



Save Our Heritage
Organisation

August/September 1997
Volume 28, Issue 4

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

SOHO's Arts & Crafts Weekend is Back!

**MARK NOVEMBER 22 & 23 ON YOUR CALENDAR
FOR TOURS, LECTURES AND FUN!**

THE SOHO ARTS & CRAFTS WEEKEND IS BACK BY POPULAR demand. Are you interested in American Style of the first few decades of this century? Then you need to be part of what we have planned in November. Last year's events were among the most successful in SOHO's history, and we can't wait to present this fall's lineup.

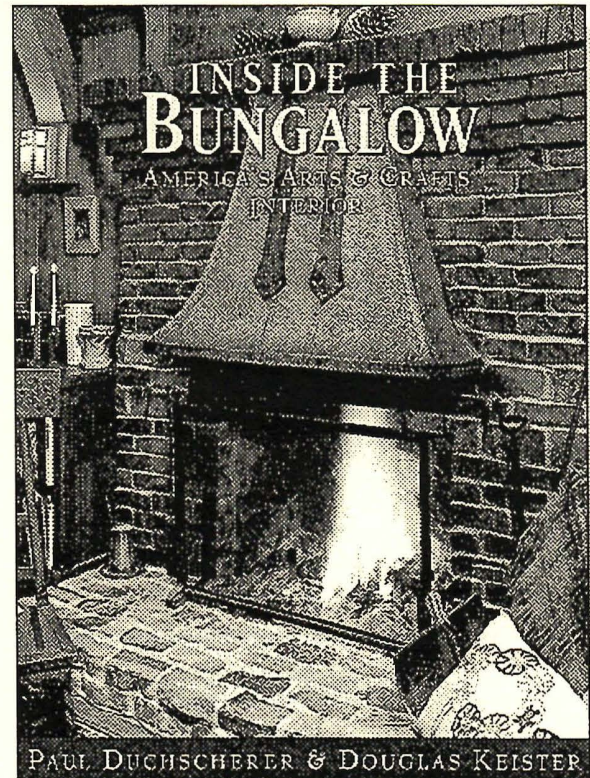
What have we got for YOU? We've got Paul Duchscherer, author of *The Bungalow, American Arts & Crafts Home*, for a lecture and book signing of his brand new book, *Inside the Bungalow*. Paul's new book features several San Diego homes (see if you recognize the SOHO members' home where we had the last holiday party!). Paul will share his extensive knowledge of the style in a lecture on Saturday, November 22. And if you buy Paul's new book at the lecture, your purchase will help benefit SOHO.

Two other exciting lectures on November 22 will cover Art Pottery and the history and design of Arts and Crafts Textiles. Dianne Ayers, our Textile speaker, is perhaps the country's leading expert in Arts and Crafts textiles. Her workshop, located in Oakland, CA, produces period reproductions of Gustav Stickley textiles and other Arts and Crafts-inspired designs for the home. For those lovers of Arts and Crafts, it doesn't get any better than this!

Are the house tours back? You bet. This year we'll have at least five homes open for your viewing pleasure on Sunday, November 23. See how real people have restored or maintained their houses, and hear how they did it. You'll be able to see the homes at your own pace, in which ever order you prefer. What a great way to spend a day!

At press time we're still working out the details for the location of the lecture series. All details will be announced later in September.

Admission per person for each lecture is \$15 (SOHO members: \$10); admission to the home tour is \$25 (SOHO members: \$20). SPACE IS LIMITED, so please reserve early, especially those coming from outside the area. Send your checks to SOHO, P.O. Box 3571, San Diego, CA 92163.●



If you buy Paul Duchscherer's new book at SOHO's November 22 lecture, you will be helping raise money for SOHO's non-profit work. Paul will even autograph it for you too!

**HOTEL DEL CORONADO IS SOLD
TO LOWE ENTERPRISES FOR
\$330 MILLION.**

SEE PAGE 2 FOR DETAILS.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

DAVID SWARENS

WHAT I DID ON MY SUMMER VACATION:

I went to camp.

