

# REFLECTIONS



Mar. 1977  
Vol. IX, No. 3

Newsletter of the  
Save Our Heritage Organisation

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

### HORTON PLAZA, ONE MORE TIME

As long ago as 1890, people were complaining about the condition of the strip of land that we now call Horton Plaza. In that year, "Father" Horton himself wrote, "The present so-called park should be condemned and removed -- hedge, trees, fountain, bandstand and all. Instead of being an attractive and useful place it is unsightly, a receptacle for dust and filth. . . ."

Changes were slow in coming. In 1897, Kate Sessions planted 28 palm trees. In 1908, the park commission asked Irving Gill to draw up a plan for the Plaza which was highlighted by the dedication of a new fountain in 1910. Now -- over 65 years later -- those last improvements are a little worse for wear (or is it lack of Maintenance?). Again, the Plaza is "unsightly, a receptacle for dust and filth" among other things. Is it time once more to clear the slate and start all over?

The Horton Plaza Study Committee, headed by former San Diego Mayor, Frank Curran, recently presented a list of ten proposed Horton Plaza "improvements" to the City Council for action. The list reads as follows:

1. Remove all existing posts and chains around the perimeter of the park.
2. Remove all existing grass areas and replace with tan colored salt-textured concrete.

3. Leave in place all existing mow strips, sidewalks, the information building and the underground restrooms.

4. Remove all trees from Broadway, Third and Fourth Street sidewalks and replace with trees in concrete boxes within the park area. Such trees could then be relocated as future requirements dictate.

5. Remove all newspaper racks (official style only to be permitted) to positions behind the mow strip.

6. Plant shrubbery within the fountain basin. Flowering plants are not recommended since past experience has indicated that flowers are rapidly picked by the public and also eaten by the pigeons.

7. Add three mast arms to existing lighting standards extending into the park area and provide high intensity lamps.

8. Remove all existing litter containers and replace with approximately ten circular concrete litter containers similar to those now placed along "C" Street.

9. Remove armed services recruitment boards from all sidewalks and park area.

10. Add two Kiosks for telephone and informational purposes.

These proposals are supposed to be "interim" measures until the Great Shopping Center magically appears on the horizon.

(continued)

(President's Message continued)

On Wednesday, February 23, the Council, despite written objections from the San Diego Chapter of the American Institute of Architects and the Historical Site Board, voted unanimously to spend \$60,000 for the implementation of this program.

SOHO has never been against any improvement in the Horton Plaza or other redevelopment areas, but what exactly is an improvement? Is it an improvement to pave the only lawn in the Center City area? Is it an improvement to plant the basin of one of the oldest and last remaining functional, (well at least it has water in it) fountains in the City?

If, as the Study Committee indicates, one of the main purposes of this program is to relieve congestion caused by persons waiting for buses, then it would seem that a more suitable approach would be to find a new location for a bus stop. How can a park act like a park when it's treated like a Grand Central Station? How can anyone sit down and enjoy his lunch if he's afraid he will be trampled when the next bus dumps its load?

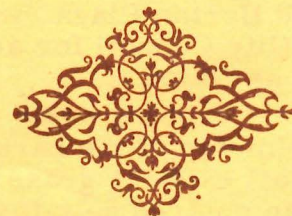
Curran also told the City Council that people had been seen "fornicating" on the lawn, so a harder surface should be put down to prevent such activity. The way this comes across is that the Plaza should be made uncomfortable for the "undesirables" instead of comfortable and attractive for everyone else. Can such a negative approach be productive? Next they may recommend we pave Balboa Park for the same reasons.

