



# Reflections

25th Anniversary 1969-1994

*Save Our Heritage Organisation*

## St. Francis Chapel at Warner's Ranch

by Vonn Marie May

As of August 1994 the St. Francis Chapel Adobe rescue is progressing quite well considering the magnitude of repair and the amazing volunteer team that has staid with it. Profound credit goes to the following core group who have been constant in their support with personal time and resources:

**Wayne Donaldson** F.A.I.A. the man who brings most of the tool cache and sets the physical pace, we fondly refer to him as the work nazi.

**Jim Watts** A.I.A. and **Janice Fahey** A.I.A., **Bruce** and **Alana Coons** who have been so dependable and knowledgeable.

**Bob Broms** and **Paul Johnson** A.I.A. for their hard work and event documentation.

Others have joined in and have also been of great help: Karen Benjamin, Ron and Dale May, Kathy Flanigan, lone Stiegler, Greg Gavino and there will be more to come.

The bell tower structure and related roofing work has been completed. The in-tact adobes salvaged from the damaged area have been laid back into place. Mid-August the loyal group made 104 - 20" x 12" x 3" adobe bricks from the historic soil recovered during the project. We project the need for a total of 220 newly made adobes to complete the southeast wall. The Warner Ranch Owners, the Pala Indian Tribe, Santa Ysabel Mission and other interested parties are planning a rededication ceremony sometime this year. SOHO has been a part of the cultural reinvestment and plans to document this project in a report to be submitted at the time of the rededication.

As it stands now we need more people to complete the project. The tasks remaining are: making the remainder of adobes, laying them in, and whitewashing (plastering) the finished wall. The next work party weekend will be in September, to be announced later. We hope to have 20 working humans and attendant family who may also enjoy the Ranch. Come on all you 'Californians', this is your chance to make adobe bricks and revel in the 'essential earth'.

Certain members of the media have shown interest in the project. That would bode well for the local community near the Chapel when they launch their fund raising and rededication plans. We invite the SOHO membership to come see this project for many reasons. Primarily for the preservation value of this fragile resource, but also for the educational and community values as well. If you can't take that much time or care not to do the physical work, just take a nice drive through the back country and come see us anyway.



Adobe making at St. Francis Chapel

**SOHO'S 25th ANNIVERSARY**

**CELEBRATION**

**November 6, 1994**

**Mission Brewery**

**7:00 pm**

## President's Message

by Vonn Marie May

**o.r.i.g.i.n.a.l** *adj.* (ME.<OFr.<L. *originalis*)

1. having to do with an origin; initial; first; earliest 2. never having occurred or existed before 3. a pristine form or primary type that has given rise to varieties 4. being that or those from which reproductions or copies have been made.

The above are a few select definitions of the word 'original'. A sweeping concept that many in the field of preservation encounter. As we assess the significance of structures or sites we often 'walk through' history and imagine a setting that was untouched by humankind. For one reason or another pioneering spirits selected sites and built their shelter or monuments. We, as preservationists, are in the business of calling on those spirited 'original' folks and times. We chase down the magic of those who have preceded us. Those who accomplished amazing feats most often against profound odds. We stand on their shoulders, walk in their boots, parallel their motivations. The detective work of putting the puzzle pieces back together is a cultural thirst. Human character models; inspired, evil, or otherwise abound in history. Today by comparison we seem in short supply of this form of enchantment. So let it be our pursuit, or indulgence, this retro-storytelling.

Such an original site was San Diego's Panama-California Exposition of 1915. After a protracted acrimonious fight for the best site the victors built at the present location, political ambitions and professional beliefs aside. Today it would be hard to imagine the Prado or Palisades anywhere else. San Diego at its own expense hosted nearly 4 million people in direct competition with San Francisco's federally sanctioned, federally funded site. What up-starts we were. Yet some eighty years later San Diego's exposition is credited with having far more influence architecturally and culturally. There's that spirit again. Timeless.