Not just any camp, but a music camp in the foothills of the Sierras at a place called "Sweet's Mill."

Here, at 4500 feet above sea level, an evolving celebration of folk life traditions has invested this place with meaning.

Memories of experience and memorials to the fallen reinforce the significance of this cultural landscape.

Since the hippie explorations of the Sixties to the developing focus on many (mostly) non-native traditions, the "Mill" has been a hothouse for exotics -- like California itself.

The Balkans, the Spanish Seville of Flamenco, Greece, Mexico, Puerto Rico, Ireland, even New England and the Southeastern U.S., all have sent roots into the old mill pond.

The pond remains, but the mill is long gone; the lodge and other more recent constructs also lost in fire which swept the property in 1989.

But these losses only add to the layering of meaning -- the memory of this place, a place steeped in associations such that each tree, each stand of native grass, each slab of stone resonates with sympathy.

Like any true cultural landscape, the power of association here does not depend on particular artifacts through these can only help us to touch, very literally, the past.

The power is in the place as well as on the place.

What did I do on my summer vacation? I experienced the power of cultural landscapes! ●

Volunteers needed for Arts & Crafts and Gill Tours

SOHO MEMBERS AND FRIENDS OF SOHO: WE NEED YOUR HELP FOR two very busy, very fun upcoming tours. We're looking for willing, able people to help with ticket sales, at the Membership Table, and as house guides and docents at the Irving Gill tour on October 18 and at the Arts & Crafts events on November 22 and 23. No experience is necessary. When you volunteer for half a day, you'll get to see the activities for free during the other half! Tell a friend or your favorite history student.

There will be a two hour training session the weekend before each event (day, time and location to be announced). This is a great way to learn more about what interests you, or to share what you know with others! For more info or to sign up, leave a message for Ingrid at 297-9327.●

Reminder: SOHO is an all-volunteer, non-profit group doing our best to preserve what's important in San Diego County. Moving? You need to tell us your new address in order for Reflections to continue to reach you.

Hotel del Coronado is sold to Lowe Enterprises for \$330 Million

SOHO TO KEEP WATCH ON PROPOSED \$50 MILLION IN IMPROVEMENTS

FOR THE PAST SEVERAL MONTHS, SOHO MEMBERS HAVE BEEN VERY actively involved in protesting the plans by the Travelers Group to "wall off" the Hotel del with new construction. The sale of the property to Lowe Enterprises, long rumored to be in the works but only announced in late August, is hopefully a positive change for this beautiful landmark. Lowe Enterprises buys and manages hotel and resort properties as investments for pension funds. The Hotel del will be managed by a Lowe subsidiary, Destination Hotels & Resorts, which has already taken over management of the property.

As quoted in the San Diego Union-Tribune of August 29 (pp. C-1, C-3), the new owners are "mindful that Travelers' expansion plans has sparked sharp criticism from local preservationists" and that "the immediate plan calls only for remodeling and refurbishing existing rooms and structures." Lowe plans to invest \$50 million in improvements over five years.

The U-T also quotes the new management as stating they are "interested in considering appropriate enlargement of the facility over time...but we will first gather input from the community and the on-site staff before we take any specific action." Let's hope that this management does indeed understand that SOHO and all the others supporters of this National Historic Landmark will not allow this treasure to be cut off from the city it is named after with inappropriate additions and enclosures. Before we feel it's safe to celebrate the sale, we at SOHO will wait to see what direction the new regime will take.