In their letter to the Mayor and City Council, the local chapter of the A. I. A. wrote, "The desecration of this dedicated park and historical site would not only be a non-solution to the familiar problems associated with Horton Plaza, but would be a disservice to Center City redevelopment and the public trust." Apparently the letter was ignored, but the Mayor and Council will not ignore letters from hundreds of voters and taxpayers. Twice before SOHO's letter writing campaigns have proven effective in getting the ear of our elected officials (for the Horton Hotel and the Santa Fe Depot). We can do it again! The Plaza proposal must now go before the planning department and then back to the City Council. If we act swiftly it may still be possible to save



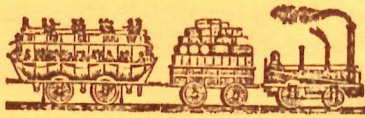
that little bit of green downtown that we know as Horton Plaza. I urge each and every one of you to write to Mayor Wilson and your Councilman protesting this violation of public property. If you don't have time to write your own letter, at least sign and send the enclosed letter: Every voice counts!

Bruce Kamerling





## TRAIN TOUR



The annual train tour is coming, May 21st. Come and see exciting L. A. with us. Due to increased demand, we will be making space available for more people. Tour reservations are on a first come, first serve basis--so keep May 21st open, and see the architectural masterpieces of the Los Angeles area. The final details will be in next month's "Reflections". Remember... May 21st.

Patricia Minnich  
Tour Committee

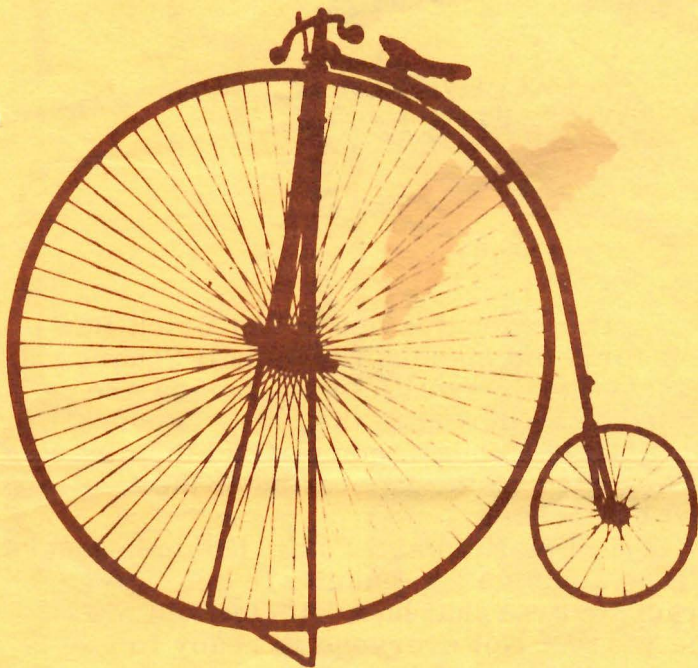


## HISTORICAL DISPLAY IN LA MESA MARCH 22

The La Mesa Historical Society will present an historical display on Tuesday, March 22, from 11:00 A. M. to 7:00 P. M., at the San Diego County Library, La Mesa Branch, 8055 University Avenue. Furnishings, turn-of-the-century costumes, and a Bicentennial quilt will be shown, as will photographs and various artifacts related to La Mesa's history.

At 1:00 P. M., there will be a presentation to the library of microfilms of the La Mesa Scout (1932-1936). Donations from the La Mesa Soroptimists and the La Mesa Women's Club, Tempos Section, made it possible for the historical society to have the microfilming done. Microfilms for the years 1916 to 1936 will now be available to researchers.

Refreshments will be served throughout the day. The recently published booklet, La Mesa-A Brief History, and reproduction copies of a 1907 La Mesa Springs Scout (Vol. 1, No. 3) will be for sale.

