



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

Orange County Chapter

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THE COMMENTARY

October 2008 Edition

A Newsletter of the Society For Design Administration
Orange County Chapter

President's Corner

By Natalie Newman, SDA

In these days of company lay-offs, with the financial market in turmoil, the cost of rising gas, and wondering who the heck you're going to vote for come November, let's ask ourselves "What can we do to stay positive in these tough economic times?" Well, for those of you who have worked in this industry for a long time, you've faced these issues before and

survived. We all realize it's time to tighten our belts and focus on what's important, what's needed now. Time to look at our expenses and cut out the fluff.

So let's remember, six months from now when the market starts growing again, we have the opportunity to learn about the excess in our lives, in our companies, and in this A/E community. And as we look forward to the holiday season, let us count our blessings because there are people you know out there who may not be as fortunate as you are.

It's amazing what CAN get accomplished when people come together for the purpose of benefiting their communities. Whether its building homes with Habitat for Humanity, or supporting BIA/OC HomeAid's Project Playhouse, or even just donating blood, clothes, and food to your local shelters, I stand in respect and admiration of the kindness of people.

Through the combined efforts of SDA/OC, the AIA Associates, SMPS/OC, the OC Food Bank, and South Coast Plaza, we just completed the 1st Annual Orange County CANstruction® Design/Build Competition. The Orange County



From left, Marva Thomas, OC Food Bank, Natalie Newman, SDA/OC Chapter President, Audrey Udelhofen, AIA Associates, and Paul King, SMPS/OC.

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Upcoming Events

October 2008

- October 1 Business Meeting 5:30 pm**
Meeting will be hosted by Jeffrey Berkus Architects.
- October 11 Project Playhouse 1:30-5:30 pm**
Please come out to Fashion Island and volunteer on the last day of this wonderful fund-raising event for Home Aid.
- October 16 Firm Appreciation Breakfast 7:30 am**
"Ask the Experts," a professional panel discussion.
Wyndham Hotel, Costa Mesa.

November 2008

- Nov. 5 Business Meeting 5:30 pm**
Meeting will be hosted by Snyder Langston.
- Nov. 20 Luncheon Meeting 11:30 am**
Annual Meeting and Elections
"Green Round Table"
Wyndham Hotel, Costa Mesa.

December 2008

- Dec. 7 Holiday Brunch and Ornament Gift Exchange 11:00 am**
Hosted by Judy and Dale Merrill.
Look for invitation to be e-mailed in November.
- Dec. 11 Business Meeting, Installation of Officers, and Gift Exchange 11:30 am**
Wyndham Hotel, Costa Mesa.

Happy New Year 2009!

Resource Library

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).

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.



October 2	Wendy Woolsey
October 4	Robert Hutchinson
November 2	Karen Henderson
November 10	Sharon Gunther
November 10	Cheryl Mathes
November 24	Betsy Nickless
December 2	Judy Merrill
December 3	Lisa Falcon
December 4	Chad Gniffke
December 17	Natalie Newman

President's Corner

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Food Bank will receive monetary donations and over 50,000 cans of food that they will be able to distribute to local churches, senior centers, shelters, soup kitchens and social service agencies who are food insecure.

And what better people can I admire and have respect for than the committee members who I just spent almost a year with, organizing and implementing a successful event that none of us had ever done before. And to the teams that participated. The hard work they did to collect the cans that went into building their magnificent structures. And to the faithfulness of our sponsors who gave so generously to this unknown event. And South Coast Plaza, who met with a bunch of misfits who really didn't know what they were doing, but hosted the location site anyway. And to the members of SDA/OC who helped host a fun and exciting Awards Gala. I am so proud of everyone who gave so much of their personal time.

All this to feed the hungry. To lift the spirit. To put an end to hunger.

One Can.

Project Playhouse

October 11, 2008

By Wendy Woolsey, SDA/C

Come help us continue our 17 year tradition of assisting at Project Playhouse!

Team SDA is scheduled for Saturday, October 11th, from 1:30 p.m. – 5:30 p.m., to assist at HomeAid Orange County's *Project Playhouse* event at Fashion Island, Newport Beach. Volunteers are needed to help out in the village tour areas. As an SDA volunteer, you will be able to attend the Auction Party immediately following our shift if you would like. For more information or to sign up, please contact Wendy Woolsey, SDA/C at Bassenian/Lagoni Architects, (949) 553-9100, or e-mail at wwoolsey@bassenianlagoni.com. Come have some fun with your fellow SDA/OC members and friends to help the homeless in our community!

