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*Member Emeritus*  
**HOWARD REBACK**  
Bailes & Associates, Inc.



*18th Annual*

**ROSES AND LEMON  
AWARD BREAKFAST  
1998**

**THURSDAY, APRIL 9TH  
THE BILTMORE HOTEL  
LOS ANGELES**

*The Downtown Breakfast Club is an organization of professionals whose main purpose is to recognize, foster and encourage the orderly and planned growth of Downtown Los Angeles. The group consists of individual representatives of all the major fields of development: real estate, banking, international investment groups, architects and engineers, urban planners, investment brokers, insurance development organizations and governmental agencies. Meeting on a bi-monthly basis, the group maintains a profile of current business activity through featured guest speakers as recruited by its members. This type of professional interface encourages and supports sound principles of developing a better quality of life for Downtown Los Angeles.*

## WELCOME

Fritz Kastner

## SPECIAL AWARD TO COLBURN SCHOOL OF PERFORMING ARTS

Presented by

Fritz Kastner

## PRESENTATION OF ROSE AWARDS

John Hendricks

Bob Stewart

Lauren Meléndrez

John Whitaker

Michelle Isenberg

### I. STRUCTURES

California Science Center  
Institute Plaza  
Parkside Apartments

### II. INTERIORS

Aames Financial Corporation  
New Mart Building  
Traxx

### III. EVENTS / GOOD IDEAS

Cultural Programs at the  
downtown Central Library  
MTA Bookmark Project  
and MTA Bus pLAys  
Shakespeare Festival / LA

### IV. CIVIC / PRIVATE COMMITMENT

Downtown Center Business  
Improvement District  
Belmont Learning Complex  
Staples Center

### V. PUBLIC ART

California Science Center's Science Plaza  
Galeria Sister Karen Boccalero  
at:  
Casa De Sousa Olvera St.  
Satellite gallery space of  
Self Help Graphics  
Photo Essay Bus Card Project:  
Photographer Willie Garcia &  
Writer Marisela Norte  
MTA

## PRESENTATION OF THE LEMON AWARD

Howard Reback

## ADJOURNMENT

For information regarding the Roses & Lemon Awards Breakfast  
visit our Web Site

[www.LosAngelesDowntown.com/97R-L/R-L.html](http://www.LosAngelesDowntown.com/97R-L/R-L.html)





# Squeezed by Red Tape

## Downtown Building Gets 'Lemon' Award

### REGIONAL REPORT ..... DOWNTOWN

By MELINDA FULMER  
SPECIAL TO THE TIMES

A massive downtown redevelopment project that crumbled in the early 1990s was singled out Thursday for dragging down a several-block area nearby. The owners of the 81-year-old Brockman building, which used to house clothier Brooks Brothers, and the adjacent buildings on a block-long dilapidated stretch of Seventh Street between Grand Avenue and Olive Street received the annual zinger in the Downtown Breakfast Club's 18th annual Roses and Lemon Awards.

"It's a blight on our city," said presenter Howard Reback. "Empty buildings don't have to be ugly, but on this one they've outdone themselves."

The awards, given by a group of almost 30 business leaders concerned with the aesthetics and quality of life downtown, were held at the Biltmore Hotel.

The Seventh Street site, which decades ago was a high-rent shopping district, is now owned by an affiliate of All Nippon Airways called Grand Avenue Hotel Partnership. The Brockman building was emptied of tenants, gutted and then abandoned in the early 1990s after a \$400-million hotel, office and retail development went south during the real estate slump.

Since then, it has sat vacant, boarded up with peeling plywood and covered in graffiti, depressing the value and marketability of nearby office buildings and restaurant sites, the club said.

But a representative of the buildings' owners says they are stuck in a bureaucratic Catch 22. The parking lots along the back have been sold by one of the former owners to a Denver developer. That sale meant the buildings' owners can't develop



GENARO MOLINA / Los Angeles Times

Brockman building, owned by an All Nippon Airways affiliate, used to house Brooks Brothers store.

the site because they're unable to build the parking structure spelled out in the development agreement. They need the parking lots and their development rights to do that.

Furthermore, if the partnership wants to demolish the buildings, they must pay the city a \$5 million fee to restore other historic buildings—more than the current owners think the site is worth, said Ted McGonagle, of Property Solutions in Granada Hills, a consultant to the buildings' owners. The fee, which the previous developer negotiated with the city as mitigation for tearing down old buildings, is spelled out in the development agreement and the environmental impact report.