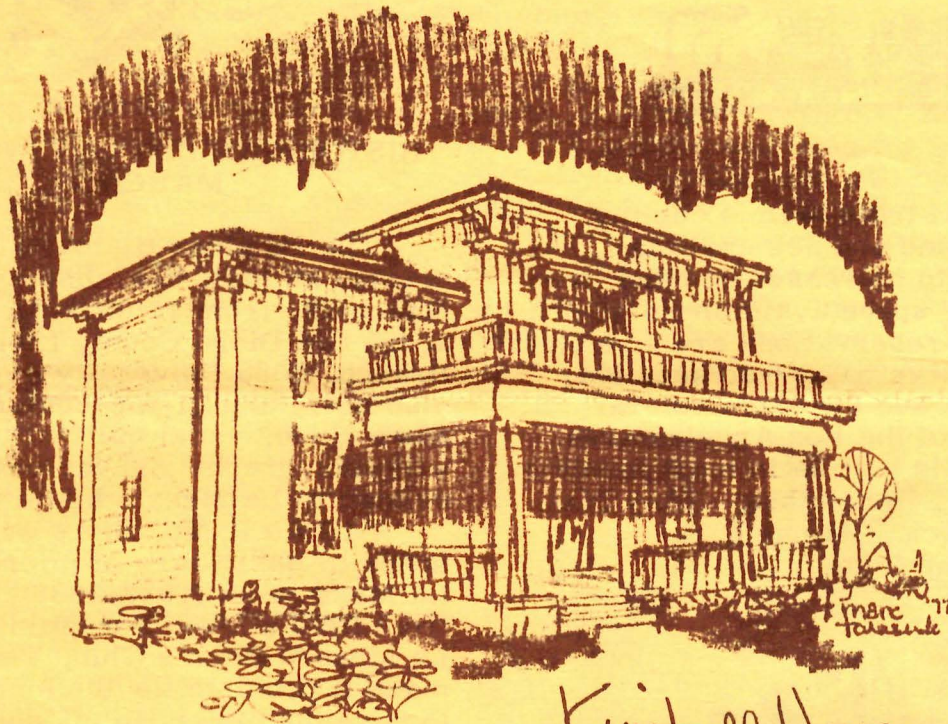


A Bridgeport, Connecticut, man narrowly escaped losing his scalp last week. He had decided to go to the Black Hills, but was taken sick and died two days before he was to start.

--from Frank Leslie's Illustrated Weekly, 1876



# Around the Town:



Kimball House  
Nat'l City, Ca.

## NATIONAL CITY'S NEW-OLD NEIGHBORHOOD

by Marc Tarasuck

Inching its way off the site behind the pawn shop and Pussycat Theater in National City was the 109 year old Frank Kimball House. The two block trip to its new site on "A" Avenue across from the Kimball Brick Row was far less eventful than the impact that its relocation can have on the community.

Threatened by demolition, Mayor Kile Morgan launched a campaign to save the Kimball house as a link to the architectural and historic past of National City. While architecturally a "good" Victorian and not a "great" Victorian--the Kimball House sits as a reminder of the boom town era of the late 1800's. The 23rd President of the United States, Benjamin Harrison, slept there overnight --perhaps even bathing in the first indoor bathtub in National City.

The relocated house and Brick Row now form the nucleus of Kimball Square. At least two more Victorian homes are slated to be moved to the area. Federal Bloc Grant Funds accomplished the clearing of the site and the relocation of the families and businesses.

Unlike Heritage Park, Kimball Square offers a unique opportunity to help upgrade an area that has deteriorated over the years. Not everyone is ready to accept that opportunity! Some local merchants bemoan the loss of customers who were relocated, without considering the potential income from tourists and the new commercial enterprises that the area will attract.

Some owners of Brick Row appear reluctant to cooperate with the Community Development Commission in its offer to rehabilitate the exterior of the 10 unit historical landmark. The owners responsibility would be to bring the interiors up to health and life safety standards--not rigid

building code standards. While restoration efforts are privately being accomplished there, the majority of external work will require a considerable sum of money--money being offered by the city.

