

# el Presidio



## THE OLD SANTA FE ASSOCIATION

# HAPPY 80TH ANNIVERSARY!

It was standing-room-only for the Old Santa Fe Association's 80th-anniversary celebration on Thursday, Oct. 26, at the historic La Fonda, downtown on the Plaza. The old hotel's elegant Santa Fe Room on the main floor was set up to seat about 100 people, which in most years is considered a large turnout for the group's annual meeting. But as the 5:30 p.m. event drew near, the room had filled and guests were still coming. The hotel staff quickly spread out more chairs, until the space could hold no more. Even then, several people had to stand around the edges for the ceremony. An estimated 150 came.



*Sarah Melton Award recipient, Randall Bell, with OSFA Vice-president Marilyn Bane and city councilor Chris Calvert.*

To enhance the autumn evening, OSFA provided an array of tasty hors d'oeuvres from La Fonda's superb kitchen, and a no-host bar added another touch. The meeting room was donated by OSFA lifetime member Sam Ballen, owner of La Fonda--which coincidentally is noting its own "modern-day" 80th an-



*City of Santa Fe historic preservation planner David Rasch, OSFA President Karen Walker, and OSFA Community Award recipient Wayne Nichols.*

But nobody was complaining. Instead, the brisk, two-hour occasion had a festive air from start to finish. After all, it's not every day that brings an 80th birthday party.



*Ex-OSFA president Debbie Wyant, board member Joanne McCarthy, and long-time member Irene von Horvath.*

niversary this year. Friends mixed and mingled, and new links were made. In the audience were city officials and other leading Santa Feans. The heart of the celebration, however, was the official program.

OSFA president Karen Walker started things



*Jane Farrar accepted an OSFA Community Service Award on behalf of the city's Historic Design Review Board.*

off with a brief recounting of some of the organization's notable achievements since its founding in 1926, and she also drew attention to current public-policy initiatives. Treasurer Richard McCord reported that the group was solid and solvent, with an ade-



*David Rasch, Richard Horcasitas, Dolores Vigil, and city councilor Miguel Chavez.*



*OSFA Board member Richard Ellenberg and city councilor Karen Heldmeyer.*

quate amount in its checking account and backup reserve funds for future special projects that may be launched. He noted, however, that in recent years OSFA has grown increasingly active in support of its mission--and with member dues virtually the only source of funds for these efforts, he urged everyone to renew or sign up for 2007. Board members and officers for the coming year were duly presented and ap-



*Keynote speaker, historian Tom Chavez, Ph.D.*

proved by the membership.

Four prizes were then given. The special service award for an individual went to Randy Bell, a long-serving member of the Historic Design Review Board. Next the Historic Design Review Board itself won a group community service award. The OSFA



*Wayne Nichols and Santa Fe New Mexican editorial page editor, Bill Waters.*

individual community service award went to board member Wayne Nichols, who has represented the organization's causes for more than three decades. And in an encore, Randy Bell was given the first an-



*OSFA President Karen Walker and keynote speaker, Representative Peter Wirth.*

nual Sara Melton Award, named for a bulwark OSFA member who died this year. The prize pays tribute to one who honors "the character of our beloved city with the passion, persistence, intelligence and commit-



*Sarah Melton Award recipient, Randall Bell.*

ment" exemplified by Sara Melton (1930-2006).

The evening was capped by two keynote speakers. State Rep. Peter Wirth recalled one of OSFA's founders, his grandfather architect John Gaw Meem, and also cautioned about the threats to historic preservation inherent in public-private joint projects. Then historian Tom Chávez--who forgot his glasses, could not read his notes, and thus had to ad-lib--broke up the audience with historical put-downs of Santa Fe, now part of the city's proud heritage. He ended the gala evening with a call for OSFA to never stop its work.



*OSFA board members Richard McCord and Tom Spray with Representative Peter Wirth.*

## From *The Santa Fe New Mexican*:

### THE SANTA FE NEW MEXICAN

Wednesday, October 25, 2006

**The West's Oldest Newspaper**

Founded 1849

**Robin M. Martin,**  
Editor and Publisher

**Robert M. McKinney,**  
Editor and Publisher, 1949-2001

**William W. Waters,**  
Editorial Page Editor

**Robert Dean,**  
Managing Editor

202 E. Marcy St. • Santa Fe, N.M. 87501

#### OUR VIEW

## Old Santa Fe Association: *80 years a sus ordenes*

It was a rousing start to a movement that saved Santa Fe from going the way of so much of the Sun Belt: A Roaring '20s proposal, to put a la-di-da vacation resort in the hills above town, met resistance — first from the arts community, then with leading businesspeople and professionals wielding their influence against the project.

