



REFLECTIONS

THE S·O·H·O NEWSLETTER

FEBRUARY 1984 VOL. XVI NO. II

Horton Plaza Workshops: License to Redesign

HISTORIC GILL FOUNTAIN THREATENED!

By Michael Sullivan
Vice President of Governmental Affairs

That tiny oasis of green in the asphalt heart of our hometown has once again become the center of attention. From the first, it's been a place the population of San Diego has gathered under palm trees and blue skies to watch the mainstream flow by and to discuss the world events of the day. Horton Plaza may now become the doormat for Ernie Hahn's Horton Plaza Shopping Center.

THE PARK WAS DEDICATED in 1871 as a "central commodious and attractive place for public meetings, recreation and other proper public purposes; a place where all public questions might be discussed with comfort, where public open-air concerts might be given,



San Diego Historical Society-Ticor Collection

and where people might rest and children play in safety." Then merely a rectangle fenced off from the mud and dust of downtown, it was transformed into a real green space in 1906 by our world famous hometown boy, Irving Gill. The present fountain was added a year later and was a true marvel. Electricity and water seemed impossible, but not for Gill, and history was made the day they turned on the lights and pumps and the town did *not* go dark.

This wonderful open space among the tall black boxes downtown is in need of **HELP!** Unfortunately, the Center City Development Corporation (CCDC), seems to interpret "help" as "redesign." It's sort of like the way they have "redesigned" the Knights of Pythias Hall, the Bradley Building, the Lyceum Theater, the Plaza Theater, the Horton Grand Hotel, and the Commadore Hotel. "Help" merely means it needs someone to care; someone to mow the lawn, to scrub down the brick paths, someone to clean up the sandcastle remnants, repair the ballards and chains (which the dump trucks ruined), and generally clean the place up.

Instead, CCDC wants to rip up about one-third of the park to remove the underground restrooms which are on the south border of the park and mostly under the sidewalk and not even in the park. Their replacements will be those glamorous port-a-potties. Oh, how attractive that will be! The discussion of this aspect of the renovation was addressed at the public workshops given by CCDC, and not once was an answer given. Max Schmidt did say that restrooms (other than porta-potties) would be located to the east, west, and north. Yet, not once was a definite location given. Will they be located in Gaslamp (they'll be thrilled to hear that), or in the soon-to-be restored U.S. Grant Hotel, or in the Central Federal Savings building? I can just see the lobbies of these establishments packed full of the very element they want out of the plaza, all waiting patiently to use their restrooms.

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by Mary Joralmon

This month my column will be short and concise... too busy fighting for preservation. Our last chance to save Horton Plaza has come. Please reserve **Friday, February 10, 5:30 p.m.** on your calendar for the final meeting/workshop. PLEASE ATTEND. Nearly all of the plans submitted at the workshop this past weekend completely destroyed the integrity of the park.

Also in the preservation gang-fight this past month was Bruce Herms, Marie Lia and myself, trying to facilitate the rescue of the historic Greg Rogers house in Chula Vista. We met with Mayor Cox and other members of the community to offer ways to save it. Essentially, it is the city of Chula Vista's decision. Hope it works... At press time there was no decision made yet. A motel is going in its place. The owner of the property has been very cooperative with the city, so we are hopeful.

Thanks to Karen Johl, Eleanor Bolen and all others who made our slide show a multi-beautiful thing to see. It was a well-received show by everyone at the general meeting.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Dan & Kam Rehm	Mr. & Mrs. Richard McDaniel
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Charles & Norma McCandless	Linda Hearn
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Mrs. John Arbuthnot	Sharon Giles
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Barbara Curry	Richard Moore
Claudia Kalp	Norean Cunningham
Robert Bourque	Nicholas & Kristen Aliotti
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Martha Wiley & Karl Thies	Mary Hardwick
Esther Traer	H. Brian Shear
Mary Lynn Hyde	Barbara Brisco
Lori Chandler	Linda & Leroy Flick
Coup & Smith, Architects	Austa Schurr
Mr. & Mrs. J.E. Caffee	Mrs. Mildred C. Stamper
Lee E. & Doris M. Patton	David Zimmerman

REFLECTIONS

Nancy Roberts & Judy McCutcheon *Co-Editors*

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Bruce Herms	<i>Vice President of Education</i>
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Alternates

Susan Houston	Pat Schaelchlin
David Hutchinson	

Save Our Heritage Organisation

P.O. Box 3571, San Diego, California 92103
619/297-9327

The SOHO newsletter, *Reflections*, is published monthly. Letters to the editor and contributions are welcome. Deadline is the 15th of each month prior to publication.



