

### 2015 Officers

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## THE COMMENTARY

Spring 2015 Edition

A Newsletter of the Society For Design Administration

### President's Corner

By Penny Nelson, CDFA, President

Well we've made it out of the first-of-the-year craziness and short winter days to arrive squarely in spring! I feel rather like an animal just coming out of hibernation, particularly when the drive home in the evenings is no longer a drive in the dark. I think a lot of us feel reenergized and inspired during these early spring months. Have you been inspired to tackle a task that's been weighing on your mind? Have you started a new hobby? Perhaps you're stepping up your fitness and exercise routine?

As for me, I've decided to learn a new skill: learning to drive a Vespa scooter. My husband and I have had a scooter for over a year, and I usually ride on the back. Inspired by a fellow SDA member, I decided to learn how to ride on my own scooter. Reactions from some of my family and friends have not been exactly encouraging. My mom thinks I'm crazy. Her words to my sister were somewhere along the lines of, "At her age - what is she thinking?!" My boss is worried I'll hurt myself enough to warrant an extended leave from work. Iterations of "Be careful out there" fill my Facebook page. However, the person closest to me, my husband, has been my main encourager, trainer and coach. Having ridden motorcycles since he was very young, he's used his experience to train me on the necessary skills, even pushing my self-imposed limits when necessary. After about a month of studying, training and practicing, I earned my M1 motorcycle endorsement and a license to "scoot." But trust me; my training is far from complete. I have so many things yet to learn and practice until they are so ingrained in me that they become instinctive and automatic. Like any skill, it takes time to become proficient.

This experience has really given me food for thought about other areas of my life. What kinds of things do I not do because I don't think I can, or maybe haven't even considered? Where can I push myself and develop? Who can I connect with to guide me through this new endeavor? What useful habits do I need to practice until they become a part of me? And most importantly: What kind of fun am I missing out on that I have yet to discover? I encourage you to ask yourself these questions, then try something new. Try something that makes you a bit uncomfortable; push yourself in a new direction. Eleanor



# Upcoming Events

## April 2015

- April 18** Tour of Pavilion Park 10am-Noon  
Hosted by ValleyCrest in the Great Park, Irvine (See flyer on page 11)
- April 30** Luncheon Meeting 11:30 am  
New California Sick Leave Policy to be presented by Erick Becker from Cummings + White, LLP  
Lutron Event Center, Irvine

## May 2015

- May 4-8** EDConnect15 9:00 am-1:30 pm  
(See Schedule of Events on page 7)
- May 7** A/E/C Industry Networking Mixer 6:00-8:00 pm  
Location: Gensler (Irvine)  
Hosted by SDA Orange County  
(See flyer on page 12)
- May 8** National SDA 2015 Annual Business Meeting 12:30-1:00 pm  
Open to SDA Members Only
- May 14** Business Meeting 5:30 pm  
Meeting will be held at Lesley, Thomas, Schwarz & Postma hosted by Nancy Burt
- May 21** Luncheon Meeting 11:30 am  
Recap of EDConnect15  
Presented by SDA Members.  
Lutron Event Center, Irvine

## June 2015

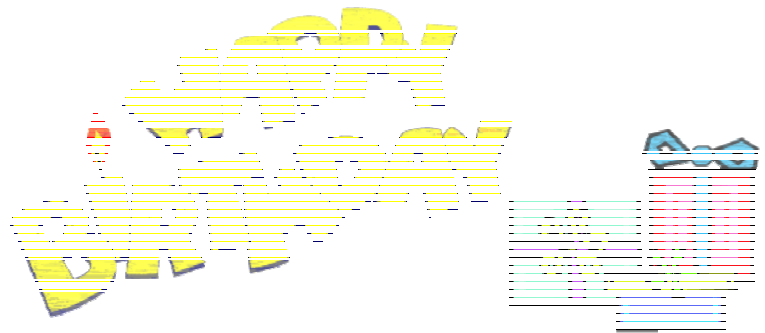
- June 4** Business Meeting 5:30 pm  
Meeting will be held at IBI Group hosted by Wendy Woolsey
- June 18** Luncheon Meeting 11:30 am  
Subject will be "Finance." Details to be announced.  
Lutron Event Center, Irvine