From that effort came the Old Santa Fe Association, whose founders constitute a who-was-who when our community, state capital though it was, amounted to only a few thousand sun-baked and highly creative souls. Writer/historian Mary Austin and Ina Sizer Cassidy, wife of painter Gerald Cassidy, were the forces organizing a not-notably-organizable bunch of people. Grocer Henry Kaune, pharmacist John Zook, potter Frank Applegate, painter Gus Baumann and poet Witter Bynner, along with doctors J.A. Massie and Frank Mera and attorney Francis Wilson, among others, celebrated victory against the Texan resort plan. They also took steps to keep the burning of Zozobra open to all Santa Feans.

And having set a tone of preservationism for the City Different, the association did hardly anything during the next couple of decades.

But when the state proposed putting a highway through the middle of town, a revived Old Santa Fe Association put the kibosh on it — only to see St Francis Drive, years later, become a major artery for traffic between Albuquerque and Espanola. But that was better than the Guadalupe Street alignment the state's *ingenieros* originally had in mind.

The association in 1948 helped draft Santa Fe's first master plan, and from then on was a watchdog over attempts to bulldoze our community's old structures and replace them with Mid-Century Modern structures.

Some projects slipped past the association — but when the Desert Inn went up as a modern complex across from the State Land Office, its walls crowding the river channel, the group persuaded the City Council to enact the first of the historic-design rules for which Santa Fe became known.

During the latter part of the last century, the continually growing group got local *politicos* to expand the historic-district restrictions on new construction and renovations as well, helping Santa Fe become a world-renowned travel destination. From time to time, it and the H-board might overstep; caution must be part of their work.

The role of historic preservation in our city's economy is enormous. Tourism is our leading private industry — smoke-stack-free, and largely painless to the populace, give or take a few summer days. And in good winters, our community's warm adobe setting has *après-ski* appeal that helps the Santa Fe Ski Area and the renowned Taos SM Valley compete with the resorts far-ther north in the Rockies.

The respect for our past has turned many visitors into active and contributing members of the community, lots of them involved in the Old Santa Fe Association's continuing efforts at resisting urges to impose Phoenix, Dallas, Denver or Los Angeles upon a place people have come to escape such, uh, wonderfulness.

Through public forums on general topics such as design and preservationism, and through scores of specific efforts to keep our leaders reasonable in the face of speculators' pitches for fancy new projects, this organization has been — and continues to be — a priceless asset to its namesake community.

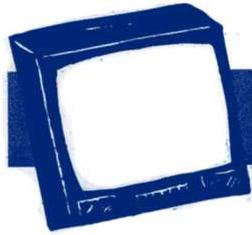
The Old Santa Fe Association is about to celebrate its 80th anniversary, tomorrow evening from 5:30 to 7:30 at the Santa Fe Room of La Fonda. The event is open to the public — so stop by and offer handshakes to your community-volunteer neighbors who've given so much talent and effort to a much-loved community.

## OSFA WATCH

Future of St. Catherine's Indian School  
Future of the northwest quadrant  
Proposed pedestrian overpass on St. Francis Drive  
REI request for exception to the Rail Yard Master Plan

Possible changes to downtown height requirements  
Historic District schools  
City support for Planning Department

## From the *Eldorado Sun Monthly*:



Richard McCord

### According to McCord

## “To Preserve and Maintain”

### FOR 80 YEARS, OSFA HAS FOUGHT TO KEEP SANTA FE OLD

**H**ow's this for an alternative, vision of Santa Fe?

- In the east-side foothills, about where St. John's College is located, tall adobe walls surround many acres, on which a charming faux-Southwestern-style summer colony hosts an array of speakers and performers each year, and wealthy out-of-towners spend the season there, before going home and leaving the site virtually vacant in September.

- Along the route of Guadalupe Street downtown, a major six-lane U.S. highway zips tens of thousands of cars, SUVs, semitrailers and other vehicles through town all day and night! The Santuario de Guadalupe and dozens of other old buildings were knocked down long ago to make way for its construction. Several high overhead walkways enable pedestrians to get across the busy thoroughfare, which is lined on both sides by familiar big-box chain stores and fast-food restaurants.

- Along East De Vargas Street downtown, in the area where the Community Playhouse and numerous old houses now stand, nothing but big, square, multistory state office buildings rise, surrounded by acres of parking lots.

- Two or three blocks on all sides of the Plaza have carefully been preserved to create, a tourist-attraction theme park called Santa Fe Old Town, surrounded by high-rise chain-owned luxury hotels and department stores, all brightly illuminated by neon signs. Similarly preserved along Canyon Road is a strip officially designated the Old Artistic Zone. But long gone from it are the graceful El Zagan, the old Borrego House and

several other" buildings, which have been replaced "with more modern, efficient and profitable structures with adobe facades.