And now, in our modern time, we've come round to a full appreciation of the magic we inherited. Instead of watching each exposition building go down and be replaced with a non-contributing structure (as in the 1960's) we are assured each remnant will be represented as it was in the original plan. Yes Virginia, we are talking about re-dos or 'reconstructions'. In the late 1960's/early 70's Casa del Prado was the first entire reconstruction. Preservation technology has since improved. Casa de Balboa followed and now the Houses of Charm and Hospitality are next. The House of Charm, however, may echo the exterior footprint of the original but its four floored interior and anything-but-exposition feel will not capture the spirit of place.

The House of Hospitality, in contrast, promises to be the most honest and technically correct attempt at reconstruction to date. Certainly the most researched and detail oriented planning has gone into the effort. But here's the rub. Gone will be a posthumous collaboration between 1915 architects Bertram Goodhue and Carleton Winslow and the 1935 architect Richard Requa. Gone will be the celebration of purist Spanish Colonial of the original structure as it appeared in the Panama-California Exposition, albeit temporary, then modified later with an enlightened 'Islamic wash' of the ever respectful Requa during the 1935 California-Pacific Exposition. Will the spirit evaporate at the time of demolition? I lament this passing and still wonder, as did the National Park Service, why restoration wasn't seriously entertained?? Regardless, conditional good wishes to the 'new' projects.

## SOHO

celebrating  
25 years of preservation services in  
San Diego County

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## Naval Radio Transmitter Facility, Chollas Heights

by Robert Broms

The dream of a worldwide wireless system began to form in many minds as soon as Guglielmo Marconi had demonstrated the practicality of radiotelegraphy. Besides the efforts by the Marconi companies within the British Empire, there was a notable attempt to start such a system in America in 1904 by Nicola Tesla, backed by J. P. Morgan. The British plan for the "All Red Chain" to link the entire empire was forestalled by the start of World War I.

Meanwhile, the U.S. Navy had taken up the challenge. The Spanish-American War, construction of the Panama Canal, and the circumnavigation of the Great White Fleet positioned the Navy for a global role. The Navy's own chain of high-powered radio stations was an essential element in this development. The Poulsen arc transmitters were tested between Arlington and Daien, Canal Zone, in 1915. This technology was then ordered in increasingly powerful versions to equip the expanding high-power chain. With America's entry into the "Great War" in April 1917, the Navy became legal operator of all radio stations public and private, a global system was organized. This system can be seen as the essential strategic element which henceforth made the U. S. Navy the dominant force on the world's seas, the first "Twentieth Century" navy. The Navy can be justly proud of both fostering the technology of global radio and using that technology to solidify the U. S. strategic position. It should be remembered, in this context, that during the course of World War II the phase called the "Pacific War" began with attacks by the Japanese Imperial Navy on the most important United States Naval Bases in the Pacific at Hawaii, Guam, and the Philippines, all part of the radio chain. Telecommunications was explicitly recognized as the key to military success.

San Diego's involvement with this modern Navy dates from the visit of the Great White Fleet. Local visionaries organized the Panama-Pacific Exposition of 1914-1916 in recognition of the role the city could play in the new Century of the Pacific. City Park was renamed Balboa Park for the Exposition to honor the Spanish explorer who discovered the Pacific Ocean in 1513. At the Exposition in 1916, the Maine Corps proudly displayed the Sword of Balboa, captured during their recent involvement in the Nicaraguan Revolution.

With the U. S. S. Bennington disaster in San Diego Bay, the city took the Navy to its heart. When the radio station at Chollas Heights was inaugurated on January 26, 1917, the entire city was well aware of the importance of the event. Articles in the San Diego Union in the days leading up to the opening of the facility contain the following statements:

*When the new station officially is commissioned, probably tomorrow, San Diego will have the novel distinction of being the only city in the world to have two government owned and operated radio station - one at Point Loma, the other at Chollas Heights. (January 24, page 3)*

*Lieutenant Hooper declared yesterday that the San Diego station is the most powerful plant of its kind in the world. He said that San Diego will not only be able to keep in constant communication with stations Panama, Hawaii, Samoa, Guam, Manila, Alaska, and along the Atlantic seaboard, but when necessary with government owned stations in Europe, South America, Australia, and Japan. (January 25, page 1)*