FIRST GENERAL MEETING OF '84

The January general meeting was held on Saturday, January 21st at the Reuben H. Fleet Space Theater to a packed house. President Mary Joralmon announced current activities and preservation battles, followed by Cathy Grigsby giving a report on neighborhood networking. Bruce Herms presented Eleanor and Bill Bolen with the SOHO Lady Award, and Alice Crittenden was presented with the Volunteer of the Year Award.

A representative of the Sister City's group presented president Joralmon with a poster of Alcala, Spain, one of the sister cities to San Diego.

After the awards presentations and announcements, the long-awaited slideshow was presented. We hope everyone enjoyed the show and, of course, signed up to volunteer for a current project. It's going to be a busy year!

1984 CALENDAR OF EVENTS



Saturday, February 11

Visit to the Tall Ship "Californian" - The special aspects of nautical architecture will be pointed out when SOHO explores the "Californian," a square-rigged sailing ship being constructed at Spanish Landing Park near Point Loma. It will be held at the Admiral Kidd Club, Nimitz Room, North Harbor Drive at Nimitz Boulevard from 1 to 3 p.m. There will be a documentary slide show narrated by Steve Christman, president of the Dana Point Nautical Heritage Museum, which is building the full-size replica of an 1880's U.S. revenue cutter. Musical vignette will be by the Dana Point Heritage Players. There will be a walk to the construction site. Advance reservations: \$3 members; \$4 non-members.

Friday, February 24

Neighborhood Network: Meeting in Mission Hills neighborhood, 7 p.m.

Sunday, March 18

Preservation in Progress: Craftsmen will demonstrate the skills needed in restoring an older home, 1 to 5 p.m. at the Thompson House, corner of Isabella and Ocean Boulevard, Coronado. Former SOHO president Bruce Kamerling will give an introductory history on this 1910 Craftsman-style residence designed by Irving Gill. A variety of craftsmen will demonstrate skills including stenciling, leaded glass, etc. in different rooms. Interior designers will create small area settings of furnishings, fabrics and accessories. Refreshments served. Advance reservations only: \$6 members, \$8 non-members. Walking tours of Coronado provided by Coronado Historical Society, \$2 additional fee.

Saturday, March 24

Commercial and Homeowner's Forum: Workshop to instruct homeowners on the ins and outs of facade easements and applying for historic registry status. Participants will be instructed on the legal ramifications and possible tax advantages of these actions. Speakers include Dr. Ray Brandes, history professor at University of San Diego, Marie Burke Lia, attorney at law and a director of Californians for Preservation Action, and Ron Buckley of city planning. Afternoon, downtown, advance fee.

April

Designer's Showcase: SOHO will lead a special bus tour of the neighborhood surrounding this year's showcase home before touring the house interior. Advance fee.

May

People in Preservation: Second annual awards banquet honoring individuals who have restored their homes. Advance fee.

October

SOHO Annual Home Tour: About half a dozen homes will be open. 9 a.m. and 1 p.m., Saturday, October 20. Advance fee.

December

SOHO Christmas Party

ALL YEAR

Restoration Workshops (hands-on instruction in restoration techniques)

Historic Tours (visits to historic buildings in Southern California)

Neighborhood Network Meetings

Membership Drive (Date to be set)



DONATIONS

Mary C. Sanders
Rush & Elinor Meadows
Esther H. Traer
Esther & Joseph Pollack
Mr. & Mrs. P.M. Klauber
Mr. & Mrs. Bruce Fischer
Catherine S. Shelton
Magdalena Garcia
Ron & Marlene Buckley
Mr. & Mrs. D. Dickinson
Lori Chandler



Volunteers Needed

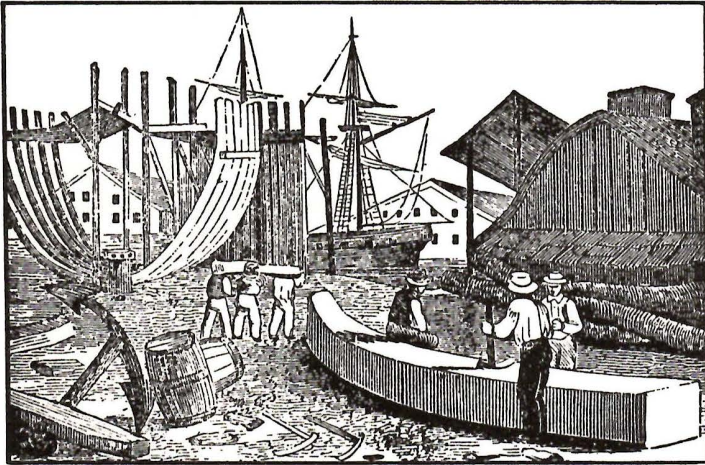
Do you have experience in writing or paste-up and layout? If you do, wouldn't you like to donate a little of your time and talents to being editor of the Reflections newsletter? If you would like more information as to what the job consists of, please call 297-9327.