The intricately detailed front porch running the entire 250 foot length of Brick Row is a study in contrasts. The aborted northernmost unit has been purchased by the city and will have its facade restored with Bloc Grant Funds. Like it or not--the area will change. It would be difficult to halt the momentum that the hundreds of thousands of dollars of federal money has started. People called "courageous" a few years ago to buy into the area are now referred to as "visionaries." Young professionals have relocated here because of its proximity to the freeway systems, close

location to downtown San Diego, and because of National City's refreshing "small town" atmosphere. SOHO opened up a new world to preservationists with its Viewing Victorian Vistas tour through National City in 1975. It is one of the last frontiers where a good buy is still possible--but not as good as it used to be!

The City of National City and the Community Development Commission have taken giant steps in being leaders in the use of Bloc Grant Funds for preservation of historically and architecturally significant structures as a core for redevelopment. The moving of the Frank Kimball House is more than just the beginning of a heritage square--it launches a sociological and economic awakening in an area of historic landmark architecture. Hopefully a new neighborhood pride will develop to contribute to making Kimball Square an example of restoration and redevelopment that works.



THE BRICK ROW

## AN ATTRACTIVE COTTAGE HOME FOR PEOPLE WITH SMALL MEANS

We give in Figs. 8 and 9 illustrations of the arrangement of the rooms on first floor, and perspective view of front and principal side of an attractive little cottage, neat and well proportioned, simple in design, and easy of construction, there being but little ornamental work used, as shown in the elevation. A course of sawed panels across the front, set in square frame-work, and the projection of the second story over bay, with its two large brackets on either side, give a fine outline to the front, with the relief of cut slat patterns under projection and over the windows in front gable; and this, together with the simple cut figures in the entrance porch, is all the real ornamental work on the house. The fact is that the exterior effect in the cottage depends more upon the outlines of corners, projections, and angles of roof, than upon anything else, and is an example of what can be done without much ornamentation and still claim merit from its attractiveness. The roof should be shingled and painted a dark red, while the body of the house should be painted an olive green, and the trimmings, that is, cornices, corners, porch and bay-window, a dark chocolate, with corners, or chamfers, where there are any, in vermilion. The effect, if the house is standing alone, with trees and shrubbery around, will be pleasing. So much for the exterior.

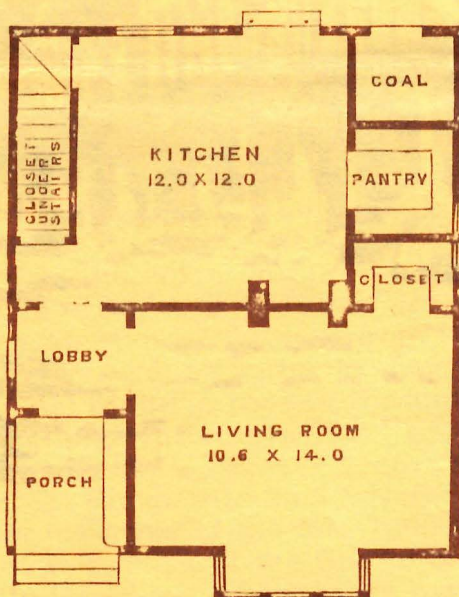


Fig. 8.

Fig. 8 shows how the rooms are placed on first floor, the porch opening into a lobby and from this either into living-room or kitchen. We would suggest that it would be a good plan to have a small room in the rear for cooking in summer, which could be added at small expense.

The small room marked "coal" could, if thought advisable, be opened into the kitchen and used for a store-room. A pantry of ample size will be found convenient, having shelves on three sides, and also a good closet off from living-room, and one under stairs, unless there is a cellar under the house, in which case the stairs to the same would have to be placed under the staircase leading to the second floor.



Fig. 9

On the second floor there are two good sleeping-rooms, there being a small hall at head of stairs extending along side of stair-way to front room, and doors opening into this and the rear bed-room immediately back of it. Two closets are between the rooms, one for each. The rear chamber is lighted by two windows, coming up into the roof, one on the side and the other in the rear.

