

Reflections

Newsletter of Save Our Heritage Organisation

June 1978



SOHO's Summer Affair, an open house, tour and reception, will be held on Saturday, August 26, from 1:00 until 10:00 P. M.

The setting will be the beautifully refurbished Long-Waterman mansion, owned by advertising executive, John Parker, formerly of the Los Angeles area. This will be the first time the public has been permitted to view the interior of this elegant symbol of San Diego's gracious past.

The three-storied structure, one of the finest examples of Queen Anne architecture in the county, is listed in the National Register of Historic Places, and is San Diego's Historic Site No. 37. Designed by architect D. P. Benson in 1889, it has been owned by John Long, a prosperous San Diego merchant, and by Robert W. Waterman, the seventeenth governor of California.

Lived in continuously since it was built until the death of Florence Hart Gilbert in 1975, the house was the scene of gala social events and numerous weddings. Now it houses the corporate headquarters of Parker Industries, and is being faithfully preserved and restored to its Victorian splendor by Parker.

Tickets to the SOHO Summer Affair will be available only by advance mail reservation. The price of \$5.00 includes a comprehensive tour, entertainment and refreshments. A no-host bar will be available. Send ticket orders to SOHO TICKETS, Box 3571, San Diego, CA 92103, and ENCLOSE A SELF-ADDRESSED, STAMPED ENVELOPE. Please indicate the time you prefer for house viewing, as only a limited number can be accommodated at each twenty minute tour. Show one of the following time schedules on your check: 1:00 to 3:00 P. M., 3:00 to 5:00 P. M., 5:00 to 7:00 P. M., or 7:00 to 9:00 P. M. For more information call Rae Berry, Chairman of the event, at SOHO, 232-1997.



REFLECTIONS OF BRUCE KAMERLING
A Former SOHO President

As a child who spent every Saturday afternoon glued to the TV set watching horror movies and mystery stories, how could I help but be interested in those dilapidated old "haunted" houses that were covered with loose shingles, crumbling porches and decaying gingerbread (not to mention bats in their belfries and pterodactyls on their turrets)? Although this may seem a strange introduction to Victorian architecture, it did instill in me an appreciation for the frivolity and eclecticism of Victorian taste. In later years, I spent many weekends driving around town scouting for a hidden tower or fancy gable to photograph. As I watched the bulldozer take its toll of some of my favorites, I learned that a group of "young radicals" were trying to save them from destruction. I happened to be in Old Town one day when I saw half of the Sherman/Gilbert house sliding down Juan Street toward ultimate preservation. I joined SOHO immediately.

At the invitation of Nick Fintzelberg, I attended a SOHO board meeting at the Gilbert house which was on blocks at the newly named Heritage Park. It didn't take long to discover that these "young radicals" were really business men, teachers, housewives and other not-so-extraordinary (but certainly extra-special) types. By never saying "no" I soon found myself involved in many SOHO projects and even found myself on the board.

At this time, Lynn Kaplan was SOHO's tour chairman and one of our most dedicated and efficient workers. I think it can safely be said that Lynn and her tour committee were largely responsible for raising the funds to repay SOHO's \$6000 loan for the moving of the Sherman/Gilbert house. It was with great regret that we learned Lynn was moving to Santa Monica and would have to resign from the board. She asked me if I would take over as tour chairman, and, since I had not learned to say "no", I found myself with a new position.

My first tour was to have a tremendous influence on my later work with SOHO--this was the Irving Gill tour of 1975. I had been aware of Gill's architectural work in San Diego, but had not really understood his significance until

I started to compile research for the tour brochure. As I began to appreciate Gill's subtle genius, I made a personal commitment to try and save as many of his structures as possible--many of the best had already been lost.

We all survived the Gill tour somehow, (when one of the buses was two hours late, Terri Recht came up smiling and said, "Oh well, next year we'll be laughing about the time the bus didn't show;" and she was right).