## Looking Ahead

- Dec. 6** Annual Holiday Brunch,  
Installation of 2016 Officers, and  
Ornament Exchange

# Job Board

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



January 5	Kelly Shoemaker
January 13	Susan Crook
February 12	Debora Smith
February 22	Vicki Marcellino
February 23	Connie McKenna
February 25	Cindy Loomer
February 25	Yun Day
March 7	Lara McKissick
March 12	DeeDee Jackson
April 5	Sunday Sagmit
April 25	Claudia Hill
May 3	Jennifer Corliss
May 3	Rebecca McCune
May 6	Gail Dyer
May 17	Kerrie Korfanta
May 23	Diane Sommerville
June 2	Judy Mitchell
June 16	Brittany Choisset
June 16	Marcy Fields

## President's Corner (Continued)

(Continued from Page 1)

Roosevelt is quoted as saying, "Do one thing every day that scares you." You never know where that action will lead you and who you will become as a result of it. When you do, share your story with me. I look forward to hearing your victories. Oh, and if you see someone with a pink helmet riding a little white Vespa, be sure to give me plenty of room!



### Mission Statement:

The SDA advances management and administrative professionals in the A/E/C industry through education, networking, and resources.

## SDA Member Anniversaries

We have quite a few SDA members who have been in our group for a very long time, and your officers would like to start recognizing and showing appreciation for our members. Therefore, this is a new addition to the newsletter.

Anniversaries for the first half of this year are the following:

Alicia Igram	January 1	16 Years
Gail Dyer	February 9	9 Years
Susan Crook	February 24	11 Years
Marcy Fields	March 21	13 Years
Olivia Mayes	March 31	4 Years
Brittany Choisset	April 2	4 Years
Wendy Woolsey	April 3	18 Years
Matt Zvolenski	May 7	1 Year
Rebecca McCune	May 23	8 Years
Melinda Walker	May 29	1 Year

# 2015 Officers

## President, Penny Nelson, CDFA

Penny Nelson has been the Director of Finance for Douglas Pancake Architects, Inc. in Irvine since its inception in 2010. Douglas Pancake Architects (DPA) is a boutique architectural practice serving the senior housing and healthcare industry across the western United States. Penny is responsible for all financial aspects of the firm, as well as contract administration, human resources and office management. Penny graduated from California State University, Long Beach with a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration: Finance, and is a Certified Design Firm Administrator (CDFA). During her 25+ years of experience, Penny directed the financial and office management functions in manufacturing, technology and advertising firms before joining an architectural firm in 2008.



Penny previously served the chapter as Corresponding Secretary, and is now serving her third term as Chapter President. She looks forward to representing the Orange County Chapter at the various SDA functions during the year. Penny finds SDA to be an invaluable source of information, education, and networking. Penny has attended one SDA Western States Regional Conference, in addition to three EDSymposium Conferences; she enjoys bringing the educational knowledge back to her firm to improve their best practices and processes.

Penny has been married to her husband Mike for 28 years; they have a 24-year-old daughter and a 22-year-old son. During her spare time, Penny enjoys spending time with her husband and children, camping, crocheting, and visiting Disneyland.

## Co-Vice President, Betsy Nickless, CDFA



Betsy Nickless was a co-founder of the Orange County Chapter and has filled all chapter board positions. She was the recipient of SDA's National Lifetime Achievement Award, the highest honor bestowed by SDA.

She is the Business Manager of Mark Scheurer Architect, where she oversees all administrative functions of the company including finance, HR, contracts, and administration of the mid-sized firm that specializes in award-winning residential communities worldwide.

