDA  
RNM Design  
949-752-1800  
[nburt@rnmdesign.com](mailto:nburt@rnmdesign.com)

### Directors

Ginger Castillo, SDA/C  
Cindy Loomer, SDA  
Connie McKenna-  
McCulloch, SDA/C  
Judy Merrill, SDA/C  
Wendy Woolsey, SDA/C

## President's Corner

**By Natalie  
Newman, SDA**



Happy New Year,  
OC Members,

Whew! 2007 is over! And what a busy year it was. Holding informative monthly seminars, attending the Leadership and National Conventions, hosting the 2007 Western States Regional Conference, volunteering at Project Playhouse, and having two wonderful December Holiday Socials, I believe we had a successful and educational year for our Chapter.

I'm looking forward to serving as Chapter President for a second term. I hope to represent this Chapter and serve the membership with the attention and consideration it deserves. My goal for 2008 is to increase our chapter membership to 100 members, so I hope all of you will support and promote this goal and encourage someone you know or meet to benefit from joining our organization. We finished off 2007 with over 60 members, so we are getting there!

To start the New Year off, SDA/OC has planned a 'New Labor Laws for 2008' seminar to be held on Thursday, January 17<sup>th</sup> presented by Jerry Murase from the American Consulting Group. February 21<sup>st</sup> – 23<sup>rd</sup> is the 2008 National Leadership Conference in Alexandria, Virginia. The conference will focus on topics including: Chapter Growth / Personal Growth - Keys to Your Chapter's Success, Chapter Governance, Membership and

### Honorary Members

Carl Irwin, AIA  
Geri Eckner

Program Development, Chapter Best Practices, Personal Leadership Training, and Team Building.

The 2008 EDSymposium (formerly known as the SDA National Convention) will be held May 14<sup>th</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup> in Boston, Massachusetts. *Engage in Design Firm Management* by attending this event. SDA promotes education and professional development of its members, and consequently the development and growth of their respective companies. One of the benefits of OC membership is the Chapter Scholarships that we offer to those members who would like to attend these educational events. So, don't forget to apply for the Chapter or National Scholarships when they are announced.

I hope you continue your SDA experience in 2008 by renewing your membership. If you have not renewed your membership yet, be sure to do so today! You can do this by going to the National website: [www.sdadmin.org](http://www.sdadmin.org). Log in as a member (far upper right corner of the home page). If you have never logged in before, it's just your

Continued on Page 3

## Inside This Issue

President's Corner	Page 1
Upcoming Events/Birthdays	Page 2
Miscellaneous	Page 3
2008 Officers and Bios	Pages 4—5
2008 Officers & Directors	Page 6
Holiday Party Photos	Pages 7—8
Monthly Seminar Notes	Page 9
Sponsors	Pages 10—11
New Members	Page 12

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### January 2008

**January 9 Business Meeting 5:30 pm**  
Meeting will be hosted by  
Steven Langford Architects.

**January 17 Luncheon Meeting 11:30 am**  
“New Labor Laws for 2008”  
presented by Jerry Murase  
from American Consulting  
Group.  
Wyndham Hotel, Costa Mesa.

### February 2008

**February 6 Business Meeting 5:30 pm**  
Meeting will be hosted by  
Wells Fargo Insurance  
Services.

**February 21** Leadership Conference,  
Alexandria, Virginia.

**February 21 Luncheon Meeting 11:30 am**  
Program to be announced.  
Wyndham Hotel, Costa Mesa.

### March 2008

**March 5 Business Meeting 5:30 pm**  
Meeting will be hosted by  
RNM Design.

**March 20 Luncheon Meeting 11:30 am**  
“Get Free Money for your  
Company” by Mike Rankin  
of e3 Financial.  
Wyndham Hotel, Costa Mesa.

### Looking Ahead

**May 14—17 2008 EDSymposium**  
Boston, Massachusetts.

## MEMBER BENEFITS

**Resource Library:** Books available for members to check out include *The Tipping Point* by Malcolm Gladwell, *The Four Agreements* by Don Miguel Ruiz, and *Eats, Shoots, and Leaves* by Lynne Truss. Contact Janet Caprario by e-mail ([jcaprario@jzmkpartners.com](mailto:jcaprario@jzmkpartners.com)).

