CHAPTER CONNECTIONS

Did you know that SDA has 16 chapters across the U.S. and Canada? SA Chapter member Laurie Breen interviewed Natalie Newman, CDFA, of the Orange County Chapter, to learn more about her insights and experiences over nearly 20 years with SDA. Natalie is the Marketing Data Systems Coordinator for ECORP Consulting, Inc.

Meet Natalie Newman of SDA Orange County

in her own words...



Tell us a bit about your background.

I'll keep it short and sweet. I was born and raised in Long Beach, California. Joined SDA in October 2002. Have attended thirteen national conventions, my first in San Diego in 2003. Have held chapter officer positions for almost 20 years. Chaired the first annual Canstruction Orange County Design-Build Competition. Have volunteered time on national committees and was on ExCom for four years. Now currently the Awards Committee Chair and a National Past-President.

What three words describe you best?

Adventurous – I like to do things that excite me like trying out new experiences, thinking about and discussing new and crazy ideas. And I love traveling, seeing new sites, and experiencing new things, which sometimes means stepping out of my comfort zone and taking chances. Not that I would jump out of a plane or eat anything put on a plate in front of me. Things on my bucket list include seeing the northern lights of Iceland, dance at the Rio Carnival, and rave at a full moon party on the tiny island of Koh Phangan.

Artistic – I love painting. I love doing arts & crafts with my granddaughter and making up stories together. I love getting together with my girlfriends for paint pour days or gathering for online craft nights.

Perceptive – I'm one of those that listens to their intuition and likes to observe and understand what's going on around me and my environment. This sometimes keeps me from automatically answering questions or making choices.

How did you discover SDA?

I discovered SDA through Betsy Nickless in the Orange County chapter. We worked in the same architectural firm and sometimes she'd ask me to help print SDA/OC chapter information out, which I read and asked questions about. Or she'd have me attend seminars on Office Administration focus areas.

How did you get involved at the National level? What was your first exposure, and your journey that led you to National President?

I remember the first time I thought about being National President. It was at the 2006 national convention in Los Angeles. Judy Beebe (Seattle) had come up to me and told me how impressed she was of me as a newbie for getting up and volunteering as an assistant for the speaker during a seminar. We had a great chat and she put the first thought in my head.

My first exposure to working on the National level was joining the new Communications Committee with Debra Ellis (Denver), committee chair, and was invited by Dana Sather (San Diego), committee member. It was exciting to work on that committee as "social media" was a new thing at that time. Eventually I took over as chair.

What's your favorite thing about SDA?

My favorite thing about SDA is how it has empowered me to be more confident in my job and created opportunities for me to take on roles and experiences I never would have had the chance to do.

What keeps you busy these days, when you're not at work/working hard for SDA?

Well... considering the past year and a half we've pretty much been on lockdown; I'd say reading would be number one. I love reading all kinds of genre. Second would be spending time with my granddaughter and taking care of my mom. Third would be doing something artsy: painting, paint pours, macrame, jewelry making, baking, planting succulents, etc. Fourth, would be binge-watching shows that I never had the time to watch before.

What advice do you have for our newer members who are looking to take their engagement to the next level?

Do it! Just jump in and say 'yes'.

I remember attending my first chapter board meeting just to see what it was like. That night I volunteered to write member profiles for the chapter newsletter. From that, I got to meet and get to know a lot of our chapter members on a personal basis.

Then when the next Call-for-Nominations came up, I ran for Recording Secretary and held that position for many years until I spent four consecutive years as Chapter President, before moving on to the National level.