On the day following the sending of the first official messages, the Union's banner headline and two front page pictures topped an extensive story describing the opening ceremonies. A minute-by-minute verbatim account of the exchange of messages contains the observation that:

*At the same instant San Diego become one of the most important radio cities in the world. (January 27, page 1)*

The scene is described as follows:

*One hundred and fifty San Diegans, including officials of the Chamber of Commerce, Merchants' Association and various commercial bodies, were guests of the naval officers at the official opening. In accordance with strict orders from Washington no civilians, with the exception of Mayor Capps and members of the press, were permitted to enter the receiving and transmitting rooms. Copies of the various messages were read to the guests by Naval Radio Engineer George Hanscom. Applause greeted the reading of the telegrams from Secretary Daniels and Congressman Kettner. (January 27, page 5)*

The article goes on to detail technical and architectural ("mission style") features of the facility. Principal personages associated with the event and the facility are listed at length, including a complete duty roster the down to Yeoman Flaherty.

A companion front-page story to the Chollas Heights report of January 27, 1917, notes the first step in the Bay's Transformation to a deep water harbor: "\$105,000 Voted For Dredging...Good news for San Diego." Needless to say, the importance of San Diego to the Navy, and the Navy's importance to San Diego, continued to grow. On December 7, 1941, Radio San Diego was the first stateside station to receive the broadcast warning of the surprise attack on Pearl Harbor. Although this writer has as yet been unable to review the official 1958 U.S. Navy account, Station History, U.S. Naval Communications Station San Diego, 1906-1958, it was presumably the Chollas Heights facility which flashed this momentous news to Arlington.

*(Continued next page.)*

Continued . . .

## Chollas Heights

It is important to realize that the opening of Chollas Heights was a confirmation to San Diego. The Panama-Pacific Exposition was an ambitious "world's fair" mounted by an obscure regional city armed only with a vision of the future and a respect for the past. It was San Diego's bid for greatness. Amazingly, within a month of the closing of the Exposition, San Diego had emerged as "one of the most important radio cities in the world." It was first among equals in a new class of city, at the beginning of a new stage in the world's history.

SOHO has extended an invitation to the Navy to join us in our request that the National Park Service designate NRTF, Chollas Heights, as a National Historic Landmark. This should be the first step in planning an adaptive reuse of the entire facility which would preserve the historic resources by providing a public monument worthy of commemorating the Navy's role in the creation of the modern world.

## San Diego Hosts Historians

"Remains to be Seen, California History through Places and Things."

This is the annual conference for the California Historical Society and the California Council for the Promotion of History. An amazing variety of topics will be covered, everything from decoding Chinese medical advertisements to depression-era schools. SOHO, both as a group and as individual members will be a strong presence. The conference will open with the SOHO Workshop "La Frontera: Our Common Heritage" presenting preservation issues from a Cross-Border Perspective and coordinated by our own Bob Broms. SOHO President Vonn Marie May will lead an excursion through Balboa Park and SOHO Board Member Alex Bevil will be your tour guide at Torrey Pines State Park. The Conference will be September 15-18 at the Red Lion Hotel in Mission Valley. For information call the California Historical Society at (415)-567-1848.

## Fort Guijarros Fiesta at Ballast Point Submarine Base

by Ronald V. May

Once again the sound of Spanish guitar and dancing will echo on the hills of Point Loma, as the Fort Guijarros Fiesta kicks off on September 24, 1994 at 5:00 PM. The event will last until 9:30 PM and will include bus tours of historical sites, as well as authentic dancing and paella dinners.

Each year since 1981, the Fort Guijarros Museum Foundation and the U.S. Navy have hosted the Fiesta to commemorate Spain's heritage in California. That rich history spans 225 years in San Diego and 198 years on the U.S. Naval Submarine Base.