SOHO will continue to monitor all future meetings and proposals for "improving" the hotel. We want to thank all the volunteers who passed out flyers, attended meetings and got the word out about what was happening at the Del when the controversial plans were barely covered in the conventional press. We also wish to thank the generous patrons who contributed to the "Save The Del" Fund and helped finance all the letter writing and copying. Watch this space for further updates in the October/November issue of *Reflections*.●



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South Park Proposed as New San Diego Historic District

B O N N I E P O P P E

THE SOUTH PARK NEIGHBORHOOD OF SAN DIEGO, which is part of the Golden Hill community planning area, is being proposed as San Diego's newest historic district. The district, home to a number of SOHO members, was subdivided by the Bartlett Estates Company in 1890, with the first wave of building taking place between 1905 and 1915. Building continued through the 1920s, at which time the greater part of the subdivision was built out. Most of the earliest homes are large, substantial post-Victorian foursquares, some with strong Arts & Crafts influences. There are also many bungalows from the teens and twenties. Some of the architects represented in the district are Irving Gill, William Hebbard, Richard Requa, and the Quayle Brothers. South Park's most well-known resident was probably Alfred Mitchell, an influential early 20th century plein-air painter who lived and painted in South Park for most of his life.

The South Park district was one of twelve districts identified in the Greater Mid-City Historic Survey. It was chosen as the first of these areas to be proposed as a City of San Diego Historic District. In implementing the district, the City has initially elected to require 51% owner consent to establish the district. Owner consent is not a requirement of the ordinance governing the Historical Site Board, The City of San Diego Resource Protection Ordinance, nor is it a requirement of even discussed in the new Zoning Code Update (ZCU). The San Diego historic districts which currently exist were created through a noticing process and DID NOT require owner consent. It is unlikely that either the Gaslamp Quarter district or Sherman Heights Historic District would exist today if owner consent had been a requirement of their formation.

If the 51% vote fails, the City proposes the creation of a "Conservation District." Such a district would have very limited, if any, benefit to the community. Without definition or recognition by ordinance, a "conservation district" lacks ability to do exactly what its name suggests, which is to "conserve."

Another difficulty with the current voting

policy is that anyone who fails to turn in a card is counted as a "no" vote. The National Register requires owner consent to the extent that if a majority of owners object affirmatively by filing an affidavit of objection, the district is not designated. Most people who are not in favor of a district are not so opposed as to file such an affidavit.

A great danger to the establishment of future historic districts in San Diego lies with the precedent that would be set by requiring the 51% majority vote in South Park. Some of the proposed districts are heavily non-owner occupied and/or multi-family zones, and these property owners (who frequently live out of the area) are less likely to give majority approval to the creation of districts. The creation of these historic districts may be critical to neighborhood rehabilitation. Historic districts are often the first step toward revitalization, both for commercial and residential areas. Without this tool, some proposed districts may well further deteriorate.

A potentially equally damaging position being proposed in South Park is that even if the majority approves forming the historic district, properties within the district which did not vote in favor of the district will not be bound by the vote. This is analogous to having single family zoning but permitting those who do not agree to build multiple units. Further, it is unprecedented and unsupported by the City's own ordinances.

There are many city regulations which govern the way we may use our property. The regulations governing historic districts, which are essentially the Secretary of the Interior's Standards, are extremely benign. They are less restrictive than many of the currently existing Planned District Ordinances in the City, none of which were subjected to a vote of the property owners. According to both the City's own current ordinance and the proposed ZCU, there is no provision for individuals to "opt out" of a historic district.

Soho believes that the policies which will govern the South Park district and other proposed mid-city districts should be made prior to establishment of the district, and after full discussion and consideration by community groups and the city. The Historical Site Board will be addressing these issues on August 27. SOHO will urge the Site Board to adhere to its own regulations and the City's code, and continue to implement historic districts as it has been done in the past, through identification of the resource, legal and proper noticing procedures followed by a period of public comment, and establishment of the district. ●

Tour Irving Gill's San Diego masterpieces on October 18

PAUL JOHNSON, AIA

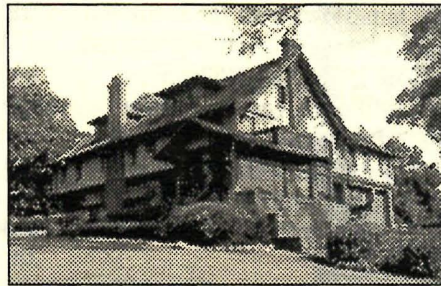
THE SOCIETY OF ARCHITECTURAL Historians/Southern California Chapter, in cooperation with SOHO and the San Diego Historical Society, will present an in-depth look at Irving Gill's residential and institutional work in La Jolla and San Diego in *Irving Gill: Fundamental Truths*. The tour and lectures will examine the architectural climate of southern California during the early twentieth century and how Gill was decades ahead of his time in the introduction of certain construction methods, architectural features, concepts and designs.

