



THE S.O.H.O. NEWSLETTER

# REFLECTIONS

VOL. XIII NO. 3

MARCH 1981

P.O. BOX 3571 SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA 92103



## SOHO SAVES

FACADE EASEMENTS:  
PRESERVATION TOOL

### THE FIRST IN A SERIES OF THREE ARTICLES

As of December 31, 1980 SOHO took three facade Easements on 3 houses in San Diego, one in the Mission Cliff area, one in Coronado, and one in the block of Victorians bounded by Front & Fir, First & Grape. This historic block is where our founder Miles Parker lives, and also contains the Sherman-Doig house, previously saved by SOHO, now owned and restored by Ted Kraus, SOHO's C.P.A. This important block, across from the site of the Sherman-Gilbert House is now one step nearer being preserved in entirety.

1930 First Avenue; Sherman-Judson House,  
Historical Site #129, San Diego

The only one of two "tract" houses built by John Sherman (the other was recently demolished) side by side with identical floor plans. Stick style architecture, the house was built between 1887-1888 as a middle-class single family residence. In 1978 the structure was converted from the apartments it then housed to professional offices, and is currently home for Gary S. Elster, Attorney at Law, corporate offices.



SOHO needs handmade items to sell at Senlis Cottage. Easter ideas now are appropriate, knitting, sewing, art cards, or other, or clean out your garage of old Victorian hardware, deco door-knobs. All items are tax deductible to the sale price fixed per item. Contact Carol, 295-6188.

SOHO  
Newsletter  
REFLECTIONS

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The SOHO Newsletter is published monthly. Letters to the Editor are welcomed. Articles and/or photographs of interest to SOHO members and friends are most enthusiastically encouraged!



# MARCH

Tuesday, March 3  
1 p.m.

HISTORICAL SITE BOARD, City of San Diego, 5th Floor Conference Room, City Adminis. Bldg. (1st Tues. ea month)

Thursday, March 5  
7:30 p.m.

SOHO Board Meeting, at Mary Dell Worthington's, 4344 Date St., in La Mesa. (for more information call 295-6188)

Monday, March 9  
7:30 p.m.

UPTOWN PLANNERS  
Central Federal Savings, 610 W. Was-  
ington. For more info. call 296-2577

Tuesday, March 10  
7:00 p.m.

HERITAGE PARK MERCHANTS'  
ASSOCIATION, Heritage Park Restaurant

Thursday, March 12  
9:30 a.m.

VOLUNTEER MEETING, Gaslamp Quarter  
Assoc. Its office 652 Fifth Ave. For  
more information call 233-5227

Sunday, March 15  
2:30 p.m.

AT SENLIS COTTAGE, a meeting to discuss  
future tours by SOHO. Any member inte-  
rested on working on tours is welcome.

Tuesday, March 17  
12 Noon

SAN DIEGO HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
Villa Montezuma

HAPPY ST. PATRICK'S DAY

Wednesday, March 25  
3 p.m.

GASLAMP QUARTER BOARD MTG.  
Athen's Market, 414 E St., San Diego

Friday, Saturday  
& Sunday

March 27-29, 10 a.m.  
to 8 p.m.

"ALL ABOUT DOWNTOWN" PUBLIC FAIR  
at the Community Concourse, sponsored by  
The Central City Association. (For  
more information call 234-0331)

## FROM THE BOARD ROOM

Board meetings were scheduled for alternating Tuesdays and Thursdays.

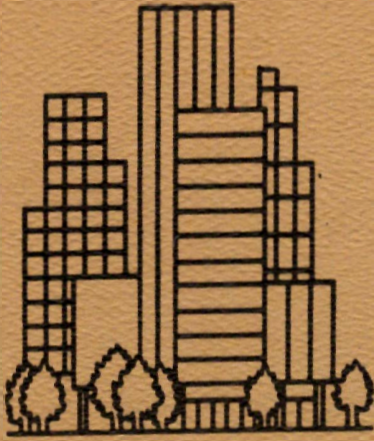
The Board reported that Joe Jones is to head the 1981-82 Nominating Committee.

Events for National Preservation Week from May 10th to 16th were proposed. These events are to include the Senlis Cottage official opening and a historic public tour.

