



Save Our Heritage  
Organisation

June 1997

# Reflections

SOHO IS THE OLDEST  
CONTINUALLY OPERATING HISTORIC  
PRESERVATION ORGANIZATION IN CALIFORNIA.

S E R V I N G   S A N   D I E G O   C O U N T Y   S I N C E   1 9 6 9

## Urgent Preservation Fight: Save the Hotel del Coronado

### CORONADO CITY COUNCIL TO VOTE ON ALLOWING GROSS "IMPROVEMENTS" TO THE HISTORIC DEL.

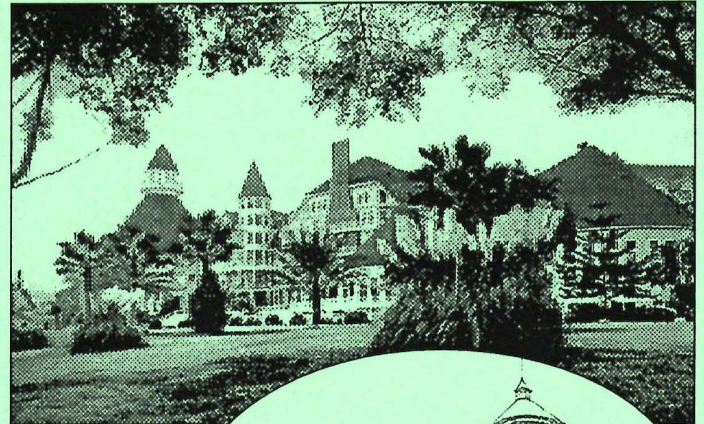
B R U C E   C O O N S

CAN THIS BE FOR REAL? NORTH, SOUTH, EAST AND WEST VIEWS TO be blocked, pioneering historic electric power plant, original and subsequent brick laundries, garage/stables, original Kate Sessions plantings and prehistoric archeological deposits to be destroyed. Yes, this danger is very real.

The Hotel Del Coronado, arguably the most important historic building in the San Diego region from a national and international point of view, faces what is the most devastating threat to historic preservation in San Diego history. The Travelers Group, new owners of this gracious hotel, argue that they must make the Del attractive for conventions and the like into the next century by expanding on the existing structures and removing some historic "outdated" ones. Of course, the fault in this thinking is that they will be destroying the very ambiance that people come to the Del to experience.

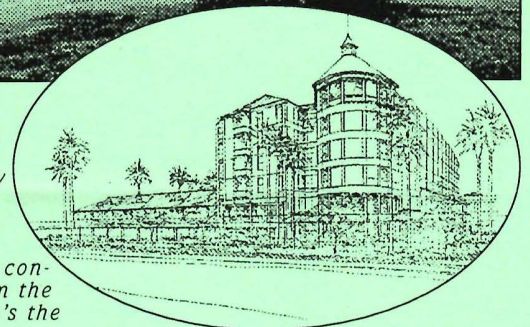
We wish we were kidding or exaggerating to get the attention of those who think "they" could never let the Del literally disappear from view. We're not. If the City Council of Coronado approves this plan (at press time, most of the councilmembers were in favor of this expansion), the Del will become caged in the center of "improvements" that will remove it from association with the town it's named after.

The Hotel del Coronado was just listed as one of the 500 most important buildings ever built in the United States from the 10th Century to the present in a new book by noted architect/author G.E. Kidder Smith. Currently the Del is a National Historic Landmark, a California State Historic Landmark, on the National Register of Historic Places, part of the National Trust for Historic Preservation's Historic Hotels of America program, and is also on the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS). Because of this proposed alteration, the National Park Service Western Regional Office has recommended the Del to their most endangered list. And if this "boxing" of the Del happens, the site will probably lose its National Register standing. The owners don't seem to mind.



*Above: the Hotel Del from a turn-of-the-century postcard.*

*Right: a proposed view showing new construction from the beach. Where's the Del?*



The new specific plan for the Del has been released and copies are on public view at the Coronado Public Library and at the Coronado Community Development Department at 1825 Strand Way in Coronado. The plan calls for destruction of the original brick powerplant and laundry complex that was the largest electric plant of its kind in the world when installed in 1887-1888. This plant provided electric power for the entire island of Coronado until the late 1920s. The Del's owners propose replacing it with a new convention center, parking structures, and new hotel rooms extending along the south side of the hotel from Orange Avenue to the ocean, with heights ranging from 40 to 80 feet high.