The National City tour later that year went a little more smoothly (probably because Pat Minnich, Cia Barron and Annie Camacho did most of the work) and SOHO opened up a whole new area to Victorian house enthusiasts.

With all those experienced helpers, how could the Coronado tour of 1976 not prove a success? It had over 125 volunteers under the able direction of Claire Kaplan, Donna Regan and SOHO's best friend in Coronado, Katherine Carlin, all of whom helped produce a net profit of over \$2,500 for the one day event. The Coronado Tour was my exit as tour chairman, but because I still had not learned to say "no", the next thing I knew I was handed the gavel.

As I look back on my year as SOHO president, I am pleased with the progress that was made. Some of the most important efforts took place downtown. The Knights of Pythias Castle was (at least temporarily) saved from demolition, and now sits as an important cultural oasis South-of-Broadway. The Gaslamp Quarter was designated as San Diego's first historic district, and a number of people began to take a second look at the feasibility of restoration.

Most important, however, was the salvation of one of San Diego's most historic spots, Horton Plaza. Because of my interest in Irving Gill, I felt that his design for the Plaza, as well as his fountain, should be restored and preserved. When it was announced that the City Council had voted to pave over the Plaza and plant shrubs in the basin of the fountain, it did not take much encouragement from me to convince SOHO that a new crusade was in the making. Who would ever have thought that the kid who used to spend his Saturdays watching mystery movies would one day stand up before the City Council and tell them they had to change their plan? Through the efforts of SOHO's Plaza Committee, particularly Mike

Jones, the Council did change their plan and scheduled the Plaza for restoration to Gill's original concept of 1910.

Another important endangered Gill structure was the old Scripps Laboratory at UCSD. With SOHO's help and encouragement a group was formed to prevent the impending demolition of the structure as well as getting it designated a local and national historic site. Both of these goals were accomplished, and with a little luck enough funds will be found to bring about restoration.

Other important preservation projects included further restoration of the buildings in Heritage Park and the sale and preservation of the Long/Waterman house (soon to be the site of a major SOHO fund-raiser). A little closer to home, SOHO at last found a location for headquarters in the heart of the Gaslamp Quarter. My last act as SOHO president was to sign the lease for a space in the Old I. O. O. F. building which has since been refurbished and will soon become a vital part of this unique area.

And so what does the future hold in store for this group of "young radicals" (long-time SOHO member Violet Beck, 91, was at the Horton Plaza hearing and spoke before the Council!)? My advice to new members is never say "no" (who knows, you may become president). My advice to old members is never give up (we need your wisdom and experience). SOHO has worked many miracles at a time when miracles are as rare as Victorian houses. We will continue to work miracles as long as there are neglected buildings worthy of preservation and concerned people willing to do the job.

Bruce Kamerling



HERITAGE PARK COMING ALIVE

Restoration of the interior of the Burton House is well under way. SOHO members Ruth and Bob Padgett are master lessees and have contracted with Jespersen & Ives to complete the interior with hopes of being able to occupy by July 15! Second floor will house Heritage Park Travel Service in a turn-of-the-century office atmosphere. Also, the Art Collector will lease a room from which to sell Victorian frames and Victorian memorabilia (framed).

First floor will house the Daffodil with exquisite hand-made gift items dispensed from Victorian furnishings. Also, The Shopworn Angel will recreate a Victorian living room from which to merchandise collectable plates and other Victorian-type collectors' items.

Two rooms remain to be leased in the Burton House and they would lend themselves to numerous interesting enterprises.

For further information, contact Ruth Padgett at 454-4623 or 287-1733.

Mary Ann Courtenaye

While working at City Magazine (a weekly newspaper), I became interested in the building where the City has its office. The Frost House, located at 2456 Broadway, is one of the earliest buildings designed by Irving Gill in San Diego. The 3-story clapboard structure, done in a 19th century Colonial Revival style, also houses the Golden Antiquarian Books & Antiques.