The tour begins in La Jolla with a lecture by Marvin Rand, noted architectural photographer and chronicler of Gill's work. Rand's photographs for Esther McCoy's *Five California Architects* (New York: Reinhold Publishing Corp., 1962), was the first introduction to Gill's work for most people. It is Rand's belief that Gill was one of the first Modernist architects. Gill's emphasis on the architectural plan, his expression of interior volumes with exterior shapes, the connection of indoor to outdoor space and Gill's belief that architecture could contribute to the physical, social and emotional well-being of its users are certainly tenants of Modernism. But these criteria are also found in the Arts and Crafts movement. One aspect of tour will examine how Gill should be classified as an architect within the context of history.

In La Jolla, tour goers will see the **Woman's Club** (1913-14), a beautiful building of arches and pergolas in which Gill used concrete tilt-up construction; **The Bishop's School** (1910); the **Kautz House** (1913) the **La Jolla Community Center** (1914-16) and the **Ellen B. Scripps House** (1915-16) facade, now a part of the Museum of Contemporary Art, San Diego (Venturi, Scott Brown and Associates, 1995).

After La Jolla, the tour moves to the Balboa Park area of San Diego. Here we find a variety of Gill's designs. Gill's institutional masterwork, the newly restored **First Church of Christ Scientist**, San Diego (1909), is also included in the tour. If you didn't see

the Church on the SOHO tour, now's your chance. The Church buildings had been hidden by a mid-century modern remodel and the tower had been removed. The congregation chose to restore the Church, including its tower and Judson Studio art glass dome, to its original form. Tour goers will hear about the restoration work and the fortuitous discoveries made during the reconstruction.



The Marston House (1904-05) was clearly influenced by the Arts and Crafts movement, but Gill's deft handling of the simple detailing and geometric composition of the interior was a precursor to the direction his work would soon take. Gill's siting of the house, at the edge of Balboa Park, between a rolling lawn and a formal garden, shows his sensitivity to site planning and the importance of landscaping in his work. Gill's work with landscape architects such as the Olmsted brothers, Lloyd Wright and Kate Sessions will be discussed.

The tour also looks at Gill's work in the context of other architects such as R. M. Schindler, Bertram Goodhue and Frank Lloyd Wright. Guest speakers will explore Gill's influence on a number of architects, both past and present. It should be noted that Gill's Dodge House (1914-16) in West Hollywood was located across the street from Schindler's own house (1922) on Kings Road. Perhaps Schindler's use of concrete and the tilt-up panel was influenced by Gill's earlier use of the same materials and methods at other locations.

Gill's Cubistic designs are found in the other houses on the tour, built from 1906 to 1913. It is here we see the simple lines, well-proportioned massing, arched openings, stucco walls and long pergolas, with just enough references to be responded to as Mission Revival in style. But during Gill's lifetime, most middle class families were not at all interested in the demanding puritanical lifestyle these residences suggested. As the critic Bertha Smith remarked in a 1914 article on Gill, "Not everyone is willing to follow this enthusiast to the extreme limits of monastic severity which is his ideal." Gill's work had to wait to be rediscovered by the later proponents of high-art modernism.

"Gill's view of social, economic and political democracy was not some form of socialism," writes David Gebhard in the new book *Toward a Simpler Way of Life: The Arts and Crafts Architects of California*, Robert Winter, ed. (University of California Press, 1997). "Rather, it was a full commitment to the ideal of the universal middle class, a middle class not living in the congested Victorian cities but in suburbia and the countryside."