Along the ocean side, covering the entire oceanfront and replacing the tennis courts, the plan calls for new hotel rooms and restaurants at a height of 40 feet with 60 foot towers. On the north side, the plan stipulates a new hotel block with a parking structure. This block will also be 40 feet high with 60 foot towers and will cover the entire north view. Completing the circle around the northeast corner and east up to the Grand Hall, which was built in recent years, will be a new commercial strip mall complex also calling for 40 foot heights.

What will be the result of these additions? Because the new buildings will be within 50 feet of the foundation of the hotel, no one will be able to see the historic Hotel del Coronado from looking up the strand, looking down the beach, from the ocean or from the town! (CON'D ON P. 2)

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

DAVID SWARENS

AN AUDIBLE GASP PASSED THROUGH THE AUDIENCE AT THE Pasadena Playhouse.

No, it wasn't a risqué comedy or a suspenseful drama, but rather the notice to the plenary session of the 22nd Annual California Preservation Conference of plans to wall off our own Hotel del Coronado.

The Conference allows groups to gather who intuitively know what it means when someone says "cottage cheese belongs on the table, not on the ceiling." There, "three minute success stories" allow us to let down our hair, celebrate our heroes and boo and hiss the villains.

As someone who has been accused of being the George M. Cohen of San Diego preservation (my birthday is during National Historic Preservation Week), perhaps I may be forgiven my enthusiasm, but it is nice to be in a crowd of preservationists.

We learn when the world has caught up with us (courts have ruled that a plaque is no replacement for a historic building) and we learn what we need to catch up with, such as the Historic Homeownership Assistance Act and the reauthorization of ISTEA (with "enhancements" such as the financed Historic National City Depot), both now in Congress.

But the enjoyment of community is the most important to me, so sing along: "...with a burger here, a french fry there, here a shake, there a shake, everywhere a shake shake, the oldest McDonald's is in Downey, El-EI-O." Hope many of us can join together in Sante Fe in October with the National Conference.

## HOTEL DEL CORONADO (CON'D)

All this planned building will require the removal of many of the original large specimen plantings that were originally in the lawn that extended from the verandas of the hotel to the village of Coronado. The plantings were left in place and paved around when this area was converted into a parking lot.

SOHO has also been informed of a plan to paint the original varnished woodwork in the lobby and Crown Room. The crown-shaped chandeliers are alleged to be removed as well. The architects of this new plan have stated that the new buildings will emulate the "Bahamas Cays architecture of the area." This statement, asserting that the Del needs to emulate some place in the Caribbean (when there's a hotel at Walt Disney World, so close to the Caribbean, that emulates the Hotel del), is outrageous. This position, together with the destructive new plans, shows that the owners have no understanding of what they possess. They have a complete disregard for this most magnificent historic structure and the importance it has for Coronado, the San Diego region, the nation and the world.

We need everyone's help. The Coronado City Council may actually vote approval of this plan. We must urge that to reject it. Please call the councilmembers, write letters to the editors of San Diego and Coronado newspapers, call talk radio, contact television stations, ask to meet with Coronado City Council members to voice your concerns. We can't allow the Coronado City Council to believe silence is consent. This is a preservation battle that our region can't afford to lose.

Updates to this plan for the Hotel del Coronado are presented every third Tuesday of each month at 3:00 P.M. in the Coronado City Council chambers, located at 1825 Strand Way in Coronado. Please attend the council sessions or write to the city council members to voice your opinion that messing with the Del will not only be bad for historic preservation, but will be bad for business also. The Coronado City Council members are Bruce Williams, Dave Blumenthal, Al Ovrom, Ruth K. (Patty) Schmit, Mayor Tom Smisek, and City Clerk Mary Waugh. They can be reached at 619-522-7320 or at 1825 Strand Way, Coronado, CA 92118. Write to the CEO of The Travelers Group, Mr. Sandy Weil, at 388 Greenwich Street, New York, NY 10013 or call him at 212-816-8888.