She is currently serving as SDA Past National President, chair of the national Nominating Committee, chair of the national Past Presidents' council, and has also held positions on several national committees. She has also been a member of Canstruction Orange County's executive board since its inception in 2007 and looks forward to chairing the 8th Annual Canstruction competition this year. Canstruction has provided nearly \$75,000 and over 350,000 pounds of food to the Orange County Food Bank since its inception.

Betsy and her husband of 33 years, Steve, enjoy trying new local restaurants, and her favorite music is contemporary Christian. She met Steve at the car races on the east coast, 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 who were both married within the last two years, so her family doubled!



## 2015 Officers (continued)

### Co-Vice President, Judy Mitchell

Judy joined Gensler in 1991. In the 23 years that she has worked for Gensler, she has held several positions and has worked in various offices. While in the Santa Monica office, she was the Studio Coordinator for the Entertainment practice area and had experience working with Disney, Paramount and Loews Entertainment. She became a Senior Project Coordinator and was assigned to work on the San Jose International Airport project where her responsibilities included consultant coordination and construction administration. When Gensler won the John Wayne Airport improvement project in 2006, she permanently moved to the Newport Beach office to assist the team in the role of Senior Project Coordinator. Since moving to Newport Beach, she was promoted to Senior Associate, and she has worn many hats, including office manager, move coordinator and event planner.



Judy lives in Fountain Valley with her husband, David, and daughter, Nikki. She joined SDA in December 2012, and she has made many lasting friendships, as well as business connections through SDA. When she has time to relax, Judy loves to shop, cook and enjoy a night out with the girls whenever she can fit it in.

### Recording Secretary, Dee Dee Jackson

Dee Dee Jackson has been the Office Manager and Executive Assistant to the Operating Director of IBI Group, an international Architectural, Engineering and Planning company, for over 25 years. IBI specializes in urban design and planning, building and landscape architecture, advanced transportation management and traffic systems, real estate analysis, communications specializations, and software development. During this time, she has developed and maintained policies and procedures for the Accounting and Human Resource departments. She continues to manage the overall day-to-day operations.



Dee Dee has been a member of the SDA - Orange County Chapter intermittently for the last 25 years. This will be her second year as Recording Secretary, and she believes the training, mentoring, and camaraderie of belonging to such an organization is a great asset.

## 2015 Officers (continued)

### Corresponding Secretary, Sunday Sagmit

Sunday Sagmit has been the Administrative Assistant/Project Administrator at Douglas Pancake Architects, an architecture firm that specializes in the Senior Housing market of independent living, assisted living, skilled nursing facilities and memory care, for over a year. Prior to this position, Sunday spent 20 years as a claims adjuster for the Automobile Club.

Sunday became a member of the SDA Orange County Chapter immediately after starting her new career at Douglas Pancake Architects. Since Sunday is relatively new to the administrative side of the house, she finds everything about SDA interesting and informative. Sunday brought her son and participated in the 2014 Canstruction "Can-Opener Build Night". Sunday and her son had a blast last year and plan on being involved in 2015 as well. She feels that it is a wonderful way to teach her son about giving back to their community.

Sunday has two children, Chloe, age 22 and Matthew, age 13. She has been in a relationship for almost five years with her boyfriend, Brad Jacobson. They enjoy bike riding, long walks and hanging out with friends.



### Treasurer, Cheryl Mathes



Cheryl Mathes has worked in the A&E industry for over 25 years. She is the Controller for ValleyCrest Design Group, a Landscape Architectural and Planning firm located in Irvine, California. As a branch of ValleyCrest Landscape Development, ValleyCrest Design Group supports the development of turn-key design-build landscape architectural projects. ValleyCrest's talented team of professionals collaborate on all aspects of a project; from the initial design conception and development of technical construction documents, through project installation and continued 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, learn and keep updated with current trends, as well as network within the building industry. She has attended National and Regional conventions, as well as participated on the local Board, monthly seminars, and committees.