Pat Schaelchlin reported on steps towards the preservation of the San Diego Rowing Club.

The Board is looking into a possible September Train Tour to Hearst's Castle.





## CONVENTION CENTER: PRO & CON

Our Newsletter contains two statements regarding the pros and cons on the Convention Center issue to come before us on the ballot May 5th. As standard procedure, the Editor has reviewed this material with me because of the controversial nature of the material presented, and as to its specific relation to SOHO policy. Since neither article states the actual SOHO position with regard to how preservation fits in, we run this material along with SOHO's public stand on Redevelopment. The following is the actual stand which SOHO takes with regard to the Convention Center, and Redevelopment in general.

As early as 1974, when the first Redevelopment project was authorized, SOHO appeared before the City Council demanding that historic preservation of worthwhile structures in the area be given priority. At that time, the only project under way was the Horton Plaza Shopping Center, to be developed by Ernest Hahn, Inc., covering 15 square blocks of downtown. The plan included hotel and convention space, with retail shops and parking facilities included. SOHO, along with the original proponents of a "Theater Square" requested that the block bounded by the Balboa Theater, the Knickerbocker Hotel, the Commodore Hotel and along F Street including the Lyceum Theater and the Horton Grand Hotel, could become a vital re-usable entertainment and hotel complement to the project. At that time a large angle hotel/convention center stood on the drawings over the Horton Grand. In public hearing, with a packed Council Chamber, citizens and SOHO were told that it was too late to make any changes in the Redevelopment plan, because it would be too costly to do so. SOHO contends that over these 7 years there have been continuing changes which have flagrantly ignored the possible rehabilitation of existing historic structures, provisions for low-income hotel housing, evening entertainment capabilities like theaters, restaurants, and the money saved by allowing private development to rehab these structures, leaving them on the tax roles.

In 1978 the Historic Sites Board was requested by CCDC, because of continuing public pressure for preservation, to submit a list of the major historic buildings in the expanded Horton Plaza/Marina/Columbia Redevelopment projects. Such a list was turned over to the Redevelopment Agency which included 33 significant structures. This list included: the Bradley Bldg., Horton Grand Hotel, Golden West Hotel, Balboa Theater, Knights of Pythias, Horton Plaza Park, Lyceum Theater, (Horton Plaza Project); The Cracker Factory, Frost Lumber, and 4 significant and only remaining buildings from the Chinese community, (Marina Project); and the Old Steam Laundry, Columbia Square, the Bekins Building, the Tower Bowl facade, the Armed Forces YMCA and the Santa Fe Depot, (Columbia Project). It is significant that SOHO caused the City Council to rescind a plan to pave over Horton Plaza, caused the City Council to at least temporarily preserve the Knights of Pythias by allowing Community Arts to revamp and use the space, and supported the retention of the Santa Fe Depot way back in 1972.

Retention of many of these structures, varying by input from the sources contacted, has been backed by letter and direct conversation and presented to CCDC and the Council, from: The State Office of Historic Preservation, The National Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, The Keeper of the National Register, The National Trust for Historic Preservation. In addition, the Department of Housing and Urban Development has questioned the plans for demolition of so many usable small hotels which will displace many senior citizens and low-income persons from the center city area.

In 1979 CCDC submitted a list of structures to be evaluated for possible retention on site, saving and incorporation of Facades in new design, or if necessary, possible moving of structures to preserve them. On this list were: The Horton Grand and Lyceum, The Tower Bowl, Armed Forces YMCA, the 4 Chinese buildings, the Bradley Bldg. Of a complete list of 20 structures we have had to battle to save Old Columbia Square, and there is the possibility that the Horton Grand may be moved to save it. There is currently no plan to preserve in any way the remaining list of buildings, which show up on CCDC demolition schedules consistently. SOHO contends that there never was any intent by CCDC, the Mayor and Council, and the Developers to recycle any of these structures. The evident cost-savings by inviting private development has been ignored.