Don't let what is now unique and beautiful be trapped inside a fortress-like mall/convention center. For more information and to volunteer to help the fight, call SOHO at 619-297-9327. Donations for the "SAVE THE DEL" Fund should be sent to SOHO at P.O. Box 3571, San Diego, CA 92163. ●

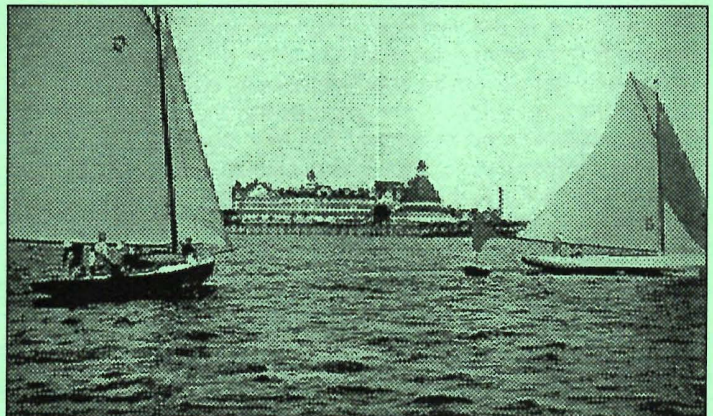
## CPF Conference Focuses on Strategies for Preserving Neighborhoods

BOARD MEMBERS DAVID SWARENS AND BONNIE POPPE ATTENDED this year's Conference, held in Pasadena in late May. The "Preservation Comes Home" theme focused on strategies for preserving neighborhoods and included workshops, tours of homes, gardens and neighborhoods, and an inspiring address by a preservation activist who had insights and recommendation for revitalizing inner city neighborhoods based upon preservation and enhancement of historic resources.

Look for more details about this energizing and inspiring conference in the August Reflections. ●

### Reminder:

*If you move, you need to send SOHO a change of address. Bulk mail will not be forwarded to you, and we don't want to lose touch.*



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# Register now for SOHO's June 21 Historic Gardens Workshop

B O N N I E P O P P E

WHAT KIND OF A GARDEN GOES WITH MY OLD HOUSE? This question is often asked, but there's little information available on the "how-to's" of historic garden design in California. Get the answers to hopefully most of your questions at the SOHO Historic Gardens Workshop.

Be there on Saturday, June 21 at 10:00 A.M. when SOHO boardmember Bonnie Poppe, Union Tribune garden writer Lucy Warren, and Victorian restorationist Alanna Coons will show and tell what took them years to learn about period gardens in San Diego.

In this workshop you'll find out

- how to research your own garden;
- where to find information about all aspects of historic landscapes;
- what plants were used; and
- what actual garden plans were used to create Victorian, Arts & Crafts and Mission Revival gardens in California.

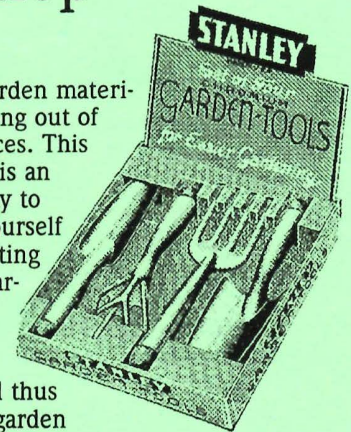
Don't know the difference between garden preservation, restoration, reconstruction and rehabilitation? That's okay; you'll find out at the workshop. You'll also see "do's and don'ts" for using a mix of historic and non-historic plant materials and designs.

Best of all, there will be lots of handouts of

historic garden materials from long out of print sources. This workshop is an opportunity to educate yourself about creating the best garden possible to fit your old house, and thus avoid the garden restoration errors that our workshop leaders have made.

Cost is \$10 for SOHO members, \$15 for non-members. Make your reservation now by calling SOHO at 297-9327. Leave us a message with your name, phone number, and number of reservations. We'll call you back with your confirmation and the site address. Space is limited, so be sure to reserve by June 19.