**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 calling (949) 833-9066 or by e-mail at [betsy@sladesign.com](mailto:betsy@sladesign.com).

### Be Sure to Visit the SDA Web Sites

**SDA/OC Web Site:**

[www.sdaoc.org](http://www.sdaoc.org)

**SDA National Web Site:**

[www.sdadmin.org](http://www.sdadmin.org)



January 13  
January 13

Susan Crook  
Kimberly Marroquin

February 16  
February 17  
February 23  
February 25  
February 27

Ellen Mogasemi  
Kristy Jordan  
Connie McKenna  
Cindy Loomer  
Jill Wood

March 2  
March 19  
March 25

Joey Pitcher  
Ginger Castillo  
Lori Stodd

## President's Corner (Continued)

first and last name (e.g. JaneDoe) and the password is SDA. Click on the membership tab and select 'Member Dues Renewal'. You can renew online or by mail.

Here's to a successful year for the SDA/OC, and wishing you and yours a happy and fabulous 2008!

Natalie

## Updated Your Profile Lately?

SDA continues to add more fields in the member profile to gather demographic information in order to determine our member needs.

All members should be encouraged to review their membership profile and complete the new demographics fields. If you haven't already done so, upload a current photo. Photo size cannot be adjusted after uploading. Suggested size for easy viewing is 150x200 pixels. Go to the National SDA website at [www.sdadmin.org](http://www.sdadmin.org), go to Membership, then View/Update My Profile.

## Quotable Quotes

"An optimist stays up until midnight to see the new year in. A pessimist stays up to make sure the old year leaves."

— Bill Vaughan

"Cheers to a new year and another chance for us to get it right."

— Oprah Winfrey

"A new year's resolution is something that goes in one year and out the other."

— Anonymous

"We spend January 1 walking through our lives, room by room, drawing up a list of work to be done, cracks to be patched. Maybe this year, we ought to walk through the rooms of our lives not looking for flaws, but for potential."

— Ellen Goodman

"Look for opportunities this year to make a significant, long-term, positive impact on the lives of others. The best way to feel good is to be good."

— Michael Josephson

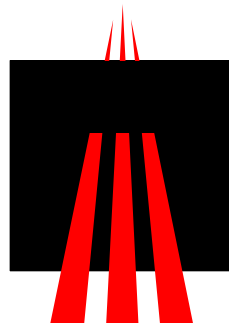
## ANNUAL AWARDS & INSTALLATION OF OFFICERS

This year, we held a December holiday luncheon and gift exchange at the Wyndham Hotel that included a lot of networking, great food, and fun times. Some of the gifts were "stolen" the maximum number of times and other gifts were kept hidden under the table cloths so no one could see. It was a good time.

In addition to the festivities, the 2008 Officers were installed by **Judy Merrill**, SDA/C and the Directors were sworn in as well. While our out-going and in-coming President, **Natalie Newman**, was given flowers and a gift for her outstanding service to the Chapter in 2007, Natalie turned around and honored a few members as well. **Judy Merrill** was given the **Lifetime Achievement** Award for her years of dedication and service to the O. C. Chapter, which included a stint of four consecutive years as Chapter President.

Two members were chosen by Natalie to receive the **2007 Member of the Year** award. **Karen Henderson** received this honor for her outstanding work during the Western States Regional Convention, promoting our sponsors on sign boards throughout the convention and for her graphic design work for the conference (letterhead, name badges, etc.). **Diane Sommerville** was also honored for her work as the Editor of *The Commentary* and for heading up the WSRC Sponsorship Committee.

Congratulations to all those who were honored and who work so hard to make our Chapter successful. Here's to another successful and educational year in 2008.



### SDA's Mission:

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

## 2008 OFFICERS



### 2008 President — Natalie Newman, SDA

Natalie Newman has worked in the architectural field since 2000 and has been employed as an Accounting & Executive Assistant at RNM Design, Inc. since October 2005. Natalie still feels like a newlywed being married to Jason Newman. They will be celebrating their 7<sup>th</sup> Wedding Anniversary this coming Valentine's Day and they love to do weekend get-aways. Her two favorite people in the world are her son Drew, 23, and her daughter Brittney, 22. They make her happy just thinking about them.

Natalie's hobbies include reading, trying new recipes, and she just completed her first attempt at sewing aprons. She also loves to play in Texas Hold 'em tournaments and has recently learned to shoot a soft bow and arrow.