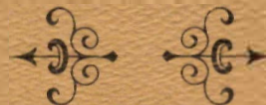
In seven years who has paid for the numerous and constant changes in planning these projects? Since Proposition 13, why has the City ignored the potential in recycling existing structures to cut costs, involve the community in planning solutions? Why has Horton Plaza yet to be finalized? Why hasn't the Santa Fe Depot been restored? Why has the Balboa Theater been completely left out of the project, to be restored at owner or citizen expense? And why has the new Ernest Hahn proposal all but walled off the Gaslamp Quarter with parking structures?

Let us not forget that it was the Mayor of San Diego who stated in public session that the input from the Historical Sites Board was not asked for and not needed in the revitalizing of downtown, whereupon he fired 4 members from the Board for publicly supporting preservation in the Redevelopment project.

The referendum placing the Convention Center on the ballot resulted from 7 years of public frustration over preservation, housing and cultural issues which the Mayor and Council have excluded from all redevelopment planning. Escalating costs have been ignored as projects are scaled up instead of down, and the citizens have been told they will pay for all future services, park development, cultural programs and others while the City pays for a convention center and its related projects.

Other cities have recycled their historic buildings and saved costs, involved citizens in the planning. Why can't San Diego do the same? **THE CONVENTION CENTER REFERENDUM IS YOUR OPPORTUNITY TO VOTE ON THE FUTURE OF OUR CITY.**

--Submitted by SOHO President Carol Lindermulder





# PRO

San Diego is America's eighth largest city, but its public convention facility is only ranked as number 100, behind Moscow, Idaho. San Diego is actually losing major conventions as convention centers around the country are being expanded and new ones built. Everyone else is bullish on convention business!

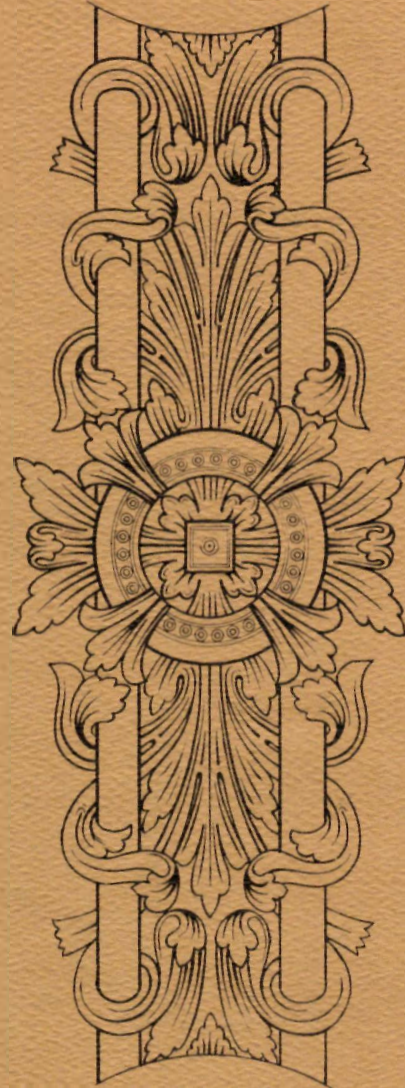
The following points were culled from a fact sheet of Citizens for a Strong San Diego:

1. The Convention Center is the cornerstone of downtown revitalization.
2. The \$226 million price tag will be borne entirely by tourists and conventioners, the project developers, and taxes generated by the center. The people of San Diego have absolutely no responsibility for convention center bonds. The bonds will be paid off from revenues generated by new hotels and tourism dollars.
3. In return, the Convention Center will provide more than 10,000 jobs, with a one-time payroll of \$65 million (construction industry) and an on-going one of up to \$50 million annually (tourism industry). Many of these jobs are the kind of entry-level, semi-skilled jobs that are the hardest to generate and the most needed. An estimated \$1.4 billion of new money would be introduced into the local economy between now and 1992.

The opponents of the Convention Center suggest that it could be built by private initiative. Without citing the problems of raising \$226 million in private capital, you should realize that no major convention center has ever been built with private capital outside of Las Vegas. While talk about redeveloping downtown solely with private capital is nice, can you point to a single city where urban renewal was accomplished without public subsidy?

The whole viability of the Gaslamp Quarter would be highly questionable without the economic stimulus of tourists and conventioners from the new hotels and Convention Center. The new businesses probably would not survive without night and weekend foot traffic that they are not getting now.