Send your check to SOHO, P.O. Box 3571, San Diego, CA 92163. See you in the garden. ●



## Update: Status of the Navy's Historic Officers' Row Housing

IN THE FEBRUARY ISSUE OF *Reflections* we reported that the Officers' Row housing was endangered and being considered for demolition. This prompted SOHO and *Reflections* readers to act. Steade Craigo of the State Historic Preservation Office and Bruce Coons of SOHO toured the site with architect Wayne Donaldson on April 22. A Navy general admitted that there was a demolition plan and that the fallback plan was to move the historic houses and create a "historic" district elsewhere.

Now, due to pressure from SOHO and other preservation groups, the structures are going to be repaired and restored with the help of Wayne Donaldson.

On May 28, 1997 the City of San Diego's Historical Sites Board heard an update from architect Donaldson on the current status of Officers' Row. (Although the Sites Board has no jurisdiction over this federally-owned property, Wayne presented the progress as an information item.)

The houses face the bay and are on a road know as Anne's Alley, which runs behind the houses. In 1936 all 47 buildings were declared to be a California Historic Landmark. The houses are in very good condition, with the exception of some settling and cracks in

the foundations and slabs, which are now being repaired. Any repairs that are believed necessary will be done using appropriate materials. The Navy is focusing on stabilizing and repairing the exteriors at this time.

SOHO is continuing to monitor this project and has received plans from the Navy for review. SOHO applauds the Navy for its appropriate change in direction and it's planned restoration of these historically important homes. We will keep you posted on the Navy's progress with the restoration.

Thanks to all those who wrote to support restoration over demolition. We can never emphasize enough how powerful your letters of protest are in turning around opinion toward preservation. ●

# 1997 People In Preservation Awards Honor Area Preservationists

ONE DOZEN PRESERVATION PROJECTS AND THE PEOPLE RESPONSIBLE for them were honored on May 15 with a reception at the historic Balboa Theatre in downtown San Diego. Over 125 people attended the event, our biggest turnout of PIP ever. Many had never been inside the beautiful Balboa and were only recently alerted to the danger this National Historic Registered building faces. Some attended because they remembered the grandness of the theatre. One couple returned to reminisce about their courting days in high school in the 1920s when "taking your girl to the Balboa showed you had class." All in all, it was a great evening.

Entertainment was provided first by Doug Randall on piano, and then by Festival Strings, lead by Mary Karo. Our thanks to these kind musicians who donated their talents to allow us to hear just how wonderful the acoustics are in the Balboa.

This year's PIP Awards were sponsored by many generous businesses and individuals. Our sincere thanks to all of them. You'll find them all listed in Reflection's Marketplace. Please patronize their establishments and thank them for their support of SOHO's work. And now, our winners:

## PRESERVATIONIST OF THE YEAR

BUD FISCHER, for his long-standing work in the rehabilitation of historic buildings in downtown San Diego and specifically for the successful rehabilitation and adaptive reuse for residential use of the Church Lofts and Library Lofts in Centre City. Mr. Fischer has a long track record of historic preservation, and this is the second time that SOHO is honoring him for his efforts. DICK BUNDY, FAIA, the architect on most of Mr. Fischer's projects, gets recognized for the design quality of the above-mentioned recent historical reuse projects.



## "THE PHOENIX AWARD"

To ROY HAGEN and JEFFREY SHORN, AIA, for the preservation and restoration of "EL PUEBLO RIBERA" in La Jolla. Mr. Hagen rescued the property from a fire and Jeffrey Shorn's restoration is true to the original Schindler design.



## THE "SAVED FROM VANDALISM" AWARD

to BILL PETTERSEN and DAVID BARK for the salvage and adaptive reuse of the Andrew Cassidy Home in downtown San Diego, showing that dilapidated and vandalized properties can be brought back to use in the inner city.

## THE "ARTIST AWARD"

To the CHICANO PARK STEERING COMMITTEE and GARY GALLEGOS of CALTRANS for their efforts to preserve intact the Chicano Park Murals while providing needed seismic retrofitting to the San Diego-Coronado Bay Bridge. The community, through the Chicano Park Steering Committee, insisted that the murals be preserved from defacement, and CALTRANS responded creatively to the challenge and found a solution.

## THE "HISTORIC RESTORATION AWARD" TO THE MARSTON HOUSE RESTORATION

To PAUL JOHNSON, AIA, The SAN DIEGO HISTORICAL SOCIETY, and the CITY OF SAN DIEGO PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT for the loving restoration of the Marston House. The SDHS insisted on a full, historically correct restoration, the City of San Diego funded it, and Paul Johnson delivered a jewel.