We can also use volunteers for many other activities that SOHO is involved with. New faces are always welcome!

SOHO Salutes the "Californian"

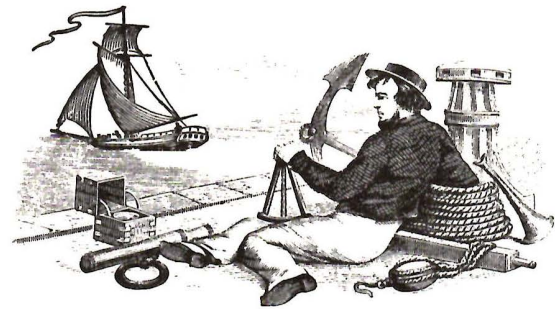
Saturday, February 11, 1984 • 1 p.m. - 3 p.m. • Admiral Kidd Officer's Club • North Harbor Drive, east of Nimitz Blvd.

SOHO invites you to attend a slideshow and talk by Steve Christman, President and Founder of the Dana Point Nautical Heritage Museum, sponsors of the tallship "Californian." This ship is now being built at Spanish Landing and when finished, it will be a full size replica of the Revenue Cutter "Lawrence," a swift sailing vessel that patrolled the California coast during the turbulent Gold Rush era. The Nautical Heritage Museum commissioned famed Naval Architect and Artist, Melbourne Smith, to design the Californian.



The construction site at Spanish Landing is providing San Diegans with a bit of living history as the vessel takes shape under the supervision of shipwright brought from the Bahamas especially for this project. Mr. Christman will trace the development from initial "concept," to the hardwood forests of Honduras and then to the laying of the keel and construction here in San Diego. This will be followed by a musical presentation, featuring the Heritage Players of Dana Point dressed in period costumes. After refreshments, participants will visit the construction site nearby for a firsthand view of progress.

Don't miss this special event!



Melbourne Smith Brings the "Californian" to Life

By Bruce Herms

Many San Diegans enjoyed the robust clippership "Pride of Baltimore" when it visited our harbor in 1983. The designer of this beautiful ship was Melbourne Smith, who is the designer and builder of the "Californian," now taking shape at Spanish Landing. Smith is widely known as a naval architect and artist. His gouache portraits of ships are found in collections around the world.

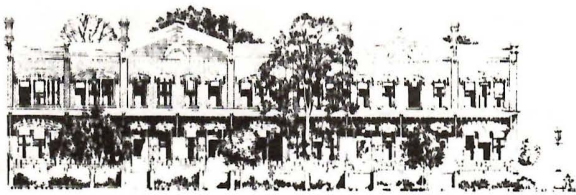
Born in Canada, he ran away to sea at age 14 and joined the Royal Canadian Sea Cadets. He served in the Merchant Marines. He developed an interest in art while living in Maryland and New York. During this period, he and his wife fixed up an old trawler, "San Pareil," and set sail for France to pursue his artistic career. Unfortunately, a severe storm struck off Cherbourg and their ship sank. Miraculously, Melbourne and his wife survived, but they lost all of their possessions, including 300 of his paintings.

Melbourne outfitted yet another ship and sailed between Spain and North Africa. In 1960 he sailed to the Caribbean where his ship was leased by Guatemala as a training vessel. As ship master he was made a commodore in the Guatemalan navy. The volatile politics of Central America forced an early retirement and Melbourne moved on to British Honduras where he actively entered the ship building profession. Together with another refugee,

master builder Simeon Young, they opened a shipyard and turned out many wooden ships for clients around the world. In 1963, while delivering a cutter to her new owner in Maryland, Smith showed one of his paintings to "Skipper" magazine. They liked it and hired him to be their art director.

Settling in Annapolis he has become active in publishing and book design for the U.S. Naval Institute as well as the Admiralty Publishing House and the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum. He has found time to sail in five Bermuda races as well as longer trips to Australia. His first love remains art and ship design. In addition to the "Pride of Baltimore" he has designed the "Spirit of Massachusetts" and a pilot schooner for New York city.