The law does not require a vote on the Convention Center, because taxpayers are not liable. Instead, this special election is being called because 20,000 signatures on a petition are relatively easy to obtain, especially when gathered in part by paid collectors. As pointed out in Mayor Wilson's State of the City address, these professional signature gatherers were largely bankrolled not



only by persons concerned about potential competition by the Convention Center, but also by owners of property within and adjacent to the proposed Center site. The special election forces delay, which inflates property values. By delaying public acquisition of their property, they force the public to pay more for it. In his address, Wilson estimated that each month of delay adds \$1.5 million to construction costs.

According to a November 3rd San Diego Evening Tribune account, these same property owners have entered into an unholy alliance with others who, quoting from the newspaper, "merrily admit... (that they) have chosen (the Convention Center) as the easiest target in a program to demolish all downtown redevelopment projects."

--submitted by Eleanor Ratner Bolen, with information cited from the 1981 State of the City Address.



# CON

## WHO'S LIABLE FOR THE CONVENTION CENTER DEBT?

The Convention Center Bond Prospectus reads:

"The City hereby covenants to take such action as is necessary under the laws applicable to the City to include IN ITS BUDGET and maintain funds sufficient to discharge its obligation to meet all rental payments due hereunder in each fiscal year.

Frank Soriano of Blythe Eastman Paine Webber (the company packaging the bonds for sale) has stated:

"How it meets that obligation is up to the city. If revenues (from the center) are insufficient to make lease payments, the city still has the obligation to make those payments. The city has the right to tap the general fund."

ANSWER: THE TAXPAYERS

### HOW MUCH WILL IT COST?

Principal on bonds	\$226,000,000
Interest	685,707,000
Total bond debt	911,707,000*

\*Latest CCDC estimate. Mayor says principal cost is increasing \$50,000 every day!

Plus operating deficit estimated at almost \$1 million per year.

ANSWER: ALMOST \$1 BILLION DOLLARS

### HOW MANY NEW VISITORS WILL BE BROUGHT TO SAN DIEGO?

Proponents hope to attract 22 to 24 additional major conventions to San Diego each year.

1. Even if successful in attracting 24 conventions, the taxpayers will pay over \$1 million dollars per convention and increase tourism in San Diego by less than 1%.

2. The Los Angeles Convention Center experience makes the CCDC predictions look overly optimistic:

Number of Conventions held (3,000 or more delegates):

1975 - 4	1977 - 6	1979 - 9
1976 - 3	1978 - 6	1980 - 11

Los Angeles Taxpayers' Yearly Loss: TWO MILLION DOLLARS

ANSWER: AT BEST LESS THAN 1%. PROBABLY MUCH LESS.

### C. Increased tax revenue.

1. The Center itself as well as the hotel above it would not pay any property taxes and taxes from surrounding development must go to pay off the convention debt. For example, all new property taxes generated by the Columbia Centre - already under construction - will go to retire the debt. Without the huge bond obligation, the City could use that money for fire, police, sewer, transportation, etc.

2. Proponents project increases in the Hotel tax of \$4.7 million. All of this is budgeted to go toward the Convention Center. In fact, by 1986 (only five years from now) the City is counting on \$12,681,000 of Hotel tax for debt service. The Hotel tax rate is 8%, only 3-3/4% is supposed to go to the Convention Center. Yet the total Hotel tax collected in 1980 was only \$10,500,700. To meet the budget projections, Hotel taxes would have to jump to over \$26,000,000 (assuming no increased need for hotel tax money in other areas.)

## WHAT OTHER BENEFITS TO THE TAXPAYERS?

Proponents claim:

### A. Increased spending by delegates.

1. All projections assume 22 to 24 additional conventions each year averaging over 6,000 delegates per convention.

2. No basis is given for the projections. For example, when the cost of the Center doubled, CCDC just doubled their figures on delegate spending.

### B. New development downtown.

1. The Port District Hotel and Retail Projects as well as the Santa Fe Depot Restoration and Columbia Center are all projects already underway and unrelated to the Convention Center. Yet, CCDC pads its figures by including them.