"The people who have the buildings can't do the project and they can't demolish the buildings. The lemon should not be going to us, but a combination of the CRA [Community Redevelopment Agency] and the [Los Angeles] Conservancy [a historic preservation group]. Nothing can happen on the property unless we get rid of the existing entitlements," McGonagle said. He pegs the cost of redeveloping the

property at almost \$22 million.

Don Spivack, CRA deputy administrator, acknowledges that the owners are trapped in a difficult situation, but says he is working with them to dissolve the development agreement. The hard part, he says, will be for a developer to spend the time necessary to compile a new environmental impact report and come up with the money to mitigate the effects of any new construction.

"Whether [this project] will pencil depends on the sale price you attach to it. How much of their investment are they willing to write off?" he said. Sources say the original development group had sunk about \$60 million into the development before calling it quits. Until someone steps in to develop the project, Spivack said, he is hoping his agency and the owners can come to terms on a cleanup.

"We have to come to some agreement about making it look presentable," Spivack said.

Winners of the breakfast club's Rose awards included: The California Science Center, a museum and education center that opened earlier this year in Expo-



Los Angeles Times

sition Park; Traxx, a new restaurant in Union Station inspired by classic railroad dining cars; and Colburn School of Performing Arts.

The club also bestowed honors on several other public programs that enhance life downtown, including the \$3.2 million Downtown Center Business Improvement District, a group launched last month to spruce up the city's core, the Shakespeare Festival/LA and an Metropolitan Transportation Authority photo essay that profiled MTA workers on bus advertisements.



# See What Grows in Downtown

Breakfast Club Dispenses Awards, Including a Huge Surprise

by Jon Regardie

The roses smelled sweet, but the lemon bared the sharpest thorn at the Downtown Breakfast Club's (DBC) annual awards last Thursday. And oh yeah, there were two special presentations, including a surprise that struck very close to home.

The DBC began the Roses and Lemon Awards in 1981 both to honor Downtown's commendable structures, renovations and historic preservations, and to jab at a person,

## DOWNTOWN PROJECTS

place or project that fails the community. Winners beam and losers—which in the past include the Board of Public Works, Parker Center and Pershing Square, *twice*—almost never show up.

Approximately 350 people in the Regal Biltmore Hotel watched the first Special Rose go to the Colburn School of Performing Arts, which will open a campus next to the Museum of Contemporary Art this summer, a move expected to increase Downtown night and weekend life. The school will bring up to 1,500 music, drama and dance students, and a 420-seat concert hall, to the area.

The Structures Rose went to the 245,000-square-foot California Science Center, which opened in February. The \$130 million project is heralded as a major step in boosting Exposition Park. Museum Executive Director Jeffrey Rudolph accepted the award, mentioning that more than 500,000 people have traipsed through the doors since the February opening. Then he added, "Keep coming. We're not telling you not to come like the Getty."

(For the record, the Getty is now airing radio commercials warning that visitors who arrive during peak hours may be denied entrance, and instead urging them to come at other times.)

Traxx restaurant in Union Station earned the Interiors Rose for its design by Rogerio Carvalheiro, who took hints from railroad dining cars. Traxx General Manager and Executive Chef Tara Thomas claimed the prize... in her white chef's shirt! She observed, "Union Station could have been home to a Chubby Chicken or a Beefy Bowl. Instead they chose to honor its integrity."

Shakespeare Festival/LA captured the Events/Good Ideas award. The theater group stages an annual summer Shakespeare production in various Downtown locales, charging only a can of food for entry. This summer's show is *Julius Caesar*, on the steps of City Hall. The troupe's Ben Donnenberg accepted the Rose, though presenter Lauren Meléndrez addressed him as "Bob." Which led Donnenberg to quip, "Thank you, Liz."

The Downtown Center Business Improvement District got the Civic/Private Commitment Rose, meaning the purple-clad cleaning and security force patrolling Downtown now have the right to pin red petals to their outfits. The BID began March 12 after 65 percent of the land owners in the district elected to tax themselves to fund services the City does not provide.

Perennial whipping boy and previous Lemon recipient, the MTA actually won a Public Art Rose with its Photo Essay Bus Card Project. Photographed by Willie Garcia and written by Marisela Norte, the placards in MTA buses pay tribute to the 6,000 workers in the MTA system, with artistic images and details about their lives beyond the wheels and rails.