I could go on word painting this striking image of a different Santa Fe, but you get the idea. And my point is this: Without the efforts of one local organization, Santa Fe likely would have turned out that way. That organization is the Old Santa Fe Association (OSFA), and it turns 80 this year.

For the sake of full disclosure, let me note that I am a member of the OSFA board and have been for two or three years. I am proud to serve, to tap into OSFA's heritage, following the trail blazed by many esteemed Santa Feans.

One of them was famed architect John Gaw Meem, who was present at the creation of OSFA in 1926. In that year the City Council offered to give or sell city-owned land east of the old Sunmount Sanatorium to a group of 3,000 rich Texas women who wanted to establish a Chautauqua-style resort. Santa Fe had a population of just 11,000 then, and this project would have profoundly altered its character.

At a packed meeting called to oppose the plan, OSFA was formed and its purpose was spelled out: *"To preserve and maintain the ancient landmarks, historical structures and traditions of Old Santa Fe, to guide its growth and development in such ways as to sacrifice as little as possible of that unique charm, born of age, tradition and environment, which are the priceless assets and heritage of Old Santa Fe."* In other words, it sought to keep Santa Fe authentic—and real. Presented with a petition from OSFA, the council withdrew its offer to the Texas women.

In 1946 the state Highway Department pro-

posed a major route through downtown Santa Fe. Alarmed that the road would cut the city in half, OSFA opposed it and enlisted the Catholic archbishop in the cause. The plan was dropped.

In 1948 OSFA helped draft the city's first master plan, and in 1957 OSFA was instrumental in establishing the Historical Styles Ordinance, which defined a large and old part of the city in which visible architecture had to conform to traditional guidelines. It was the second such law in the country. The first was in Santa Barbara, California.

Since its inception, the Historical Styles Ordinance has been controversial, with some developers and homeowners protesting that it infringes on the rights of private property, and other critics saying it stifles creativity. But it has withstood court tests, and it has without a doubt blocked wholesale change in much of Santa Fe. The ordinance has been extended to parts of the city beyond its original downtown and east-side origin, but even now it covers just a fifth of town, leaving 80 percent open for apartment complexes, Cerrillos Road commercialization, whatever. And yet this ordinance has preserved Santa Fe's heart and soul and essence.

When in the mid-1950s the state wanted to raze the old Houses and other structures along East De Vargas Street and extend the big, boxy government complex onto the property, things looked bad for OSFA because the state was not bound by any of Santa Fe's local historic rules. But in the end, OSFA trumped the state by getting the Barrio de Analco, as the area is called, placed on the National Registry of Historic Places. Then the state could no longer touch it.

The list of OSFA victories goes on, but also in

the mix are some notable defeats. Despite OSFA's efforts, for example, the elegant old Nusbaum House on Washington Avenue was knocked down in 1961, at the urging of Plaza merchants, to make room for a parking lot. OSFA lost its fight to make the big, institutional downtown post office reflect Santa Fe style. The massive Eldorado Hotel was built over OSFA objections. The so-called "Ugly Building" at Washington and Marcy wiped out an old string of one-story shops.

By no means does OSFA win every struggle it enters. Nor should it. Neither this nor any other interest group deserves absolute say over the architectural course of the city. But time and time again, now for 80 years, OSFA has worked diligently to preserve Santa Fe's historical integrity. Even when it loses, OSFA often wins a partial victory, by causing projects to be altered or scaled back to a version more in keeping with the city's character.

And although after eight decades OSFA is perhaps taken for granted in some quarters, it is still very much on, the job, as demonstrated by some quite recent headlines. In one case, the Catholic Archdiocese of Santa Fe withdrew its plans to erect buildings taller than Historical Styles Ordinance height restrictions on six acres it owns behind the downtown cathedral. In another, expansion plans for the Inn at Loretto were downsized and changed in order to be more compatible with traditional considerations. OSFA helped influence both outcomes.