2. Original Center financing proposals called for shared funding between the City, the County, the Port, and private developers. For example, included in the benefit figures is still development within the Port District yet the Port District is not sharing in the financing. Why should City taxpayers bear the burden alone? Surely what benefits are derived will be regional in nature and financing should be shared just as the City and County shared the cost of building San Diego Stadium.

ANSWER: PROponents CAN'T DOCUMENT BENEFITS EXCEEDING THE \$1 BILLION COST. THEIR FIGURES ARE GUESSES AND OVERTIGHT DISTORTIONS.

## WHAT DO YOU THINK SAN DIEGO'S PRIORITIES SHOULD BE?

City Manager Ray T. Blair stated on January 5, 1981: "The six-year revenue shortfall of \$106.4 million is for both the General and Special Revenue Funds, except the Convention Center Fund (225 Fund). This shortfall was projected prior to recent Council action to allocate an additional 1-3/4 cents of Transient Occupancy Taxes to the 225 Fund. As a result of this action, \$21.5 million less will now be available over the six-year period. In other words, the projected shortfall has increased to \$127.9 million."

1. The city sewer system is in need of repair. We can't have sufficient funds to keep fire vehicles in proper condition. The transit system has been denied funds to maintain existing levels of service. And, Mission Bay--our biggest tourist attraction--is in danger of becoming a giant sewer.

2. And, the future? This, after all, is a 30 year mortgage on our community's future. What will our children think of our decision? Mayor Wilson summed it up in the San Diego Tribune:

"Let the children of the future who will enjoy our parks enjoy developing them as well."

ANSWER: YOU'LL DECIDE AT THE BALLOT BOX.

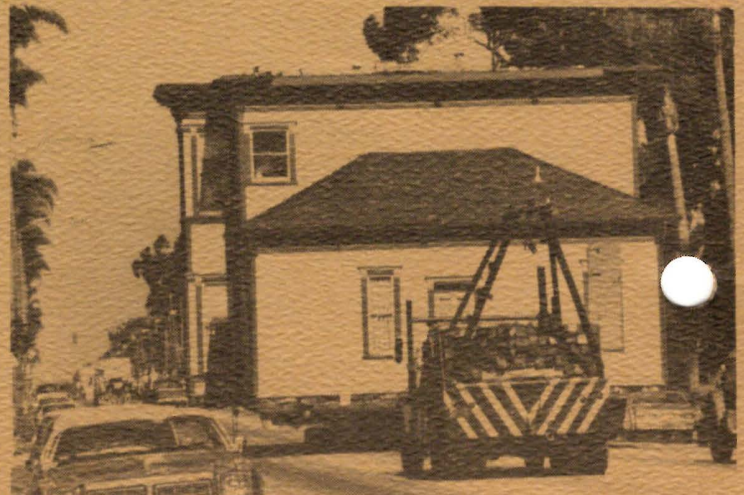
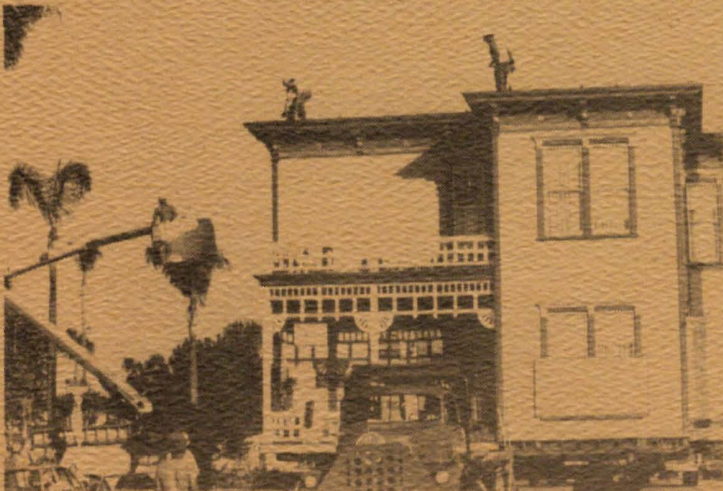
--Submitted by Lucy Goldman, with information cited from Citizens for Responsible Redevelopment.