The Fort Guijarros Museum Foundation invites the public to join in the festivities by donating \$25 per person. Guests will be guided by docents to the current archaeological excavation of the 1796 ruins. Tours will also include a museum exhibit of artifacts recovered over the past 15 years, the foundations of a 1860s whale-oil rendering oven, and the scientific laboratories. One of four forts built on the Pacific Coast in the 1790s, only the ruins of Fort Guijarros have survived as testament to Spain's coastal defense.

The United States Navy has authorized special arrangements for guests to enter the Submarine Base. Navy personnel will guide guests to parking, drive bus tours, and assist the Museum Foundation. Guests must agree not to photograph submarines or sensitive military facilities.

Soldiers from the "Royal Presidio de San Diego de Cosoy" were assigned by the Commandante to the outpost. By two-wheeled *carreta* and horse, the Spaniards hauled supplies and armament from the Presidio through what later would become "Old Town" and off to the east side of Point Loma. At least ten cannons were mounted on the walls of the fort.

Fort Guijarros is the site of the only ship to shore cannon battle between Spain and an American ship on the Pacific Coast. On March 22, 1803, the famous "Battle of San Diego Bay" exploded in an exchange of violent cannon fire. Spanish shots damaged the rigging, but the ship's small guns missed and bounced into the hills. Although no one was hurt, Spain's message to blockade foreign traders was heard round the world.

The Fiesta on September 24, will commemorate more than the Spanish legacy that remains under modern asphalt. It provides a forum for the U.S. Navy to meet with the California public, Spanish officials, and archaeologist to remember all the periods of history that have become our heritage as citizens of the United States.

Guest attending the Fiesta will have two hours to visit the ruins and listen to docents explain the archaeology discoveries. At 6:00, a walking tour of the 1904 vintage block of U.S. Army Fort Rosecrans houses will begin. Tours of the new "Fort Guijarros Legacy" laboratories will be led by scientists working on the thousands of artifacts and photographs.

For information please call 229-9743 and leave a message with your name and telephone number. If you wish to attend, send \$25 per person and a note with your name, address, and telephone number to the following address:

Fort Guijarros Museum Foundation  
P. O. Box 231500  
San Diego, Ca. 92194

## On Hallowed Ground SOHO/San Diego Historical Society Historical Cemetery Tour

by Alexander D. Bevil

On October 30th SOHO, in cooperation with the San Diego Historical Society, will lead a walking tour through the historic Mt. Hope Cemetery.

Founded in the fall of 1869 by a citizen's committee headed by Alonzo E. Horton, Mt. Hope Cemetery is the final resting place for a number of celebrated San Diegans. Included among these is Horton himself, the "Father of Modern San Diego."

Other pioneer promoters of San Diego we will visit are: Thomas Whaley, pioneer Old Town merchant; Captain Matthew Sherman, City Trustee and developer of "Sherman Heights", Col. Charles P. Noell, credited with building the first wood frame house in Old Town, and regarded as : "the most honest man in San Diego."

Also at rest at Mt. Hope is George A. Cowles. Cowles, a native of Connecticut, settled on a 5,000 acre ranch northeast of the mountain that today bears his name. Calling the place "Cowlestown", he planted trees and grew world-famous grapes. Cowles, who died at the age of 51 in 1887, was buried on the ranch. His widow married Milton Santee, a surveyor and real estate developer who convinced residents to rename the town "Santee". Because the former ranch was being subdivided, Cowles body was exhumed and brought to Mt. Hope for reburial.

Mt. Hope is also the final resting place of Robert Whitney Waterman who, until Pete Wilson was elected to the office in 1990, was the only San Diegan to serve as governor of

California (1887-91). Waterman was also a railroad builder. The tracks of the San Diego Trolley which bisect Mt. Hope, follow the original right-of-way of the San Diego, Cuyamaca & Eastern Railroad, organized by Waterman in 1888. At one time the SD, C&E maintained a regular station at Mt. Hope.

Another notable railroad builder buried near the Waterman grave is that of Elisha Babcock, co-developer of the Hotel del Coronado and organizer of the Coronado Railroad in 1888.