When Abel H. Frost of Chicago and his brother, George W. Frost of Kansas, moved to San Diego in the late 1800s, each invested in real estate. After George Frost's death in 1895, Abel acquired the lot which is at 2456 Broadway and commissioned Irving Gill to design a home for himself, his widowed sister-in-law and her children. Gill, whose architectural endeavors became widely respected in later years, was still a relatively unknown architect (the Frost house was his second San Diego commission).

The house was home for various members of the Frost family until 1948, when it was leased to Mr. & Mrs. H. A. MacLaughton, who turned it into the Cromwell Lodge Convalescent Hospital. With the change from family home to convalescent hospital, many structural changes were made. The kitchen was completely done over in stainless steel (not only counters, but cabinets and even walls). The side porch, which had originally served as the principal entrance to guests arriving by carriage, was converted into storage space. The MacLaughtons also installed an extensive sprinkler system throughout the house for fire protection.

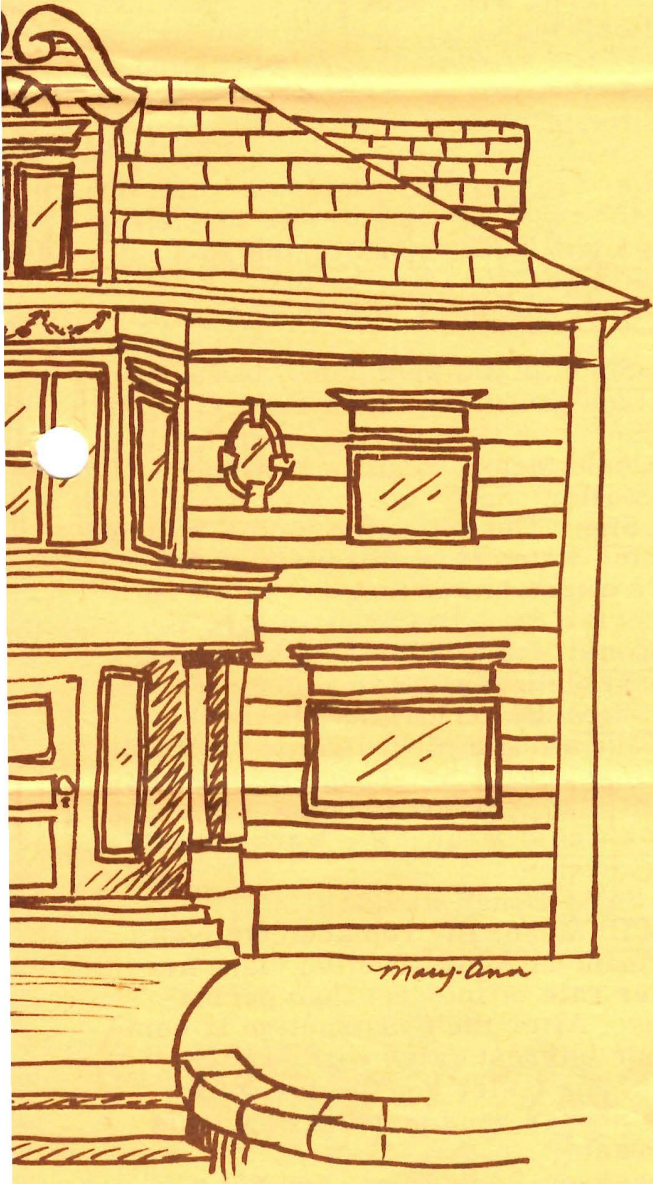
In 1968 the Cromwell Lodge Convalescent Hospital closed, and for the next two years the house became the Desmaisieres Residence, a home for students and working girls operated by a religious order. In 1970 the sisters closed the Desmaisieres Residence, and it was converted into a boarding house. A great deal of damage was done during the next 6 years. Walls were knocked out, fixtures pulled, valuable Port Orford cedar doors cut in pieces, and leaks allowed to ruin plaster.

