



# ORANGE PRESERVES

Spring 2025

## REFLECTIONS



By Rob Boice | *President, OTPA*

**FOR 39 YEARS the Old Towne Preservation Association has fought to preserve, protect and enhance historic Old Towne Orange.**

Our first effort was to lobby the city to transform the Old Towne Design Guidelines into The Old Towne Design Standards. Today, those Standards run alongside those of the Secretary of the Interior Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties.

In 1997, the OTPA Board approved the herculean task of placing Old Towne on the National Register. We submitted a more than 400-page application, and Old Towne Orange was soon awarded National Register status, making it the largest National Historic Register District in California. Those are only two of the most important contributions that OTPA has made in preserving our city's historic resources.

In late 2024, OTPA helped create a coalition agreement with the Orange Legacy Alliance (OLA), a



new preservation organization dedicated to "fostering awareness and appreciation of our community's historic and cultural resources."

Two of OTPA's board members sit on the OLA board. (continued on page 3)

## 19th ANNUAL HISTORIC HOME TOUR



**Saturday & Sunday • Sept 27 & 28  
10 am - 4 pm**

To buy your tickets,  
at [www.otpa.org](http://www.otpa.org)

**CANCELED!**

or by check payable to

Old Towne Tour, P. O. Box 828,  
Orange, CA 92856.

**Be sure to write HOME TOUR on your check.**

Tickets will not be mailed out. Your name will be placed on our Will Call list. On tour days, please stop by the Will Call table located at the Orange Public Library at 407 E. Chapman to receive your booklet, which is your admission to the tour. Will Call hours: 10am - 2:30pm

**Members \$30 / Non-Members \$35  
\$40 when purchased on tour days**

For more information, visit us at  
[www.otpa.org](http://www.otpa.org) or call **714.639.6840.**



# 2025 EVENT CALENDAR



## OTPA'S 9th ANNUAL STATE OF OLD TOWNE FORUM

6:00 pm • Thursday, April 17, 2025  
City Hall Council Chambers



Come hear Mayor Dan Slater, District 1 Councilmember Arianna Barrios, City Manager Tom Kisela, City Treasurer Garrett Smith, Police Chief Adam Jevic and Chapman VP Community Relations Alisa Driscoll discuss the big issues facing Old Towne. Free and open to the public.

**RSVP ONLINE NOW at [otpa.org](https://otpa.org)**

## MAY is PRESERVATION MONTH

Join OTPA for these free workshops during the Month of May!

### PRESERVATION 101

11:30 am to 12:30 pm • Sunday, May 4, 2025

Learn the basics of historic preservation at this introductory workshop & museum tour.

### HISTORY IN YOUR HANDS

10:00 am to 12:00 pm • Wednesday, May 14, 2025

Learn with a hands-on workshop how to restore and preserve historic markers in our community.

### LOST & FOUND: Discovering the Hidden History of Your Home

5:30 pm to 6:30 pm • Wednesday, May 21, 2025  
— and —

11:00 am – 12:00 pm • Thursday, May 22, 2025

Learn how to research a home's historic past along with a tour of the Orange History Center.

### FOUNDATIONS, FRAMES & FOLIAGE

10:00 am to 12:00 pm • Saturday, May 31, 2025

A hands-on workshop to learn tips and tricks for maintaining and enhancing historic homes and landscapes.

## OTPA's INTERNATIONAL STREET FAIR - IRISH BEER BOOTH

Friday – Sunday • Aug. 29, 30, 31, 2025

Get ready to enjoy some Guinness and other great imported brews while soaking up the lively tunes of The American Wake and Sligo Rags bands. Irish Street—where the fun's always flowing and the music never stops! Sláinte! (Cheers! Also pronounced "slawn-cha")

## OTPA'S 19TH ANNUAL HISTORIC HOME TOUR

10:00 am to 4:00 pm • Saturday & Sunday, Sept. 27-28, 2025

Go back in time and tour an amazing collection of historic homes, gardens and structures in Old Towne Orange, California's largest Residential Historic District.

**ORDER TICKETS ONLINE NOW at [otpa.org](https://otpa.org)**

## OTPA'S 7th ANNUAL HAUNTED HALLOWEEN DECORATING CONTEST

Judging 4:00 to 7:30 pm • Saturday, Oct. 18, 2025

Join the fun and spook up your home or business.

The judges will tour Old Towne to select the winners.



2024 Best Theme Winner, 314 East Maple

## OTPA'S 5th ANNUAL ART OF WINE GALA

5:30 pm to 7:30 pm • Saturday, Nov. 8, 2025

Hilbert Museum of California Art

Enjoy tasting the finest in interesting wines from California's most noted boutique vineyards, while browsing the Hilbert's special exhibits.

**ORDER TICKETS ONLINE NOW at [otpa.org](https://otpa.org)**



## OTPA'S 38th ANNUAL HOLIDAY DECORATING CONTEST

Judging 5:00 to 8:00 pm • Saturday, Dec. 13, 2025

Enjoy the spirit of the season by decorating your home or business for the holidays. Judging will be in these categories: Most Beautiful, Most Old Fashioned, Best Use of Lights, Most Original, Most Whimsical, Best Block, Most Festive (business), and Honorable Mention.