Thanks for your participation.



The "playhouse" above is Wahoo's Xtreme Sports Shack that will be raffled off at the Auction Party on October 11. Come join us as a volunteer for the tours 1:30—5:30, and you will receive free admission to the Auction Party.



Western States Regional Conference

Sailing For Success

By Wendy Woolsey, SDA/C

The SDA San Diego Chapter hosted a wonderful Western States Regional Conference September 26 – 27, 2008. With the theme, “Sailing for Success,” they provided attendees with a conference schedule that included a variety of topics for learning, as well as information for “sailing” around San Diego to see their many treasured sights.

Although I have been to a few Western States Regional Conferences in the past, this was the first one I attended as a beneficiary of the Orange County Chapter and their generous scholarship program. We are fortunate that our Chapter is able to offer scholarships. I would not only like to thank the Chapter, but I would encourage others to participate in the future. It may make the difference between staying home or taking the opportunity to expand your horizons. As the Orange County Chapter scholarship winner for Western States this year, I was especially excited to attend this event. The programs sounded so interesting and the location couldn't be beat.



After a quick drive down the coast Thursday, with Natalie Newman and Betsy Nickless, we arrived at the Marriott Courtyard Hotel. This exceptional location was not a new building, but a re-invention from the San Diego Trust and Savings Bank building built in 1928. Architecturally, it was a cool place – Italian marble, wonderful wood paneling, impressive ceilings and period lights, with a sense of history and fun

about it. The welcome reception was actually held in the bank vault! As attendees arrived, we had time to catch-up with old friends and network with new ones.

Friday was a jammed-packed day full of enticing speakers. I found the topics very informative and all the speakers had the ability to get your attention, hold it, and make you feel that you gained something from their presentation – truly what we were there for! Pattie Vargas, The Vargas Group, led off at 8:00 a.m. with her lecture on *Extraordinary Teams, Extraordinary Results!* She shared her tips on how to develop truly great teams which result in quality business relationships and trust among co-workers. *Creating an Optimal Work Environment with Feng Shui* was presented next. Cathleen McCandless, a highly respected Professional Feng Shui Consultant, Teacher and Star of a nationwide television show, “Feng Shui Living,” certainly caught everyone's attention with her no-nonsense approach and vivid Powerpoint show. I know I wasn't the only one sitting there thinking about what we have done right, or where we could improve, in my office setting.

After lunch in the hotel, we were treated to a very interesting topic – Mary McKay, EdD.'s interpretation of *The Multigenerational Workplace – Challenging by Design*. She explored the differences among the Traditionalists, Boomers, Gen X-ers and Millennials and shared how best to handle the “deal breakers” and “culture wars” among our mixed-generational staff. I found this seminar fascinating. James Robbins, AIA, RJC Architects, took us on a journey through time in the afternoon by way of the *Historic Downtown Gaslamp Tour*. As a former Historical Architect for the City of San Diego, Mr. Robbins was able to provide a great insight into San Diego's variety of architecture and its colorful history.

The Host Chapter Party, held Friday night, was a real treat. HMC Architects opened their office and roof-top patio to the SDA for a lovely evening. The weather was perfect up on the roof and the view was incredible! Good food and lively music from a combo added up to another opportunity to enjoy SDA friends from throughout Southern California (including Diana Dubich from Orange County), San Jose, Sacramento, Portland, Seattle and Las Vegas.

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Western States Regional Conference

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Disaster Recovery and Business Continuity was the subject of our next morning's opening speaker. Greg Glasgow, LANSolutions, discussed the various aspects to be considered regarding data security and the many financial, legal and productivity ramifications on business. It certainly was a good reminder to check our preparations. Todd Stichler, NTD Architecture, was the next presenter, with his topic *Design Firm Profitability Factors*. His suggestion was to select a few statistics and measurements to guide your firm's profitability and then keep it as simple as possible.

Following lunch, we were treated to a double presentation, *Successful Marketing in Leaner Times*, by Charles J. Reilly, Marketing Strategist, and Tyler Blik, of Blik, a graphic design agency. These frequent collaborators shared their insight, from both a marketing point of view and graphics, on how to gain market share in a down economy. Great ideas! Kotaro Nakamura AIA, LEED AP, was the closing speaker, with a segment entitled *Simple Green*. With the philosophy of less energy, water, material, waste and toxic fumes; live local and keep it simple, Mr. Nakamura entertained us with his presentation on old homes and ideas and current designs using LEED items. Featured was his LEED Gold certification project, the DMV San Ysidro Branch Office.