Cheryl enjoys participating in the community outreach programs, such as Project Playhouse and CanstructionOC. Cheryl is a proud supporter of the SDA and enjoys participating in all that the SDA has to offer.



Advance your career with this virtual four-day conference. The EDConnect 15 schedule is as follows:

Monday, May 4, 2015	9:00—10:30 am	Strategic Planning: Design Business Strategy into Action and Results
	Noon—1:30 pm	Why Design Professionals Should Embrace Integrated Delivery
Tuesday, May 5, 2015	9:00—10:30 am	On-Boarding: More Than Just Orientation
	Noon—1:30 pm	What Is the Right Value for Your Firm?
Wednesday, May 6, 2015	9:00—10:30 am	Composing a Winning Application for Professional Liability Insurance
	Noon—1:30 pm	RFQs/RFPs: Composing a Winning Response
Thursday, May 7, 2015	9:00—10:30 am	Effective Financial Management for Design Firms
	Noon—1:30 pm	Farewell to Death by PowerPoint
Friday, May 8, 2015	12:30— 1:00 pm	National SDA Annual Business Meeting (Open to SDA Members only)

For more information or to register for this event, please go to [sdanational.org](http://sdanational.org).

# Holiday Brunch 2014

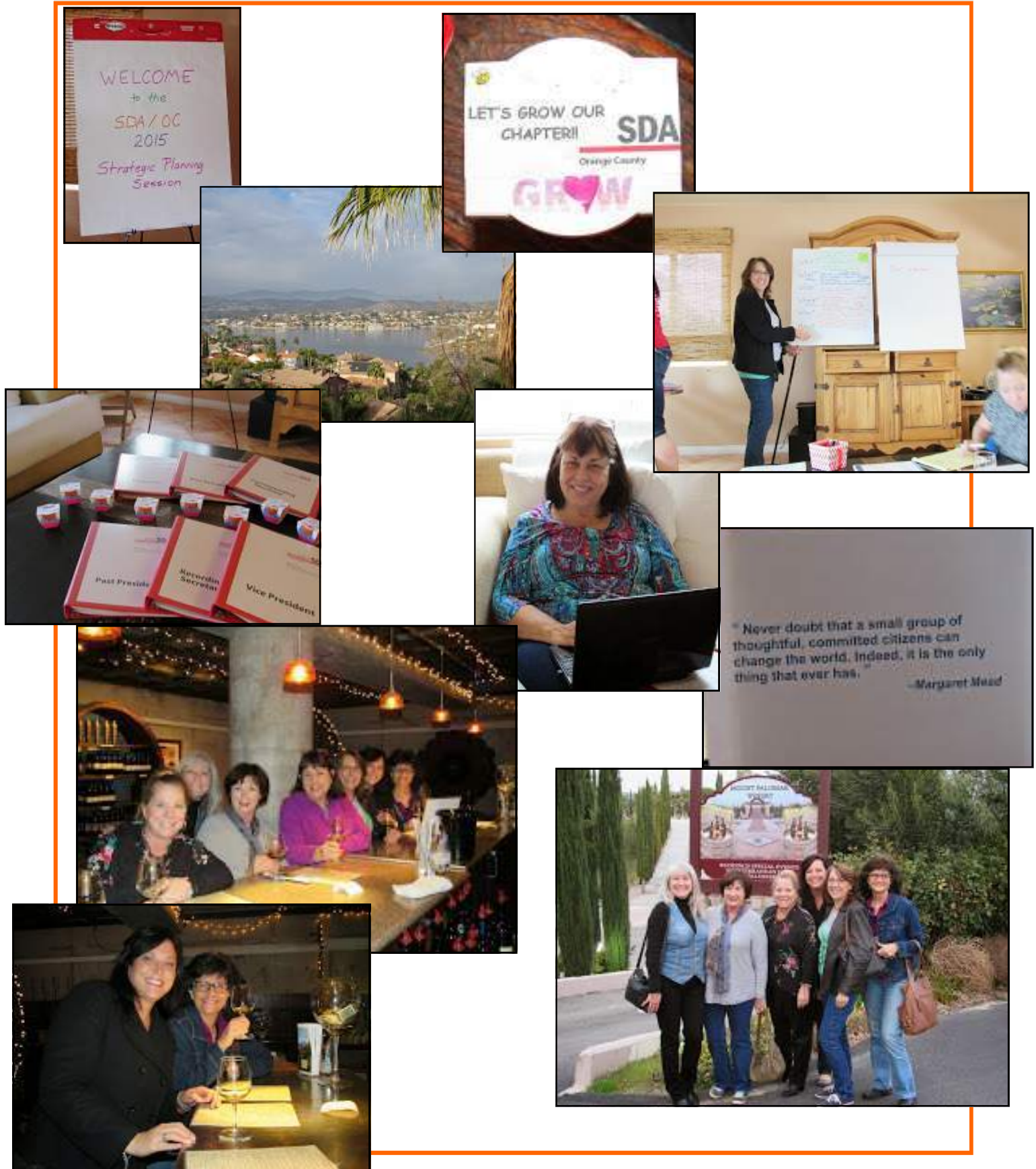




## More Holiday Brunch 2014

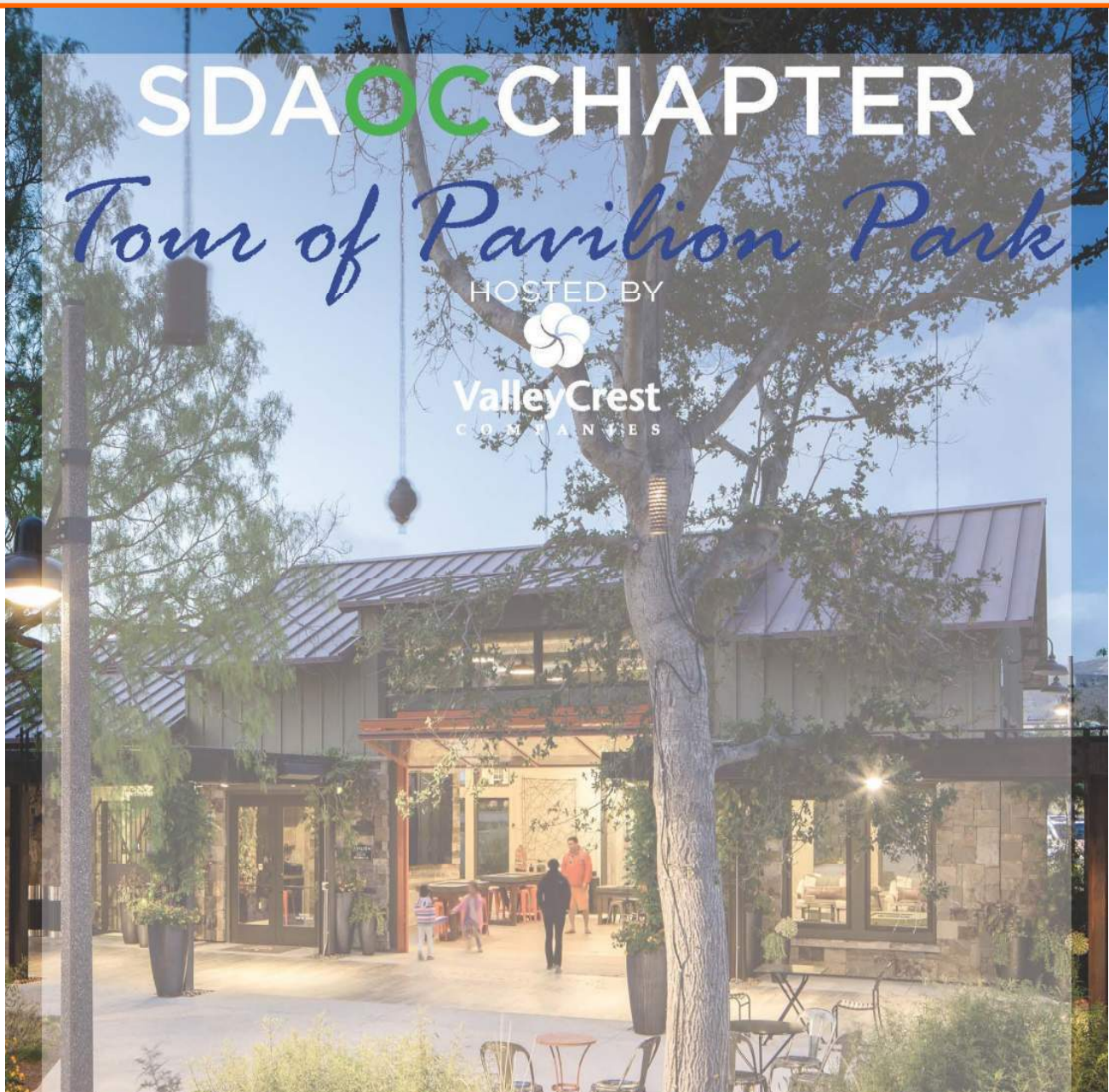


# Officers' Strategic Planning Meeting 2015





## Pavilion Park Tour



**Saturday 4.18.15 10am-12pm**

Pavilion Park is located at the intersection of Irvine Blvd and Ridge Valley

*Meet on the patio in front of the greenhouse*

Landscape Designer Brett Park from VCDG will discuss the "big picture" design philosophy behind Pavilion Park with a guided tour of this award-winning park



Email your R.S.V.P to [cmathes@valleycrest.com](mailto:cmathes@valleycrest.com) or call (949)238-4936