San Diego is fortunate to have Melbourne Smith as the designer of the Goldrush Revenue Cutter, "Californian." This ship will represent the state of California during the 1984 Olympics and as one of the tallships commemorating the centennial of the Statue of Liberty during Opsail '86 in New York harbor. SOHO members and friends will have an opportunity to see the "Californian" under construction at their Saturday meeting on February 11, 1984. Don't miss this special event.



Preservation In Progress

Recent members of SOHO have just purchased the beautiful historic Irving Gill Thompson House in Coronado overlooking the Pacific at Ocean and Isabella. They have graciously allowed SOHO to view their restoration task on Sunday, March 18, 1 p.m. to 5 p.m.

First Meeting February 24th

Neighborhood Networking

There will be a free kick-off meeting at the San Diego Federal Savings & Loan Building, 925 Ft. Stockton, at 7:00 p.m. to share our common problems in various neighborhoods of the city and county.

In an effort to preserve the existing character of San Diego county's neighborhoods, SOHO is attempting to bring neighborhoods together to share similar problems, concerns and goals. A SOHO-initiated Neighborhood Network would hopefully help different neighborhood residents develop more awareness of their neighborhood's special character and the value of their historic landmarks to that ambiance. Come join us on the 24th to discuss these issues.

Bruce Kamerling, a leading authority on Gill, will give an introductory program, then a variety of craftsmen will demonstrate skills including wood refinishing, stenciling, leaded glass, floor finishing, etc. in different areas of the house. Interior designers will create small area settings of furnishings, fabrics and accessories.

During the mid-afternoon break, the Coronado Historical Society will provide a walking tour for \$2 additional fee, or you can relax on the beach. As the sun sets over Point Loma we'll have a small refreshment hour and have time to visit with the craftsmen personally. Space is limited so get your reservation in early. \$8 for non-members, \$6 for members. Call 297-9327 for further information.

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RESERVATION FORM

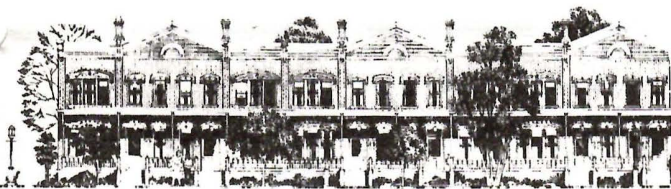
Enclosed is my check for the March 18, 1984 Preservation in Progress Program.

Name(s) _____

Address: _____

Zip and Phone: _____

Mail To: Preservation in Progress, SOHO, P.O. Box 3571, San Diego, CA 92103.



Horton Plaza Workshops continued from page 1

These workshops cost the taxpayers the grand sum of \$120,000. They included the experts of Halprin, Van Dyke-Halsey, and the team of Jim Burns and Dai Williams. The process was to extract a consensus from the attendees as to the future of the plaza. After introductions of everyone at CCDC from Dean Dunphy to Max Schmidt, and the experts from Halprin and Halsey, the facilitators joined a table and the discussion began.

Groups of about 10 people each were formed. Our expectations were gathered and my own skepticism was now in full bloom. During the past eight years or so of dealing with this agency, I have generated a tremendous amount of distrust. I personally feel all the information gathered by these workshops will end up in the circular file, giving CCDC license to do as they please by calling this "public input." However, hope is all we have that someday this and other historic structures will be safe from developers, so we must participate in these

workshops and remain firm in our convictions that this space is sacred. Why developers must change things to make them better has always baffled me.

For instance, when I was a child, cleaning up my room always made a marked difference in its appearance. I didn't have to demolish it or redesign it to enhance it. The very fact that CCDC is having these workshops indicates that once again they must change something which is of excellent quality and substantial historical value to conform to the very format of the Hahn shopping mall.

ON FEBRUARY 10, the design teams will return with three or 4 preliminary drawings. It is our responsibility to be at that workshop and to insist that the historical integrity of Horton Plaza be retained. Please come and stand up for the count; we've lost seven National Register sites to this development--we can't afford any more.



MEMBERSHIP FORM

MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIES

Benefactor	\$1,000
Patron	\$100
Corporate	\$50
Professional	\$25
Family	\$15
Single	\$10
Donation	\$

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SAVE OUR HERITAGE ORGANISATION
 Post Office Box 3571
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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!

NAME: _____

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