Gebhard also writes that Gill continually referred to three underlying concepts: simplicity, honesty, and democracy. While simplicity and honesty exhibit decidedly ethical overtones, he used them primarily as criteria for design. Gill himself wrote that the architectural ideal of the new West should be realized in the small home, which he equated with the vision of democracy.

For information about this tour and lectures, please contact tour organizer Ted Wells at (714) 495-6009 or e-mail at tedwells@twmn.com.

SPACE IS LIMITED, so please reserve early. Cost is \$65 (\$50 for SOHO, San Diego Historical Society, and SAH/SCC members).

The tour admission includes parking in La Jolla, all lectures, slide presentations, admission to sites, discount coupons for lunch at area restaurants, and a foldout map of Gill's work in La Jolla and San Diego. This map will be a valuable resource for anyone interested in Gill's architecture. Books of architectural interest, including some on Gill's work, will be available for purchase, at a special discount, at tour sites in La Jolla and San Diego. •

See tour schedule on page 5. To volunteer to help with the tour (and see the sites for free), call SOHO at 297-9327 and leave a message for Ingrid.

GILL TOUR SCHEDULE:

Morning: Meet at the Museum of Contemporary Art/San Diego for the opening lecture by Marvin Rand. Docents will lead walking tours of the La Jolla sites.

Afternoon: Meet at the First Church of Christ Scientist for a presentation on the restoration of the building. Docent led tours of residences follows. A number of the sites are located within walking distance of one another

At each site on the tour, special guest speakers will be on hand to discuss an area of Gill's work. Guests

include John Reed, architect and Gill historian; Merry Ovnick, author and history professor; Lucinda Eddy, author and historian; Vonn Marie May, author and landscape historian; Paul Johnson, Gill restoration architect; John Berley, architect and SAH/SCC president; George Lentulo, Gill restoration contractor; Clifford McMillan of First Church of Christ Scientist. More historians, archivists and architects will also offer unique perspectives on Gill, the era in which he lived and worked, his building techniques, social implications and design theories. ●

PRESERVATION DESIGN

SOLUTIONS:

Learn how these solutions can apply to your historic building in workshops on September 19 & 26

THE CALIFORNIA PRESERVATION Foundation, a private non-profit statewide preservation organization with over 20 years of experience, is offering a series of one-day workshops focusing on award-winning preservation design solutions and their applicability to other buildings. In these training sessions, winners from the CPF's annual Preservation Design Awards competition will present case studies of exemplary projects from around the state that have been honored for creatively integrating cutting-edge technological, engineering and architectural solutions for difficult historic preservation and design problems. Featured projects include a church, apartment complex, theatre, city hall, railroad bridge, bungalow court, hotel, hospital and private homes, among others. Workshop

participants will have an opportunity to learn about and discuss all aspects of project designs including restoration, materials conservation, seismic retrofit, adaptive reuse, code compliance, Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance, as well as owner goals and project constraints.

The workshops will be at two locations: in Northern California at the Oakland City Hall (built 1914) on September 19 and in Southern California at the Ivy Substation & Media Park (built 1907) on September 26. Cost is \$65 to \$95 (it varies according to whether you are a member of one of the participating organizations -- SOHO is not a cosponsor of this event).

For more information, call the California Preservation Foundation at 510-763-0972 for details. ●

SOHO's annual meeting to be held at Stein Farm on September 15

ALL SOHO MEMBERS ARE INVITED AND ENCOURAGED TO ATTEND SOHO's Annual Meeting on Monday, September 15, at 6:00 P.M. at the Stein Farm in National City. This event is free and the whole family is welcome to attend.

Since so many members who attended this year's People In Preservation Awards at the Balboa Theatre expressed their desire to have more meetings off-site, giving them access to a historic locale at a time when it's closed to the general public, we decided the Stein Farm would be perfect for our meeting. The restored Stein Farm is a living museum of a family farmstead that's over one hundred years old. You'll be able to tour the farmhouse, the barns with all the antique equipment inside, explore the grounds and play with the animals.