**Call for Entries:  
The National Trust  
for Historic Preservation  
announces the 1998  
Great American Home  
Awards®**

IF YOU HAVE RESTORED OR REHABILITATED AN older house within the past five years, consider entering the 1998 Great American Home Awards contest, sponsored by the National Trust for Historic Preservation. In its ninth year, the Home Awards is the national contest that specifically recognizes outstanding achievements in home rehabilitation across the country.

Categories include Exterior Rehabilitation, Interior Rehabilitation, Sympathetic Addition, and Landscape,

plus a special category for Bed & Breakfasts. To be eligible, houses must be at least 50 years old and must have been designed and still be serving as single-family homes or bed & breakfasts. The entry deadline is September 30, 1997.

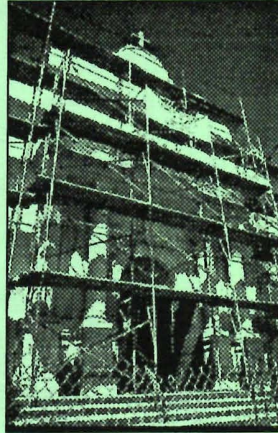
For information and entry forms, send your name and address to Great American Home Awards, National Trust for Historic Preservation, 1785 Massachusetts Ave., NW, Washington, DC or call 202-588-6283. ●

**THE "SHOW MUST GO ON" AWARD**

To the **BALBOA THEATRE FOUNDATION** for their continuing and growing success for the preservation of this grand dame of San Diego theatres. This PIP Award is specifically for the Foundation's unwavering effort to get the Balboa Theatre listed on the National Register of Historic Places, an important step towards the Balboa's long-sought restoration and reopening as a live theatre.

**THE "NEXT CENTURY" AWARD**

To the **OLD TOWN IMMACULATE CONCEPTION CHURCH** in Old Town San Diego for the excellent seismic retrofit, readying the building for the next century through the use of non-invasive high technology methods. The project's designers, McCall-Smith Design and Luth & Turney, Inc., used their technological know-how and historic sensitivity show everyone that a seismic retrofit of historic buildings does not require destruction.



**THE "KEEPER OF THE FLAME" AWARD**

To the **FIREHOUSE MUSEUM** for the preservation and exhibition of historic firefighting artifacts that all can enjoy. The exhibits were created and maintained by San Diego Firefighters. The museum is located in an old firehouse in Little Italy and is especially important to children who usually have their first exposure to living history and technology by seeing, touching and learning of the lifesaving purpose of these artifacts.

**THE "EDUCATION AWARD"**

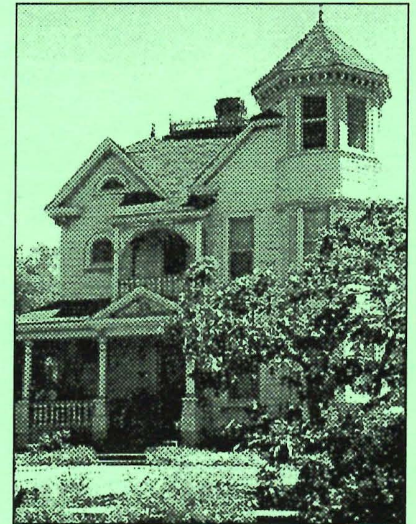
To **KPBS TELEVISION** and writer/producer **JIM HOLTZMAN** for the documentary of San Diego in the 1950s, with SOHO's thanks and hope that they will continue to focus on every decade of San Diego's existence since Sebastian Vizcaino first gave it the name San Diego.

**THE "RURAL HERITAGE PRESERVATIONIST" AWARD**

To **GUY WOODWARD**, posthumously, for Mr. Woodward's pioneering work in the preservation of our region's rural area heritage. Among his many accomplishments, Mr. Woodward founded the Ramona Pioneer Society and Museum to help preserve Ramona's history for future generations.