Two full days of thought-provoking seminars was definite proof that the San Diego Chapter had fulfilled their quest for furthering education amongst its SDA members. I came away from the Conference with an increased awareness on a personal level, plus insights and ideas to share with my firm, which were my goals. It truly was an amazingly fun and education-packed event!

* * *

To Hyphen or Not To Hyphen

By Betsy Nickless, SDA/C

The grammar rule is that if the description serves as an adjective and is followed by a noun, then it is hyphenated (e.g., slab-on-grade configuration). If it does not modify a noun, there are no hyphens (e.g., the project is slab on grade.)

Similarly, you can have a 15,000-square-foot building, but the building is 15,000 square feet.

Tips For Going Green

By Diane Somerville, SDA

- **Avoid Fast Food Vendors.** They tend to over-package foods resulting in excess trash in our landfills.
- **Bike Instead of Ride.** Biking saves energy and reduces pollution.
- **Change a Light Bulb.** Change those standard bulbs to compact fluorescent ones.
- **Recycle Cans and Bottles.** You can make some cash while keeping these out of our landfills.
- **Avoid Aerosols.** They can't be recycled, so they end up in our landfills, and some of the chemicals in aerosols cause air pollution.
- **Eat Organic Produce.** This will result in less chemicals in your body and in the environment.
- **Plant a Tree.**
- **Recycle Batteries at the Hazardous Waste Dump.** Please quit throwing them in the trash.

Source: For more helpful information about what we can do to help protect our environment, visit the Going Green website at www.geocities.com/RainForest/Vines/4990.

CANstruction®

September 6 – 21, 2008, the SDA/OC Chapter joined with SMPS, the AIA Associates, and the O.C. Food Bank to put on Orange County's 1st Annual CANstruction event with 12 teams participating. We're starting now to plan for next year, so get on board and experience the rewards of this event for the design community, while serving the food insecure in Orange County.

And the winners are...

Jurors' Favorite

LPA, Inc.
"I Think I CAN"
6,830 cans

Structural Ingenuity

RBF Consulting
"Bridging Hunger"
5,045 cans

Best Use of Labels

Most Cans Used
Thomas P. Cox: Architects, Inc.
VanDorpe Chou Associates, Inc.
"Bear Necessity"
7,400 cans

Best Meal

Disneyland Resort Facility and
Operations Services
"We CAN Make a Difference"
6,830 cans

Honorable Mention

KTGY Group
You've Been Soft Served"
1,500 cans

Honorable Mention

Gensler
"Paint Away Hunger"
2,500 cans



More CANstruction®



Clockwise from Left:

You've Been Soft Served
Bridging Hunger
We CAN Make a Difference



SDA/OC Celebrates 25 Years!!!

By Betsy Nickless, SDA/C

The Orange County Chapter celebrated the 25th anniversary of their 1983 charter with a special event held to recognize current and past members, current and past presidents, and those who have supported the chapter over the last 25 years. In addition, it was hoped that the event would raise awareness and visibility of SDA in the design community.

The evening social networking reception was held at the Costa Mesa Marriott and was attended by over 40 guests. Many former members and past presidents were in attendance, including chapter co-founders, Geri Eckner and Betsy Nickless, SDA/C.

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Natalie Newman—Judy Merrill



Co-Founders Geri Eckner and Betsy Nickless



Past Presidents

SDA/OC 25 Years

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During the reception, a slide presentation ran with photos of the chapter's members and activities over the years. In addition, scrapbooks were on display as well as information on the chapter's many projects over the years including the *Orange County Architecture Activity Book*, *Project Playhouse*, and awards won by the chapter.

The chapter was honored to receive a special proclamation from SDA National President, Stephanie Kirschner, SDA/C, in recognition of the chapter's 25th anniversary, which was read to all in attendance.

The chapter was originally formed in the early seventies (Architectural Secretaries Association) but apparently was not chartered with the national organization. In the early 1980s, Geri Eckner and Betsy Nickless met with members of the Los Angeles Chapter and began informational meetings. The chapter was chartered with 18 original members.