Gordon T. and Albert A. Frost, Jr., began to restore the house in 1976. The first floor restoration is complete, and it houses both the Golden Hill Antiquarian and its proprietors, Bob and Margaret Summers. City Magazine occupies a

The Frost Past, Present



The Frost House - and Future



portion of the second floor, and the remainder will be leased as shops or offices as it is restored. The third floor will be leased as an apartment.

The Frost House and the Quartermas-Wilde house were built in the same year (opinion is divided as to whether that was 1896 or 1897 - a sidewalk marker in front indicates the sidewalk was poured in October of 1896), and were the only houses on the block for several years. The area in between the two houses is said to have been a tennis court at one time.

Due to its location on a central elevation, the house has a panoramic view of San Diego. From the third floor, one can clearly see Point Loma, the downtown area, Coronado, North Island, Chula Vista, National City and Balboa Park's California Tower.

The wood used in the Frost House is noteworthy. The house has the first hardwood maple flooring in San Diego. But most interesting is the extensive use of Port Orford cedar. Grown only in a tiny area of Oregon and northern California, the wood is prized for its fine-grained texture, its flexibility (valued for sailboats), and its fragrance, which lasts indefinitely. The high oil content helps protect it from decay, and resists insects. The supply of Port Orford cedar, always small, is now depleted. In the Frost House, doors, cabinets, window panes, mouldings, built-in chests, etc., are constructed of the prized cedar.

The house's fireplace/chimney design is interesting. Two fireplaces on the first floor feature fanned brickwork and elaborate Port Orford cedar mantelpieces. On the second and third floors, a whimsical touch was added--each has a small window which looks right through a hole in the middle of the chimney (smoke is directed up channels on either side of the chimney).

Among the many attractive features in the Frost House are the three front picture windows which are sashed--the large pane slides up and down. There is a butler's pantry and a china closet near the kitchen. All bedroom closets have built-in chests of drawers.

Restoration of the Frost House, by craftsman Glenn Scherer, is proceeding at a steady rate, and soon this fine, distinctive example of early Gill architecture will be completely restored.



"HOW TO OWN A PIECE OF YOUR CITY"

The May 1978 issue of Apartment Living features "City Living: A Complete Guide to Owning a House in Town." This nifty piece outlines some basics in shopping for and rehabbing an old building for residence. Some helpful ideas from the article:

- "Don't jump into a purchase until about a third of the block is being upgraded; or get in on the border of an area where rehabbing is in full swing."
- "Do part of the work yourself and hire a contractor for the rest, a good plan unless you have a lot of time and construction know-how."
- "In choosing your building forget about cosmetics; the structure, plumbing, heating and wiring are what count."
- Some of the "red flags" that tell you a building may cost big money:

Warning Sign: A brittle, peeling paint job along with separation between two surfaces, like corners on the outside or between window casings and walls.

Warning Sign: A building that sags in the middle like a bulging waistline or leans to one side.

Warning Sign: Big cracks in concrete walls or severely sagging beams in the basement.

Warning Sign: Uneven floors. Test by dropping a glass marble on the floor. If it rolls away fast, beware!

What They Could Mean: Serious structural damage.

Warning Sign: Water spots on the upstairs ceilings.

What It Could Mean: A new roof is needed.

Warning Sign: If you thump on a bad spot on a wall and it sounds like a loose-headed drum, or if it moves.

What It Could Mean: Serious rotting inside the walls.

Warning Sign: The hot water is at a trickle and the cold water is at full blast on the top floors after you turn on the water below.

What It Could Mean: Plumbing bad enough to need complete rework.

Warning Sign: Electrical outlets don't work. Take along a night light to try them.

Warning Sign: If the amperage in the fuse (or circuit breaker) box is below 100.

What They Could Mean: Big work on the electrical system.

Warning Sign: Lousy windows.

What It Will Mean: Big replacement costs.

- On financing, construction loans are at a higher rate of interest than permanent loans. After the construction is completed your interest rates will go back down. So, the faster you get the work done, the sooner your monthly payments will decrease.