So if you love Santa Fe the way it has turned out, flaws and all, pause and give thanks to OSFA. Without it, we'd surely be living in a different town. (October 2006)

## WANT TO HELP OSFA?

OSFA's many committees can always use help in their historic preservation efforts. If you would like to volunteer and get involved, OSFA would appreciate your assistance. Contact a committee chair if you are interested. Active committees and chairs include:

### *Archives*

Richard McCord, 982-4781

### *Historic Design Review Board*

Marilyn Bane, 984-8428

### *Historic Preservation*

Marilyn Bane, 984-8428

### *Membership*

Richard McCord, 982-4781

### *Newsletter*

Karen Walker, 670-2909

### *Publicity*

Richard McCord, 982-4781

### *Rio de Santa Fe*

Jane Petchesky, 471-2588

### *Special Events*

Wayne Nichols, 699-7280

Joanne McCarthy, 820-1352



# THE OLD SANTA FE ASSOCIATION

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## THE OLD SANTA FE ASSOCIATION

*"Focusing on the future with pride in our past"*



## THE OLD SANTA FE ASSOCIATION

*Preserving Santa Fe since 1926*

### Our Mission

*“To promote the prosperity and welfare of the City and County of Santa Fe and their inhabitants, to preserve and maintain the ancient landmarks, historical structures and traditions of Old Santa Fe and to guide their growth and development in such a way as to promote that unique charm and distinction, born of age, culture, tradition and environment, which are the priceless assets and heritage of Santa Fe.”*

### 80 YEARS OF COMMITMENT TO THE COMMUNITY

- 1926 OSFA FOUNDED:** New group successfully fights City Council to save 3,000 acres around the present-day location of St. John's College from becoming an elitist seasonal colony
- OSFA** ensures that Zozobra festivities at Fiesta be open to all the citizens of Santa Fe
- 1945 OSFA** successfully fights proposed highway through the heart of downtown, thereby helping protect the Santuario de Guadalupe and other historic buildings
- 1948 OSFA** helps draft the city's first Master Plan
- 1956 OSFA** and National Park Service save Barrio de Anasco from destruction by the State by ensuring it would be placed on the National Registry of Historic Places
- 1957 OSFA** members author Historic Styles Ordinance, which defines a large and old part of the city in which visible architecture has to conform to traditional guidelines.
- 1960 OSFA** creates the Historic Santa Fe Foundation
- 1966 OSFA** saves 19th-century Padre Gallegos House
- 1970 OSFA** gets the Acequia Madre on the State and National Registry of Historic Places
- 1972 OSFA** gets Historical Zone extended to the museum area
- 1973 OSFA** aids the Historic Santa Fe Foundation in purchase of Tully House
- 1974 OSFA** forms Santa Fe Federation of twenty-two neighborhood organizations to intervene in planning issues
- 1980 OSFA** advocates for a city bus service
- 1983 OSFA** initiates extension of historic regulations to five additional areas
- OSFA** instrumental in obtaining General Plan recognition of neighborhood organizations
- 1984 OSFA** receives two permanent seats on the city's seven-member Historical Styles Review Board; review body becomes independent of the Planning Commission
- OSFA** hosts first community forum on the Railyard
- Eldorado Hotel plan is approved by Council; sole dissenting vote is cast by OSFA representative on the Historic Design Review Board, Richard Hubbell
- 1986 OSFA** celebrates 60th anniversary at La Fonda
- Honors the builder of Zozobra, Gustave Baumann; fire dancer Jacques Cartier, the voice of Zozobra, Harold Gans; and pyrotechnician John Conron
- Gives awards to leaders in historic preservation: the Paloheimos, Myrtle Stedman and Jack Watson
- OSFA** lobbies for plan to get water back in the downtown Santa Fe River

- 1992** OSFA hosts forums and lobbies for human-scale downtown buildings and coherent streetscapes
- 1994** OSFA supports City acquisition of the Railyard for development for the community
- 1997** OSFA lobbies for: professional staff for the Historic Design Review Board, public transportation, and appropriate right of way for the Westside Relief Route  
OSFA hosts in Santa Fe the annual convention of the National Trust for Historic Preservation
- 1999** OSFA holds a Community Forum with national experts on the need and economics of a new community, conference and convention center
- 2001** OSFA joins community discussions on water and growth
- 2003** OSFA mounts public forum with Charleston, S.C., Mayor Joseph Riley on need for Downtown Master Plan  
OSFA contributes to Historic Design Review Ordinance update
- 2004** OSFA sponsors Historic Preservation Week with the Historic Santa Fe Foundation and the City of Santa Fe  
OSFA petitions City Council in support of the Historic Design Review Board decision to preserve the historic fabric of Plaza Chamisal  
OSFA board members encourage City Council to purchase rather than lease water rights for the city  
OSFA prevents "hotel" intrusions in city residential and historic districts  
OSFA supports modification of the Historical Museum to better reflect Santa Fe's historic standards  
OSFA helps save portion of John Gaw Meem's Villa Gra Building
- 2005** OSFA initiates Santa Fe's first-ever Downtown Master Plan  
OSFA hosts forum on archaeology at the proposed civic center; evidence of an 800-year old prehistoric village near Sweeney Center  
OSFA continues to support a living Santa Fe River  
OSFA contests the city's interpretation of the Ridgetop Ordinance  
OSFA protects the Borrego House with a written agreement  
OSFA promotes landmark status for St. Catherine's Indian School, the New Mexico School for the Deaf
- 2006** OSFA lobbies the mayor, City Council, staff and steering committee members to maintain historic zoning and streetscape ordinances in the Downtown Master Plan  
OSFA joins South Capitol neighbors in supporting ordinance prohibiting intrusion of second-story addition on West Houghton Street  
OSFA supports denial of East Buena Vista Street lot-split appeal to the City Planning Commission  
OSFA opposes the Old Taos Highway General Plan Amendment and Rezoning request that would change the plan from "very low density" to "residential high density" and would directly contravene the City's stated goal and policy of preserving the character and integrity of its neighborhoods  
OSFA requests that the City enforce the standard approval process for projects in the historic area, including the proposed Cathedral Project  
OSFA promotes an alternative to the St. Francis overpass  
OSFA promotes adoption of Historic Building Codes and Earthen Building Codes