## 2025 OTPA BOARD OF DIRECTORS



**Rob Boice**, President

**Diana Zdenek**, Vice President | **Carol Craig**, Secretary  
**Garrett Smith**, Treasurer | **Sandy Quinn**, Past President

### — COMMITTEE CHAIRS —

**Long Duong**, Preservation

**Carrie Frisby**, Membership

**Robert Paul**, Fund Development/Street Fair

**Brandy Romero**

Community Involvement & Fund Development/Home Tour

**Garrett Smith**, Special Events

**Valerie Smith**, Education & Research

**Shandra Wilson**, Communications

### — MEMBERS-AT-LARGE —

Susanna Branch | Ryan Cavalier | Sean Chavarria

Wil Dee | Tita Smith | Mark Wallace | Jonathan Zimmerman

# Old Towne Preservation Association HOW IT ALL BEGAN...

Here's the story of how a bunch of "street fighters" decided to save Old Towne, the charming and unique neighborhood we call home.

By Dale Rahn, OTPA founder and first president

*If we don't do it, nobody else will.*

Those were challenging words to me in January of 1985. Neighbors living next to Chapman University, then Chapman College, posed that statement when I met with them about organizing the community to protect their neighborhood, in particular one historic house slated for demolition in order to make room for the new library.

We, the neighbors, met at Watson's Drug Store and decided to organize.

*Golly, has it really been that long ago? Almost 39 years ago I started something that captured my passion and awakened my mind! I was 34 years old; I was in the final throes of finishing my graduate degree in Landscape Architecture, I had two baby daughters and was deep in refurbishing our home on the 300 Block of North Harwood.*

*I was enflamed with "visions" of what Old Towne could be. The existing City government was void of any real vision, I think they wanted something, but they were mired in old ways of thinking. Thankfully, Old Orange was beginning to be "found" by then "Yuppies" like me! I found them, or they found me, none-the-less, we gathered like-minded, passionate, hardworking, self-sacrificing people to organize our little community. We haggled over a name, we wanted something catchy, finding nothing acceptable, we settled on Old Towne Preservation Association.*

*We were not experts in preservation, we were not purists either, we simply wanted Old Towne residential areas to continue as family neighborhoods, we wanted the Plaza core to be dynamic, interactive, vital again. We looked at it as a whole; entwined, residences, commercial and governmental, like any small town. I walk through Old Towne with my now grown children and their spouses, and my grandchildren, I see and experience "we did it!". We changed it all, residences, the commercial areas and even the government for the better!*

**Pictured left to right: The Young and the Restless. Original "street fighters" who formed OTPA. Founder and first president Dale Rahn, current Mayor Dan Slater, and former Mayor Joanne Coontz.**



(**REFLECTIONS** by Rob Boice, continued from page 1)

Last October, the Orange City Council unanimously voted to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with OTPA and OLA. The objective of the MOU is to provide the City Council with a report on research and a direction forward on three critical issues affecting preservation work in our city.

- 1** Produce a Historic and Cultural Resources Preservation Ordinance
  - 2** Better define the oversight of the Design Review Committee
  - 3** Provide recommendations to improve the Mills Act Program.
- We expect to present this report in Spring 2025.

This effort is among the most important work that OTPA has embarked on in our 39-year history. Addressing these three issues will secure the preservation of our considerable collection of historic resources for years to come.







## OLD TOWNE PRESERVATION ASSOCIATION

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[www.otpa.org](http://www.otpa.org)

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# FOOTNOTES

**LIGHT THE CANDLES** with OTPA in 2026 when we celebrate the 40th anniversary of our founding. The Board has decided to alternate OTPA's popular Preservation Awards Garden Party & Dinner Gala with the Historic Home Tour. So be sure to join us this year for the Home Tour, and next year for the Preservation Awards and 40th birthday celebration!



**OTPA's BOARD OF DIRECTORS** meets monthly at the Orange Public Library and gathers annually in January for a half-day Planning Retreat to map out the year's preservation projects, schedule and budget. Want to get involved? Let us know what committee you'd like to serve on at [otpa.org](http://otpa.org).

**OTPA ASSIGNED AN INTERN FOR THE OFFICE OF THE MAYOR**, funded by its Anne Siebert Scholarships, to work on preservation projects. Pictured below is intern Lucas McDonald working with History Center director Aida Cuevas to digitize information on Old Towne's historic homes into the Center's permanent records, providing a valuable resource for Old Towne residents and researchers.



**OTPA PRESIDENT ROB BOICE** speaks at the City's 2nd Annual Economic Development Forum. The Forum explored ways to improve the City's vibrant business community, particularly in Old Towne where preservation has been instrumental in creating an environment which attracts visitors for dining, shopping and exploring.

**Pictured left to right:**  
Chapman Business School  
Professor Marshall Toplansky,  
City Economic Development  
Manager Aaron Schulze,  
City Council Member  
Arianna Barrios and  
OTPA President Rob Boice.



**Q:** What's going on with the Royer Mansion at 307 E. Chapman Ave. across from City Hall?

**A:** The City is looking to lease or sell the historic Royer Mansion to an investor who can renovate the property for use as either a boutique hotel or high-end restaurant. The City has a few interested parties with experience in doing quality projects in Old Towne, and proposals may be before City Council soon. It was built in 1900 and once was the home of Orange Mayor Dr. Daniel Franklin.

**Have a question?**  
Send to Newsletter  
Editor, [otpa.org](http://otpa.org)