Others who helped to shape modern San Diego buried at Mt. Hope are G. Aubrey Davidson, organizer of the 1915 Panama-California Exposition; George W. Marston, who, among his many beneficients, gave us Presidio Park and Anza Borrego State Park; and William Whitson, developer of San Diego's "Hillcrest" district.

The simple grave marker of Miss Kate Sessions, the "Mother of Balboa Park", is flanked by mature stands of twisting juniper, a fitting memorial.

Other notable San Diegans buried at Mt. Hope are : Sam Brannan, California's first millionaire, who died a pauper; Alta Hulett, America's first woman attorney; and Nathan Harrison, a man who was "born a slave and died a pioneer."

**DIRECTIONS TO THE CEMETERY**  
Take the Market Street exit on the 805 Freeway west, or the Market Street east exit on the I-15 freeway, to the entrance gate of Mt. Hope Cemetery, 3751 Market Street. The tour will start at the caretaker's office at Mt. Hope Cemetery at 12 noon on Sunday, October 30. Docents will introduce tour participants to the history behind the cemetery's founding and funerary customs of the turn of the century. Then they will lead tour participants through the cemetery to its historic core.

In keeping with the season, we will seek out the grave of several famous "haunts" of San Diego. The tall, narrow marble monument belonging to Violet Whaley marks the grave on one of the reputed specters that haunts the Whaley House in Old Town. A small angel marks the grave site of Kate Morgan, a.k.a. Lottie Bernard, who supposedly haunted guests at the Hotel del Coronado.

Clues will be given to find the grave of detective novelist Raymond T. Chandler, of Philip Marlow fame.

**TO MAKE RESERVATIONS** Please call SOHO (297-4659) and leave (1) your name, (2) number in your party, and (3) a daytime telephone number.

**COST** The tax-deductible \$10 fee, which covers SOHO and San Diego Historical Society costs, will be collected at the caretaker's office.

**NOTE** Because there will only be a token skeleton crew at the cemetery, please do not leave any valuables in view in your cars while parked in the cemetery. Parking will be available near the caretakers cottage with an attendant.



# Calendar of Events

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## September

- 15 Part 2 - La Frontera... the second in a 2 part series of cross border workshops sponsored by SOHO. To be held in connection with the California Historical Society Conference. Call SOHO for details 297-9327.
- 15-18 California Historical Society Conference annual meeting to be held in San Diego at the Red Lion Hotel. Tours, workshops and meeting are scheduled. Call the California Historical Society at (415)-567-1848 for more information.
- 15 Newsletter deadline...mail articles to SOHO or fax to 239-7302.
- 19 SOHO Board Meeting, Senlis Cottage, Heritage Park, 6:30 pm.
- 24 Adobe making volunteers needed: We will return to the St. Francis Chapel in Warner Springs to make repairs and adobe bricks. Volunteers are needed, contact Vonn Maire May at 223-4420.
- 24 Fort Guijarros Fiesta, sponsored by the Society for California Archaeology, featuring tours of Fort Guijarros archaeological excavation, 1904 Fort Rosecrans Officer's Row Residences, Spanish folk dancing. Call 229-9743 for information and see article for more details.

## October

- 15 Newsletter deadline...mail articles to SOHO or fax to 239-7302.
- 17 SOHO Board meeting, Senlis Cottage, Heritage Park, 6:30 pm
- 30 "On Hallowed Ground " A cemetery tour of San Diego's notables in Mt. Hope Cemetery. 12 noon. \$10. See article for details.