**THE "RESIDENTIAL PRESERVATION" AWARD**

To **TOM** and **MARILYN CARNES** for their preservation of the Moses Kimball house in National City, which they rescued from its prior derelict state and turned into a beautiful home. This couple's commitment to historic preservation also extends to the maintenance and use of the historic Granger Music Hall building, also located in National City. ●



**SOHO's LA Train Tour a big success. Next stop: San Juan Capistrano on September 6**

IF YOU ATTENDED THE MAY 3 SOHO train tour to Los Angeles, you know what a great time everyone had. Twenty-nine SOHO members made the journey from downtown San Diego to Los Angeles and were treated to the best of L.A. Alex Bevil did a great job of explaining the art, architecture and history of L.A.'s great buildings. There was even an added bonus of watching a commercial being filmed -- with a diapered baby in the middle of the street on a manhole

cover. Only in LA!

SOHO and Alex will be ready to take you on the next ride for a personal tour of San Juan Capistrano on Saturday, September 6. The tour will leave from the Santa Fe Depot at approximately 8:15 A.M. Nothing could be finer than to spend a late summer day exploring the architecture and attractions (not to mention all those antique shops!) in this mission town. After lunch on your own, Alex and SOHO will then continue on to the San Juan Capistrano Mission. (Lunch and the cost of admission to the mission are not included in the tour cost.) We'll return to San Diego by early evening.

All aboard for another fun event! Tickets for the tour are \$35 for adults, \$30 for

seniors (62 and up) and children under 15. To register, make your check payable to SOHO and send it Attn: San Juan Capistrano Train Excursion. P.O. Box 3571,

San Diego, CA 92163. Deadline for ticket reservations is August 20. For more information, call tour director Alex Bevil at 619-569-1486. ●



*Above: the San Juan Capistrano Mission bells and garden, from an old postcard.*

### SOHO Board Member Bonnie Poppe receives Volunteer Award

SOHO'S OWN BONNIE POPPE received the annual "Salute to Volunteers Award" from the Cuyamaca College Botanical Society in April. The award is given each year to honor community members who have made significant contributions to horticulture in San Diego County.

Bonnie was honored for her more than ten years of

service with Offshoot Tours, giving horticultural and historical tours of Balboa Park. Offshoot Tours operates through the City of San Diego Parks and Recreation Department and gives horticultural tours of the park every Saturday morning at 10:00 A.M. Meet in front of the Botanical Building in Balboa Park.

Congratulations to Bonnie for her contributions, both to the Botanical Society and to SOHO. Don't forget to register for Bonnie's Historic Gardens Workshop on June 21 (see page 3 for details).●

### SOHO Annual Meeting Moved to Sept. 15

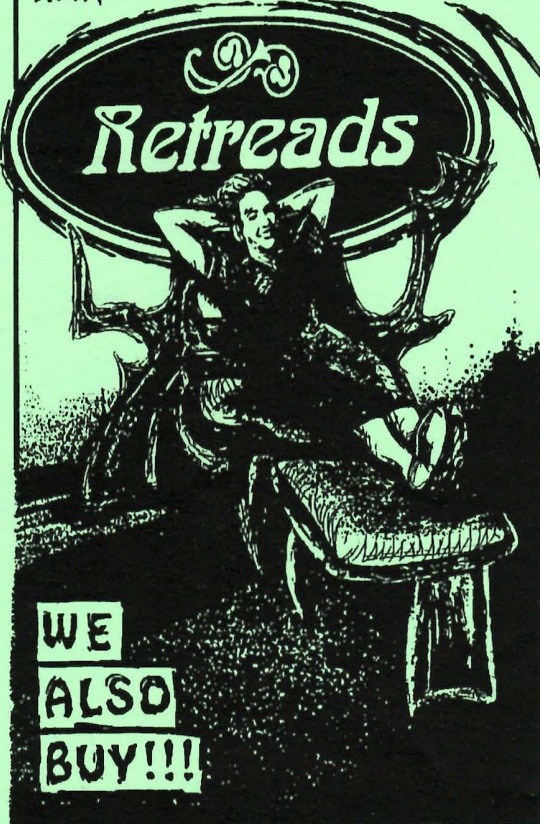
SOHO'S ANNUAL MEETING, PREVIOUSLY SCHEDULED FOR THIS month, is being moved to September. This will allow us to tackle the pressing preservation issues that face us this summer, as well as allow you, SOHO members, to consider joining out Board of Directors.