Natalie has been an SDA member since October 2002. She has written the *'Member Profiles'* and other articles for the newsletter, and volunteers for different SDA and AIA events. She has attended three National Conventions, two Western States Regional Conferences and will be attending her second Leadership Conference in February. In 2004, she presided as Corresponding Secretary for our Orange County Chapter. In 2006 Natalie presided as Co-Vice President, and assisted in planning a memorable Host Chapter Party for the SDA National Convention in Los Angeles in June 2006 at the Hollywood Entertainment Museum. Natalie just finished her first year as the Chapter President and chaired the 2007 Western States Regional Conference. She will be serving her second term as Chapter President in 2008 and will work towards increasing the chapter membership and her certification. 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."*

### 2008 Co Vice-Presidents — Betsy Nickless, SDA/C and Karen Henderson, SDA

Karen: Karen Henderson is the Marketing Manager for Snyder Langston, a general contractor. Except for a two-year hiatus in the mid-1990s, she has been a SDA/OC member since 1988 and has served as Secretary, Vice President and a three-term President. Her career in the AEC industry began 19 years ago, at the well-remembered firm of Anthony & Langford Architects, after leaving the advertising agency arena.



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

Betsy: Betsy 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. 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 has been in the Design Profession for more than 25 years, and her current position with Steven Langford Architects has spanned the last 19 years.

Betsy enjoys Five Crowns, Bistango, and Arches for dining, and her favorite music is Contemporary Christian. She met her husband, Steve, of 25 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.



## 2008 OFFICERS

### 2008 Recording Secretary — Debbie Kuhns, SDA

After spending many years in the banking profession, Debbie decided to make a change to the A/E industry, and she has been the Office Manager for MCG Architecture since 2005. Debbie says that after being associated with architects all of her adult life, she was finally able to put to use her inside knowledge of this profession.

Debbie joined SDA in 2006 due to the encouragement of her boss, Jeff Gill. Debbie says that she has learned a lot about firm administration from the monthly seminars and the conventions that she has been able to attend, and she has really enjoyed meeting so many professional women. In addition to now serving the OC Chapter as Recording Secretary, she also is a member of the National SDA Membership Committee. Debbie lives in Huntington Beach with her dog, Molly. She has two grown daughters, a granddaughter, Emma, and she enjoys sewing, jewelry making, and listening to jazz.



### 2008 Corresponding Secretary — April O'Neil, SDA

April left the software industry two years ago to help her husband with the business operations at Alliance Engineering. Alliance Engineering is a small Electrical Engineering firm located in Irvine, CA. The firm's electrical engineering and lighting design experience spans a variety of industries including commercial properties, office buildings, fitness facilities, restaurants and education.

Beyond Alliance, April enjoys being a mom to two daughters Jessie, 22, and Christina, 20. April loves to take her dogs for long walks and fosters rescue kittens for a local non-profit.

### 2008 Treasurer — Nancy Burt, SDA

Nancy has worked for RNM Design for 26 years, where she currently serves as the Business Manager for their staff of 30 employees. She was raised here in Orange County, and obtained her Bachelor's degree in English from UCLA and a teaching credential from UCI.

Nancy has been a member of SDA for seven years and has served as Vice President, Corresponding Secretary, co-editor of the Newsletter, and has served on numerous committees. She is always raising her hand to help when help is needed. Nancy says the one aspect that brought her to SDA is the availability of resources to solve the many dilemmas faced in the office on a daily basis.

Nancy and her architect husband, Kevin, live in Irvine with their two teenage sons, Ryan and Austin.



# OUR LEADERS



**2008 Officers**



**2008 Directors**



**Honoring our 2007 President**



**Judy Merrill with Lifetime Achievement Award**



# HOLIDAY EVENT PHOTOS



Member of the Year Awards went to Karen Henderson and Diane Sommerville





# MORE HOLIDAY SPIRIT





# MONTHLY LUNCHEON SEMINAR NOTES

## **Client Management**

**Thursday, October 18, 2007**

**Presented by: Michael J. Murtaugh, Esq., Murtaugh Meyer Nelson & Treglia, LLP**

Mr. Murtaugh's presentation covered three distinct points: Creating Client Satisfaction, Negotiating Contracts, then Getting Paid for the work you have performed.