Our chapter has grown from a few hearty souls with the conviction to share the SDA experience with others, to becoming one of the largest chapters in the National organization! We are proud that our leadership has encour-

aged members to become active participants at both the local and National levels. The Orange County Chapter has among its members a former National President, Janet Caprario, SDA/C; a former Executive Director of the AIA, Past President of the SDA and Honorary AIA OC member, Connie McKenna-McCulloch; and the 2008 Lifetime Achievement Winner, Betsy Nickless, SDA/C. We also count among our members several members who have served in a variety of positions and who have been dedicated to this group over numerous years. In addition, we have enthusiastic new members who we hope will carry on with our mission.

As a Chapter, we have been fortunate to enjoy sharing experiences and warm fellowship, creating lifelong friends. We have shared moments of joy, sorrow and triumphs. Our industry is what brought us together, but our enjoyment and commitment to our friends and our SDA Chapter is what keeps us going and growing.



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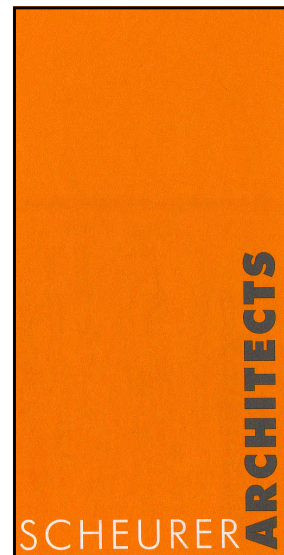


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President

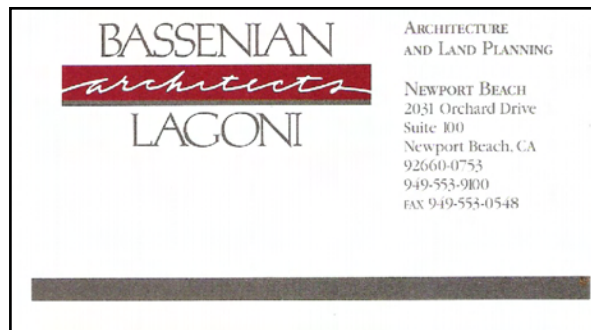
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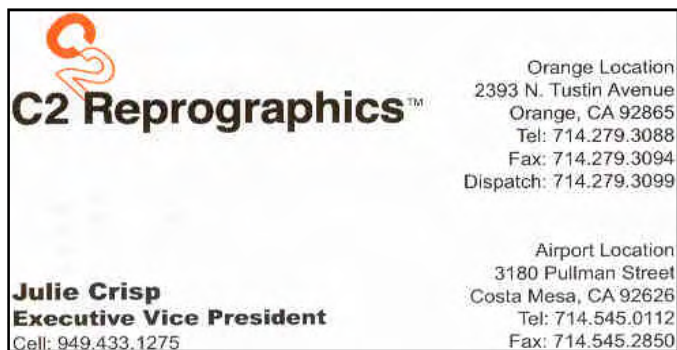
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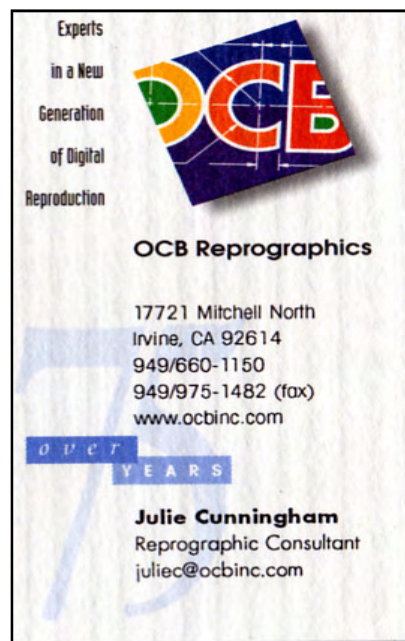
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FORMA



TRAVELERS





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And thanks to our fabulous proofreader,
Betsy Nickless!

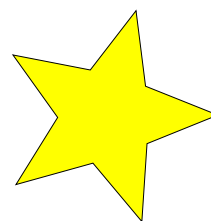
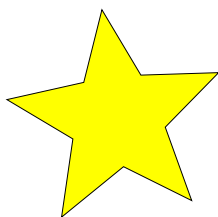
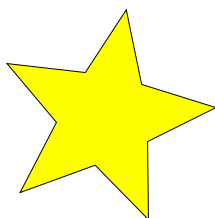
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Pierce Cooley Architects, Inc.

Sharon Gerken
IBI Group

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The Commentary

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SDA's Mission:

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