# CAUTION !! WIDE LOAD

ON FEBRUARY 5TH THE HISTORIC McCONAUGHEY HOUSE MADE A  
DRAMATIC MOVE TO ITS NEW HERITAGE PARK LOCATION.....

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thank  
you

Once again SOHO volunteers have proved that "many hands make less work." Our tour of National City on January 24th was a great success! Over and over again I heard people muttering, "I never knew all this was here." From Heritage Square to the Museum of American Treasures, our tourists were fascinated and entertained. I'd like to thank each and every one of you marvelous people who gave your time and effort to the tour:

- |                                 |                   |
|---------------------------------|-------------------|
| Harry and Virginia Evans        | Donna Regan       |
| Barry and Mary Dell Worthington | Betty Smith       |
| Bruce and Mary Herms            | Joe Jones         |
| Bill and Eleanor Bolen          | Alice Crittenden  |
| Phil and Margaret Ham           | Nettie Scarry     |
| Lorraine Costa                  | Carol Lindemulder |
| Sandra Watson                   | Olga Puhn         |
| Dian Joralmon                   | Sally Johns       |
| Mary Joralmon                   | Cathy Grigsby     |
| Ann Breslauer                   | Martha Atwell     |
| Trudy Simoes                    |                   |
| Martha Walker                   |                   |
| Sharon Adams                    |                   |
| Gwen McFarland                  |                   |
| Dorothy Griner                  |                   |

Now--onward and upward. A meeting to discuss future tours will be held at the Senlis Cottage at 2:30 on March 15th. Please be there if you're interested in working on future tours!

Thanks again,  
Jan Kitchel

NEW MEMBERS

- |  |                    |  |
|--|--------------------|--|
|  | Nancy L. Baughman  |  |
|  | Susan Andrea       |  |
|  | Marcia S. Neal     |  |
|  | Susan Clifton      |  |
|  | Franklin D. Todero |  |
|  | Daniel Ruiz        |  |
| Auxiliary to the S. D.<br>Dental Society |                    |  |

# NEWS BRIEFS

SOHO notes the President Reagan's current proposal eliminates all monies for the national preservation program. Contact your Congressman and other representatives to urge restoration of preservation funds..... The 2/19/81 Barron's magazine reported a proposed Kemp-Garcia Bill giving incentives for city revitalization. Named for a pair of U.S. House members, Republican Jack Kemp of Buffalo and Kemp-Roth fame, and Democrat Robert Garcia of the Bronx, Kemp-Garcia took rough shape last year in a bill introduced in Congress. Political enthusiasm, both left and right, augurs well for passage this session. The concept calls for "urban enterprise zones" to revitalize rundown areas of major cities. Companies setting up shop in the zones would reap huge federal tax breaks: a 90% slash in Social Security taxes on employers and employes for workers under 21, and 50% for those older; a 15% cut in business income taxes and a 50% reduction in capital gains levies; and faster depreciation writeoffs..... San Diegan's for the Rowing Club House, Inc., is scheduled to go before the Port Commission on March 3. They will request that all proposals be considered for the restoration of the building. The Chart House will follow up with a request that they be allowed to restore it for use as a restaurant..... The Central City Association, a merchants' association is planning a fair March 27, 28, 29 at the Community Concourse. Among the special events planned are bus tours, trolley rides, and speakers..... The Gaslamp Quarter reports getting city approval for the acceptance of a historic San Francisco trolley car. This original cable car, donated by Knott's Berry Farm, will be restored and made operable through a grant from the Wickes Corporation..... The Gaslamp Quarter reports that 17 buildings are now being refurbished and that 13 have been completed to date..... The San Diego Historical Society is to sponsor the 1981 Designers Showcase at the Schmidt-Nico Lek House in La Jolla on April 25. Built by George A. Schmidt in 1925, the house featured a guest house used for theatre productions. Schmidt lost the house during the depression and some years later it was bought by Nico Lek, one of the founders of the La Jolla Players.....







# MEMBERSHIP FORM

Please complete and return this membership form to:  
 Save Our Heritage Organisation  
 Post Office Box 3571  
 San Diego, California 92103

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 . . . . .	\$15.
Single . . . . .	\$10.
Donation . . . . .	\$ _____

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

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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