### **OSFA hosts 80th Anniversary Celebration at La Fonda!**

## **THE OLD SANTA FE ASSOCIATION**

*"Focusing on the future with pride in our past"*

## From the Mayor:



# City of Santa Fe, New Mexico

200 Lincoln Avenue, P.O. Box 909, Santa Fe, N.M. 87504-0909

David Coss, *Mayor*  
Asenath Kepler, *City Manager*

**Councilors:**

Miguel M. Chavez, Mayor Pro Tem, Dist. 3  
Patti J. Bushee, Dist. 1  
Chris Calvert, Dist. 1  
Karen Heldmeyer, Dist. 2  
Rebecca Wurzburger, Dist. 2  
Carmichael A. Dominguez, Dist. 3  
Matthew E. Ortiz, Dist. 4  
Ronald S. Trujillo, Dist. 4

October 24, 2006

Old Santa Fe Association  
PO Box 1055  
Santa Fe, NM 87504

Dear OSFA Board and Members;

It is with great pleasure that I wish to congratulate you for the Association's long-standing commitment to maintaining the unique charm of Santa Fe. For eighty years, you have been a vocal civic-minded group that has helped to sculpt our small-town's character with its unblemished traditional heritage.

We especially appreciate the Association's reputation, along with its influential individual members, for urging the City to draft the historical zoning ordinance. With your assistance in successful defense of court challenges, this ordinance continues to be a strong regulatory document.

I am sure that the City will benefit from your ongoing stewardship of old Santa Fe as we face new challenges in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and beyond.

Sincerely,

Mayor David Coss

## Mayor and City Council

Mayor Coss 988-7373

**District 1**

Patti Bushee 982-1270  
Chris Calvert 992-8097

**District 2**

Karen Heldmeyer 982-3968  
Rebecca Wurzburger 982-6351

**District 3**

Miguel Chavez 984-8125  
Carmichael Dominguez 955-6590

**District 4**

Matthew Ortiz 424-3930  
Ron Trujillo 424-1791

# *el Presidio*



## THE OLD SANTA FE ASSOCIATION

P.O. Box 1055, Santa Fe, NM 87504 • Return Service Requested

### OUR MISSION

*"To promote the prosperity and welfare of the City and County of Santa Fe and their inhabitants, to preserve and maintain the ancient landmarks, historical structures and traditions of Old Santa Fe and to guide their growth and development in such a way as to promote that unique charm and distinction, born of age, culture, tradition and environment, which are the priceless assets and heritage of Santa Fe."*

#### **OSFA CONTACTS**

Karen Walker, *President*  
982-0118

Marilyn Bane, *Vice President*  
984-8428

Bob Jones, *Secretary*  
989-8558

Richard McCord, *Treasurer*  
982-4781

#### **Historic Preservation Committee**

Marilyn Bane 984-8428  
Wayne Nichols 984-3000

#### **Directors**

Rad Acton, Randall Bell, Jean Berinati, Phillip Crump, Deanna Einspahr, Richard Ellenberg, Maurice Lierz, Bill Loeb, Tim Maxwell, Joanne McCarthy, Wayne Nichols, Jane Petchesky, Tom Spray, Mac Watson, Ted Williams

#### **Ex Officio**

Elaine Bergman, Executive Director  
Historic Santa Fe Foundation

Jill Momaday-Gray  
Department of Cultural Affairs

Ramona Valdez-Lopez  
Fiesta Council

Graciela Tome, Chair  
Historic Santa Fe Foundation