- Avoid client dissatisfaction by not screwing up, avoiding unrealistic client expectations (under-promise, and over-deliver), recognizing that whatever the client perceives is the reality;
- Try to detect when a client is dissatisfied through body language, client calling meetings when you are excluded, client is slow to pay, or there is resentment over petty back charges;
- For negotiating contracts, start with a good proposal with specific scope of work included;
- Take the position of no fee or liability for risks that cannot be controlled or insured;
- Make sure your contract is WRITTEN;
- Realize that all contracts have imperfections; try to include all of the client's needs and the project's risks in the contract; don't get too committed before the contract is signed;
- Be sure to include your attorney and insurance broker in your contract negotiations;
- Accounting—Keep AR current and invoice additional services promptly;
- Collection leverage -
  - 1st Tier—Stop work
  - 2nd Tier—Add interest, lien rights, threat of litigation;
- Basic Lien Right Prerequisites:
  - Before construction commences: Design Professionals Lien
  - After construction commences: Mechanics Lien (20-day preliminary notice served on the owner and lender by registered mail and filed with the County Recorder).

## **The Art of Marketing**

**Thursday, November 15, 2007**

**Presented by: Don Jacobs, AIA and Deborah Portugez, JZMK Partners**

Don Jacobs and Deborah Portugez drew upon the work of Jane Mass and identified the 10 steps to successful marketing. They are as follows:

1. Be Visible – Attend key events in your field and always carry plenty of business cards.
2. Look substantial – Dress appropriately; portray the field you are in.
3. Go after assignments you like – Your enthusiasm will show if you go after projects you truly want.
4. Target clients you respect – Create a list of 10 potential clients you regard highly and follow up with them monthly.
5. Devote the 1<sup>st</sup> hour of every day to new business – This takes discipline but will pay off.
6. Follow up on all leads – Even a wrong number can lead to a prospective client; you never know where your leads will come from.
7. Always do your homework – Use the internet to research a potential client to find out at least two discussion points.
8. Be honest – Don't misrepresent work; identify photos accordingly.
9. Ask for the business – Make it clear you want their business; be sure to ask.
10. Take the business – Be more aggressive; be able to close the deal.

If all of these steps are followed, you will most likely be successful in marketing yourself and your firm! And remember that if you "find a task you love, you'll never work a day in your life".

# WSRC SPONSORS

## AXIUM

Our number one priority is our clients' success. From implementation to data conversion to client support, you receive a complete solution from a company that cares about your business.

We are dedicated to developing innovative accounting and project management software for the architectural and engineering industry and providing exceptional service in every way.

Contact us today to see how we can increase your success.  
1.800.872.1540 • [www.axiumae.com](http://www.axiumae.com) • [sales@axiumae.com](mailto:sales@axiumae.com)



a division of the American Reprographics Company  
ARC



## e3Financial™

Founded by entrepreneurs for entrepreneurs

**Michael S. Rankin**  
**REBC, RHU**

Principal  
[mike@e3financial.com](mailto:mike@e3financial.com)

4100 Newport Place Drive  
Suite 650  
Newport Beach, CA 92660

Ph: 949.724.1964  
Fx: 949.724.9464  
[www.e3financial.com](http://www.e3financial.com)



STEVEN LANGFORD  
ARCHITECTS INC.



**PETE GILMORE**  
President

2152 MICHELSON  
IRVINE, CA 92612  
(949) 851-5065  
(800) 675-4566  
FAX: (949) 851-1145  
[www.prodataimaging.com](http://www.prodataimaging.com)  
[pgilmore@prodataimaging.com](mailto:pgilmore@prodataimaging.com)