Our evening will begin with a potluck supper and tours at 6:00 P.M., followed by elections to the Board of Directors to take place around 7:00 P.M. The SOHO Lady will be awarded to a special member that has served SOHO above and beyond the call of duty in the past year.

Please RSVP to SOHO at 297-9327. Don't forget to bring a dish or dessert to share. SOHO will provide all beverages and paper goods.

Stein Farm is located at 1808 F Street (at 18th) in National City, CA. Directions: Freeway 5 to 24th Street exit. Go east to F Street (1 mile). Turn north onto F Street (left from the west). The farm is located across the street from the John A. Otis School. There is plenty of street parking. ●



The SOHO Lady was discovered over 25 years ago in an alley, waiting to be taken away with the trash. She was rescued as a symbol of SOHO's historic preservation mission and the idea that one person's quirky, interesting, worth preserving and never-to-be-seen-again specimen. Receiving the SOHO Lady is quite an honor.

REMINDER: THE TRAIN TOUR FOR SAN JUAN CAPISTRANO LEAVES ON SEPTEMBER 6

HISTORIAN ALEX BEVIL WILL LEAD US ON ANOTHER TOUR ON SEPTEMBER 6, THIS TIME TO SAN JUAN Capistrano. The tour will leave from the Santa Fe Depot at approximately 8:15 A.M. Join SOHO for a morning of exploring the architecture and attractions 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.

For more information, call tour director Alex Bevil at 619-569-1486. ●

San Diego History Class to begin September 10 at Mason Street School

OUR FRIEND, HISTORIAN ALEX Bevil, will again teach everything you wanted to know about San Diego history at the historic Mason Street Schoolhouse in Old Town State Park, starting Wednesday, September 10 and going through January 21, 1998. Alex will cover the history of our fair city

from its Native American and Spanish beginnings to the coming of Alonzo Horton.

For those familiar with Alex's methods, you know that the class will be very interesting and filled with field trips, guest speakers, pot lucks and more.

The class is free to senior adults (and everyone else if 40% of the class is over 55). There is continuous enrollment throughout the semester. For more details, call Alex at 619-569-1486.●

PRESERVATION QUOTE OF THE MONTH:

It is difficult to imagine the mingled envy and contempt with which future generations will look back to us, who still possess such things, yet made no effort to preserve, and scarcely any to delineate them.

-- JOHN RUSKIN

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:**
- Tours
 - Newsletter
 - Office
 - Membership
 - Workshops
 - Other events.

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MEMBER NEWS

SOHO invites all members to join us for the Annual Meeting on September 15 at Stein Farm in National City. This is a great opportunity to meet others who are as interested in historic preservation as you are. See details and directions on how to get to Stein Farm inside *Reflections*.

Congratulations to new members Rita Archer and John Crial for their August 31st wedding and their generous support of SOHO's preservation goals.

MEMBERSHIP MILESTONES

20 Years

Barbara Hallen

10 Years

Bobbie Bagel

Lucy J. Berk

Betty Goldberg

Dr. Raymond Starr

5 Years

Marilyn Cornell

Dr. Albert Cutri

Erik Hanson

Ingrid Helton

SOHO appreciates your longtime support.

SOHO CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- August/September** SOHO Board meetings: 3rd Tues.
Events Committee: 2nd Tues.
Call SOHO for other meetings.
- September 6** SOHO Rail/Walking Tour of
San Juan Capistrano
Information: 569-1486.
- September 15** SOHO General Meeting at
Stein Farm. RSVP to SOHO.
See inside for directions.
- October 18** Irving Gill Tour 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. Volunteers
needed. See inside for details.
- November 22 & 23** SOHO's Arts & Crafts/
Bungalow Tour and Lectures.
\$15 per lecture, \$25 for house
tour (\$5 less per event for SOHO
members). Volunteers needed.
See inside for details.

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