- An easy-on-you-route: You get a property loan from one lender at the lower rates and a construction loan from a second lender at the higher rates. Once you finish the construction, combine the loans at the lower rate."

DESIGNERS SHOWCASE 1978

They named it Designers Showcase "Past to Present". I dubbed it "The Ugly Duckling that turned into a Swan". It was that beautiful.

SOHO provided hosts and hostesses for opening day at the Showcase House, April 22nd and closing day May 14th. As usual, these were the beautiful people, performing with a smile and enjoying every minute of it. This was just another occasion when I find being Hospitality Chairman the most rewarding position on the Board.

Again I want to express my thanks to all of you who participated; the ticket sellers, the host/hostess-type guards, the cake bakers, the cake eaters, etc.

I appreciate you Cia Barron, Rae Berry, Adele Block, Sam Bazile, Joan Bigge, Barbara Briggs, Mary Callison, Marilyn Crehore, Alice Crittenden, Stephanie Degen, Donna Dillingham, Lee Douglas, Ann Dring, Kathy Danks, Keith Evans, Betty Elwell, Ted Foley, Carolyn Foushee, Betty Fraser, Carol Frick, Arthur Frick, Gini Garrison, Ginger Griffith, Cathy Grigsby, Dorothy Griner,

Bonnie Hage, Margaret Ham, Phil Ham, Ann Holzer, Julie Johnson, Kathryn Johnson, Joe Jones, Jerilyn Jones, Virginia Jones, Ralph Jones, Kathleen Kiefer, Marion Kutchins, Barbara Klauschie, Robert Klauschie, Cheryl Lewis, Lizz Matto, Nancy Mattison, Natalie Mates, Judy McCutcheon, Michael McCutcheon, Gwen McFarland, Sue McMillian, Cathy McCloud, Ramola McKenney, Pat Minnich, Dorothy Muth, Judy Newcomer, Zenda Norte, Robert Norte, Madeline Olson, Miles Parker, Janet Pickle, Eleanor Ratner, Donna Regan, Patrisha Rutledge, Pat Schaelchlin, Pat Skidmore, Derdra Smothers, Ellen Smothers, Ethel Siegelman, Alice Tana, Carolyn Turner, Margaret Tuite, Pat Teaze, Marc Tarasuck, Sunny Tarasuck, Suzanne Watson, Arlene Watters, Jean Williams, MaryDell Worthington, and Joan Zeenkov. And also J. J. Kaplan, your patience, kindness and understanding is sincerely appreciated, especially for answering "all those phone calls". That deserves a round of applause and a special THANK YOU.

Claire Kaplan



MEMBERSHIP IN SOHO

SOHO depends upon membership dues, contributions, and fund raising activities to support our restoration/preservation expenses. Members receive the monthly **SOHO Newsletter** and invitations to special events. Gift memberships are available and we will send the recipient a card in your name announcing the gift. Memberships and donations are tax deductible. Please join us!

Membership categories:

_____	Benefactor	\$1,000
_____	Patron	100
_____	Corporate	50
_____	Professional	25
_____	Family	12
_____	Single	8
_____	Donation Only	_____

Your mailing label indicates the month and year in which you first became a member of SOHO. Your dues will be payable each year during the month shown on your label.

If a renewal is delinquent for more than three months your name will automatically be deleted from the mailing list.

If your newsletter is returned to us for lack of a forwarding address your name will also be deleted.

Please complete and return this membership form to:

Save Our Heritage Organisation
 Post Office Box 3571
 San Diego, California 92103

New _____ Renewal _____ Date _____

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ ZIP _____

TELEPHONE (home) _____

(business) _____

REFERRED BY _____

ADD MY NAME TO YOUR VOLUNTEER

LIST _____ I PREFER THE FOLLOWING

TYPES OF ACTIVITIES _____

TAX EXEMPT STATUS
 SOHO is exempt from Federal Income Tax under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code and has been classified by the I.R.S. as a charitable, educational organization.



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