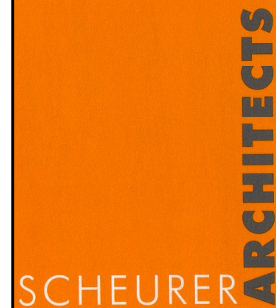
**Microsoft**  
CERTIFIED  
Partner

PROFESSIONAL SERVICES AND SOLUTIONS  
COPY • FAX • SCAN • PRINT



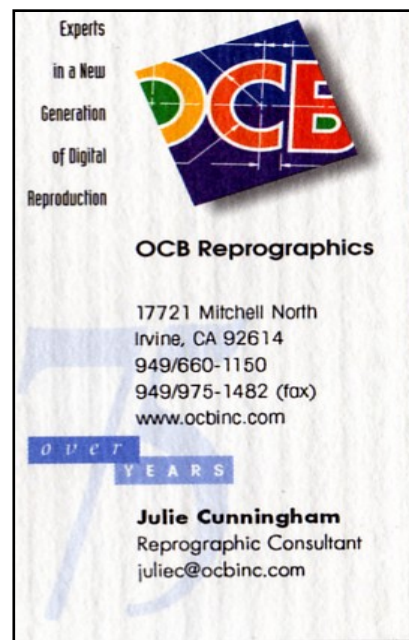
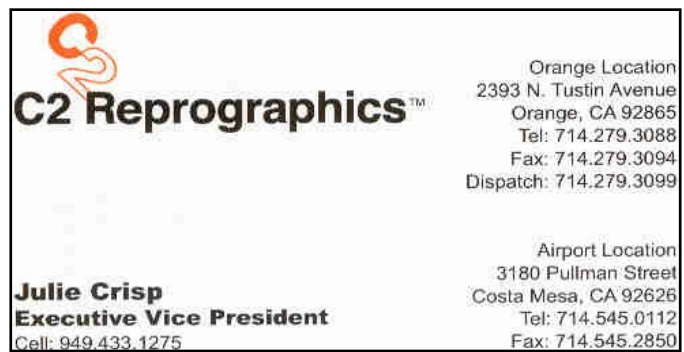
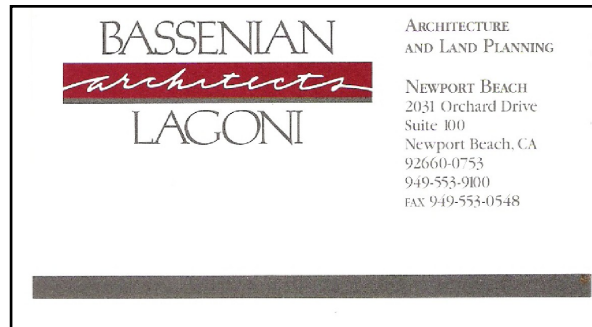
**Corporate  
Express®**

A Buhrmann Company





# WSRC SPONSORS

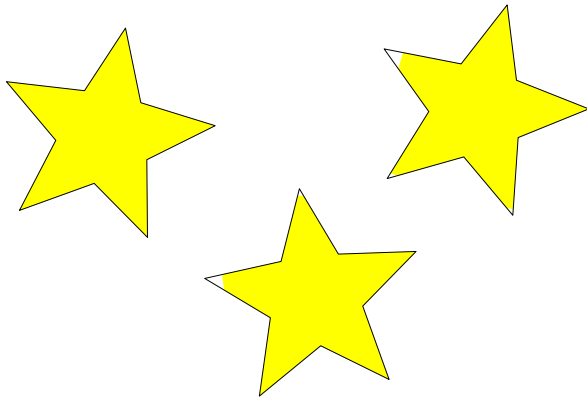




## Contributors to the Commentary

Kimberly Marroquin  
Natalie Newman  
Betsy Nickless (Photography)  
Diane Sommerville

And thanks to our fabulous proofreader,  
Betsy Nickless!



## The Commentary

Published Quarterly by the  
Society for Design Administration  
Orange County Chapter

### Editor

Diane Sommerville, SDA  
Wells Fargo of California Insurance Services, Inc.  
[diane\\_sommerville@wellsfargo.com](mailto:diane_sommerville@wellsfargo.com)

## WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

Heide Arnold  
Lee & Sakahara Architects, Inc.

Heather Chavez  
Nadel Architects, Inc.

Dee Jackson  
IBI Group

Aimee McMahon  
Environ Architecture

Heather Walsh  
M. A. Francis & Assoc., Inc.

## IMPORTANT REMINDER

National SDA does NOT send dues renewal invoices except to those members who have specifically requested one.

To renew, go on-line to [www.sdadmin.org](http://www.sdadmin.org), login, then go to Membership and then Membership Dues Renewal. Directions for on-line payment, for downloading renewal forms, and instructions on how to get a hard copy are right there.

Be sure to renew your dues prior to January 31, 2008, so that there will be no interruption in your SDA benefits.

**DON'T DELAY—RENEW TODAY!!**