Sour and Sweet

The Club's Howard Reback gave his usual whimsical Lemon presentation. Accompanied by slides, he led a visual tour of Downtown's vacant, boarded-up buildings... before stopping at the so-called Brooks Brothers building and the

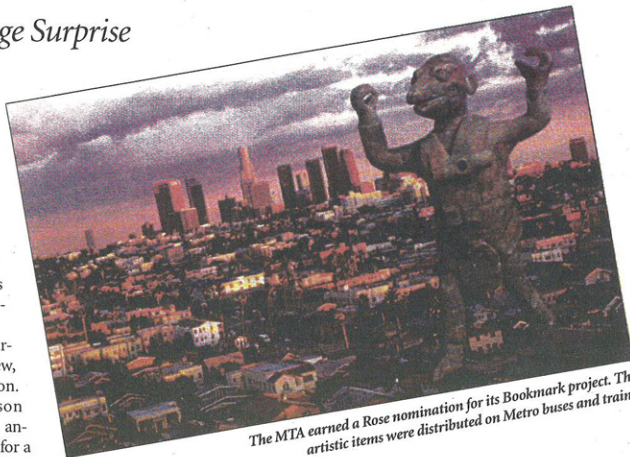
rest of the structures on the south side of Seventh Street between Grand Avenue and Olive Street. The property is owned by Grand Avenue Hotel Partnership.

"Empty doesn't have to be ugly, but they've really outdone themselves," smirked Reback. "This has all the earmarks of a third-world country."

The morning's biggest surprise, at least to a select few, came just before the Lemon. DBC member Liz Harrison took the stage to announce another Special Rose, this one for a 25-year-old company which is "black, white and read all over."

The Rose went to the Downtown News and its Editor & Publisher Sue Laris-Eastin who, Harrison noted, started the paper with a credit card in her home. Laris-Eastin accepted a bouquet and uttered not much more than "I am stunned."

In the past quarter century few Downtowners have seen her closer to speechless.



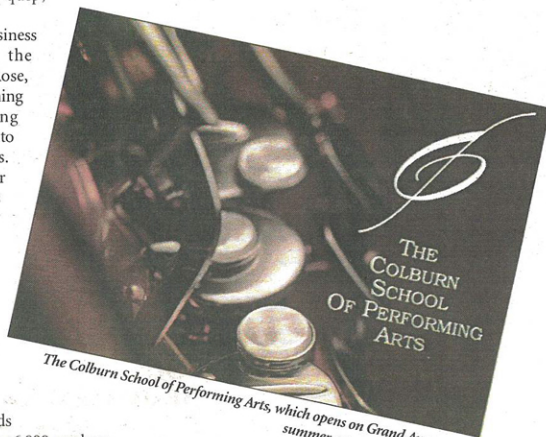
The MTA earned a Rose nomination for its Bookmark project. The artistic items were distributed on Metro buses and trains.



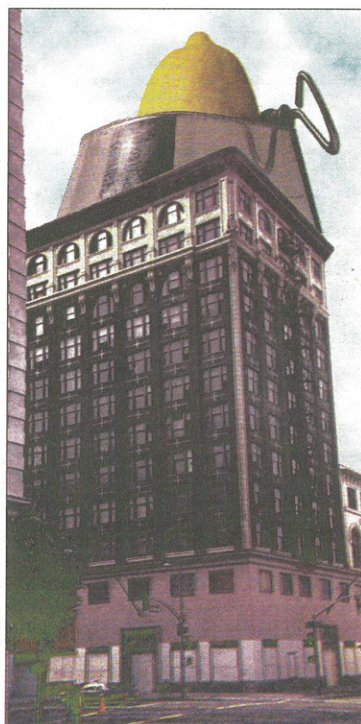
MTA employees, members of the Bus Riders Union and professional actors appeared in Bus pLays, mini-theater pieces held on a bus parked inside the Geffen Contemporary at the Museum of Contemporary Art. Bus pLays was nominated for a Rose.



The smiling faces of the Downtown News, in a rare moment away from the desks. Some of these people were not even born when Sue Laris-Eastin founded the paper 25 years ago. It received a Special Rose.



The Colburn School of Performing Arts, which opens on Grand Avenue this summer, received a Special Rose.



The Downtown Breakfast Club Lemon went to Grand Avenue Hotel Partnership, which owns the Brooks Brothers building and adjacent, dilapidated structures.