SOHO board membership requires about ten hours commitment per month (3 hours for our monthly meeting, and the rest for participation on the committee of your choice).

Do you have any skills or experience that would be helpful to SOHO? Then call SOHO at 619-297-9327 for details on how you can make a difference.●

*Have an event of interest to SOHO's members? Send your press release or information sheet to Reflections Editor, P.O. Box 3571, San Diego, CA 92163.*

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Membership privileges include the SOHO Reflections Newsletter to keep you informed of preservation issues and events, and special prices for SOHO workshops, tours and related activities. For more info, call SOHO at 619-297-9327.

#### MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIES

- \$1000 LIFETIME
- 500 BENEFACTOR
- 250 CORPORATE
- 100 EXECUTIVE
- 50 PROFESSIONAL
- 25 INDIVIDUAL/FAMILY
- 10 STUDENT

### SOHO MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Please complete this form and send it with your check to SOHO, P.O. Box 3571, San Diego, CA 92163.

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE (home) \_\_\_\_\_ (work) \_\_\_\_\_

**SPECIAL INTERESTS** (architectural styles, periods, etc.) \_\_\_\_\_

**DO YOU HAVE ANY SPECIAL SKILLS OR KNOWLEDGE** that other SOHO members would benefit from your sharing with us (in a workshop or seminar)? \_\_\_\_\_

Are you interested in helping at SOHO events (like tours, membership drives, etc.)?

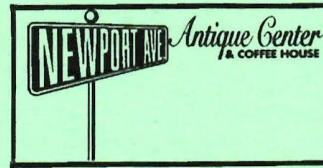
- I WOULD LIKE TO HELP WITH:**
- |                                     |                                     |  |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tours      | <input type="checkbox"/> Newsletter | <input type="checkbox"/> Office        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Membership | <input type="checkbox"/> Workshops  | <input type="checkbox"/> Other events. |

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT.**

All of the following businesses, entertainers and artists were sponsors of the 1997 People In Preservation Awards. SOHO thanks them heartily. Without their help, SOHO would not be able to finance preservation work. Please patronize their businesses and tell them you saw their ad in *Reflections*. In addition, SOHO wishes to thank: Balboa Theatre Foundation docents for tours; Andy Cameron; Centre City Development Corporation for allowing us use of the Balboa; Clarion Hotel; Horton Plaza; Jim Muir/J.M. Productions; San Diego Repertory Theatre; and Steve Veach Illustration & Design for their help.

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## MEMBER NEWS

SOHO continues to draw a steady flow of new members from throughout the county. This month we extend a big SOHO welcome to *Marge and Rurik Kallis* of Lemon Grove, *Theresa Pyle* of La Mesa, *Bob and Lorrie Dunn* of Encinitas, *Elizabeth Marshall* and *Elizabeth Stapler*, both of La Jolla, and *Mary Allely, Lucy Warren, Joan Seifried*, and *Maryella Klug* of San Diego.

## MEMBERSHIP MILESTONES

*15 Years*  
Mary Grandell

*5 Years*  
Cathy Whalen

SOHO appreciates your longtime support  
of historic preservation.

## SOHO CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- |                             |   |
|-----------------------------|---|
| <b>June/July</b>            | SOHO Board meetings: 3rd Tues.<br>Events Committee: 2nd Tues.<br>Call SOHO for other meetings.  |
| <b>June 21</b>              | <b>Historic Gardens Workshop.</b><br>Registrations: 297-9327.   |
| <b>September 6</b>          | <b>SOHO Rail/Walking Tour of San Juan Capistrano</b><br>Reserve by 8/20: 297-9327.<br>Information: 569-1486.  |
| <b>September 15</b>         | SOHO General Meeting<br>More info in next issue.  |
| <b>October 18</b>           | <b>Irving Gill Tour</b> sponsored by the Society of Architectural Historians/Southern CA Chapter & SOHO. All day event, with many private homes. SOHO and SAH/SCC members: \$50. Non-members: \$65. This will be a fabulous day for Gill lovers! More info in next issue. |
| <b>November 22 &amp; 23</b> | <b>SOHO's Arts &amp; Crafts/Bungalow Tour.</b> Back by popular demand! More info in next issue.   |

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