This design would make a very good summer cottage, if desired, in which case it would not necessarily need to be plastered. At present prices, this house can be built here, all complete, for six hundred dollars.

Almon Varney, *Our Homes and Their Adornments.* Detroit, 1884

## REAL ESTATE

### FOR SALE:

The Long/Waterman house (1889), 2408 First Avenue. Historic Site #37 (See "Around the Town" Feb. issue for history of the house). Cost is \$420,000 with excellent tax shelter first year. Irving Gill's Christian Science Church (1904), more recently known as the Ivy Chapel of Goodbody's Mortuary at Third and Ash, is also part of this estate. For information on these two historic properties contact Ray Cadena, 275-0163.

### TENANTS NEEDED:

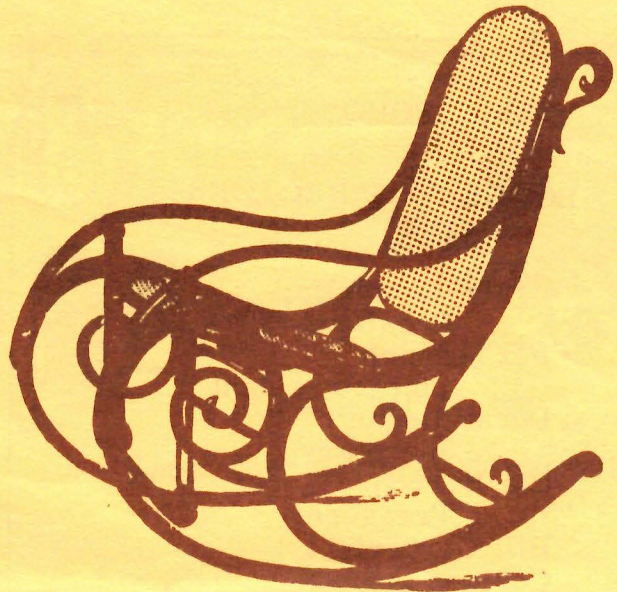
Bushyhead house (1887), Heritage Park. Ideal for offices, shops, boutique, art gallery. Prospective lessees must be willing to invest in interior restoration--all money to be used as credit on future rental fees. Contact Ruth Padgett, 454-4623 evenings and weekends.

### FOR SALE

Victorian Parlor Set - Eastlake Style - Love Seat with Three Matching Chairs. Excellent condition \$900.00

Gas Stove c. 1920. A. B. Stove Co. Works, Good condition \$100.00

Call Bill Cartwright  
236-8760 (office) 298-1021 (home)



BENT-WOOD CHAIR.

## Dues Due!

All memberships are due and payable on the 1st of January each year. Due to the increased costs of printing and postage, we will soon be forced to limit circulation of the newsletter to those members whose dues are currently paid up. If the last time you paid was before November of last year, then your dues are due (sorry but we don't have the personnel to keep track on a month-to-month basis). Please continue your support with a membership renewal. Memberships available include:

Single	\$8.00	Patron	\$ 100.00
Family	\$12.00	Benefactor	\$1000.00
Donor	\$50.00		

Please send checks, payable to SOHO, to SOHO at Box 3571, San Diego, CA 92103.

## Membership

Name \_\_\_\_\_

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I am interested in joining an action group. Please contact me !

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SOHO

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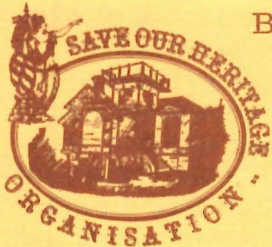


NOTICE

SOHO has rented storage space at the Lincoln Space Center in the hope of consolidating our sale items, files, artifacts and miscellaneous junk. If you have a box of stuff that belongs to SOHO, here is your chance to get rid of it. Leave a message with the answering service (225-1033) and we'll send someone out to pick it up.

DEADLINE

Items to be included in a specific issue of "Reflections" must be turned in by the 15th of the preceding month.



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