## November

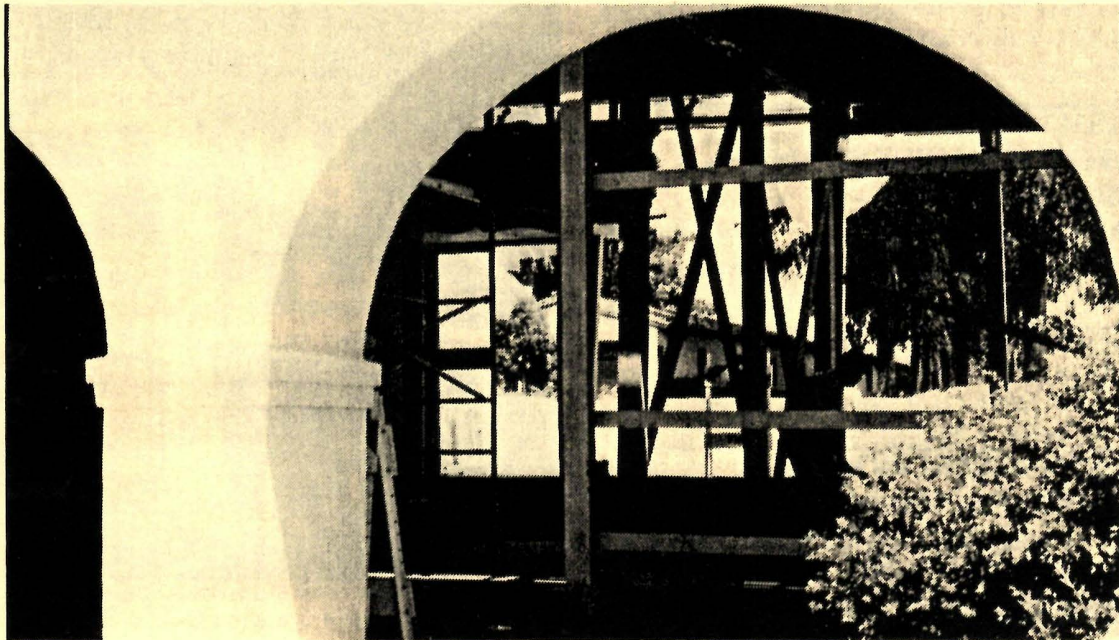
- 6 SOHO's 25th Anniversary Celebration. Sunday 7:00 pm. Mission Brewery. More details in next issue.
- 12 Torrey Pines State Park & Lecture. Back by popular demand! Details next issue.
- 15 Newsletter deadline...mail articles to SOHO or fax to 239-7302.
- 21 SOHO Board meeting, Senlis Cottage, Heritage Park, 6:30 pm.

**To our wonderful Executive Director:  
Get Well Soon All!**

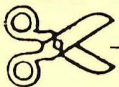
# PRESERVATION NEWS

## Camp Pendleton Rancho Margarita

Since mid-1993, SOHO has helped The Friends of the Ranch House Chapel raise funds to restore this adobe structure dating from the days of Rancho Santa Margarita. Marines from around the world, many of whom had been married in the Chapel, responded with donations, which were held in a fund administered by SOHO. Several thousand dollars were spent to start the restoration. On August 29, Ann Rothwell of The Friends and Bob Broms of SOHO presented Maj. Gen. C. W. Reinke, Commander of Camp Pendleton, with a check for \$28,000. The Friends also gave SOHO a plaque stating "sincere appreciation" for our efforts.



Recent Progress on Restoration



### SOHO Membership Application

Membership privileges include the newsletter *Reflections* to keep you informed of preservation issues and activities, as well as special prices for SOHO workshops, tours and related activities and events.

Please call the SOHO office (297-9327) for more information. To apply for membership, complete the following form and send it and your check to SOHO, P.O. Box 3571, San Diego, CA 92163.

**Thank You For Your Support!**

#### Membership Categories

- \$1000 Lifetime
- 500 Benefactor
- 250 Corporate
- 100 Executive
- 50 Professional
- 25 Individual/Family
- 10 Student

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (H) \_\_\_\_\_ (W) \_\_\_\_\_

- Yes, please send information on SOHO' Planned Giving Program

I would like to help with:  Tours  Newsletter  Office  Membership  Workshops  Other  
You will be contacted regarding your choice(s).

**FOR SALE: ARTS AND CRAFTS OAK  
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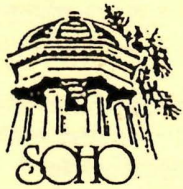
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9327 or Ingrid Helton at 239-6150 or fax 239-  
7302. Article/ad deadline is the 15th of each  
month for publication by the 1st. Photos for  
ads must be submitted camera ready.**



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