# A/E/C Industry Networking Mixer



**May 7th - 6:00 pm - 8:00 pm**

Join members of the A/E/C community to network and to recognize those in the industry who have achieved licensure, accreditation, credentialing and other significant accomplishments.

*If you know of someone deserving recognition, please send their name and pertinent information to [sdaoc.chapter@gmail.com](mailto:sdaoc.chapter@gmail.com)*

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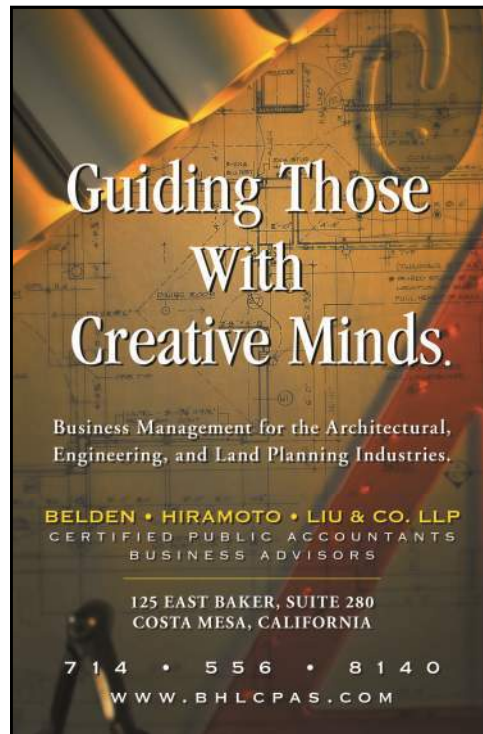
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# SDA

Orange County

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And thanks to our fabulous proofreader,  
Betsy Nickless!

## The Commentary

Published Quarterly by the  
Society for Design Administration  
Orange County Chapter

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