

Candidate's Name Marshall Merrifield

**Candidate Questionnaire  
San Diego Regional Arts and Culture Coalition  
December 2007**

**1. Do you feel that arts and culture is important to the city of San Diego and its citizens?  
Yes X No \_\_\_ Please comment**

Art and culture is important to the city of San Diego and its citizens in multiple ways. It enriches the quality of life in the region and promotes the expression of both individuality and social interaction. This expression of art and culture provides new perspectives of life, and therefore challenges our understanding and assumptions about the world around us. Ideally, art and culture challenge us to empathize with those perspectives, and in this way, both become significant educational tools that inspire the desirable qualities of tolerance and appreciation for our fellow citizens – neighbors and visitors alike.

Art and culture fulfills an economic function as well by attracting tourism to the county. The beauty of the TOT model, which was explained at your recent briefing, is that art and culture in San Diego is not only self-sustaining – if the city restores its promise to dedicate 1¢ of the tax to San Diego's Arts and Culture – but also boosts the economy, from providing jobs for San Diego's citizens to bringing monies from cultural visitors into the county's income profile.

**2. Are you aware of the City of San Diego Commission for Arts and Culture and what it does? Yes X No \_\_\_**

We greatly enjoyed the presentation last week. Thank you.

**3. Do you attend arts or cultural events? Yes X No \_\_\_ Last year over 3.9 million people attended events presented by 80 nonprofit arts and culture organizations funded by the Commission through competitive grants (including 21 music groups, 13 theatres, 10 dance companies, 12 museums, five arts education groups and 16 other cultural groups). What are the last three art or cultural events you attended? (Fundraisers and special events excluded)**

- ❖ La Jolla Playhouse Holiday Gala. While this event was a fundraiser, it was also a very entertaining reunion of Des, Andrew Young, and The Red Dirt Band.
- ❖ Tour of La Jolla's Museum of Contemporary Art.
- ❖ Hammond Studio Dance Recital. My 15 year daughter is on the competitive dance team.
- ❖ Youth on Broadway (2006), a three-day interactive session, which I attended with my daughter through the Young Presidents' Association.
- ❖ Kinkaid High School Centennial Celebration, where I performed Teen Angel with my high school quartet.

**4. Are you aware of the source of funding for the Commission? Yes X No \_\_\_ Five years ago the City of San Diego, through its Commission for Arts and Culture, invested one cent of the ten and a half cents of Transient Occupancy Tax (TOT) in arts and culture. Will you**

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**support restoring and dedicating the City's allocation of one cent of TOT to arts and culture? Yes  No**

This is a great goal to be accomplished over the next several years to ensure that San Diego Arts and Culture continues to be redefined, grow, and positively influence the lives of its citizens and visitors.

**5. Do you consider San Diego a cultural destination? Yes  No  According to a regional study, San Diego attracts 2.7 million out-of-town travelers annually who make their travel decisions primarily based on the city's broad variety of cultural attractions (organizations with budgets ranging from \$29,000 to \$18 million). Arts and culture are vital to this community and the local economy. What would you do to promote San Diego as a cultural destination?**

The city's top priority is the urgent need for fiscal and government reform at City Hall. Regional economic development, infrastructure development, and high quality of life standards are the long-term goals. The city's operating dysfunction currently is a major obstacle.

Art and Culture is at the heart of a high quality of life standard. Some of my long term goals in that respect are continual renovations of the spaces already established and well known as arts and culture centers. The Balboa Theatre is an ideal example of how the city is able to work together to renovate an important art center. Appropriately marketing the Balboa Theatre and other arts around San Diego will be crucial to promoting San Diego as a cultural destination.

The promotion of the Balboa Park 2015 Centennial will be a significant opportunity to attract national and international guests.

**6. Did you participate in visual or performing arts classes in school? Yes  No  Did/do your children? Yes  No  Unfortunately, most public schools don't have the resources to provide arts education for our young people. What do you see as the role of the arts and cultural community in addressing this issue?**

Throughout school I was an ardent participant in music, musical theatre, and drama. My interest in theatre began when in 8<sup>th</sup> grade I played the Tin Man in The Wizard of Oz. I progressed to the role of Brack Weaver, the small musical Down in the Valley and Dracula in the small musical Dracula Baby. I hit the big time in 11<sup>th</sup> grade at Kinkaid High School in Huston, TX, with the role of Paul, the stage manager in Kiss Me Kate. My rendition of "Too Darn Hot" led me to be cast in my senior year as de Guiche in Cyrano de Bergerac and in the spring musical as the Jester in Once Upon a Mattress. In our senior year I shared the drama award with Jeff Martin (one of my best friend and current executive producer of the Craig Ferguson show on CBS ... I went on to sell doorknobs). In college I had to make the Sophie's Choice of playing football for Princeton or playing in the Triangle Club, and I chose the former.

I believe that art in some form should be integral to a child's education. If public schools do not have the resources to provide it, then we need to get creative about finding solutions. The resident arts and culture groups who volunteered their time and talent at NTC's open house for The Liberty School is a wonderful example of the art community coming together to solve the art education needs of at risk San Diego school students.

The arts and culture community is the leader in finding solutions to the current art deficit in young people's education, but the government must lead by restoring the 1¢ TOT funding level

over the next many years. The San Diego community at large must be encouraged to shoulder some of that responsibility through offering their time, financial support and other resources if we intend to continue improving art education here in San Diego.

**7. Do you agree that Balboa Park is an important cultural center for the city? Yes  No**  In 2015, San Diego will be celebrating the Centennial of Balboa Park. This will be an opportunity to put San Diego in the national spotlight and on the world map. What is your vision of the importance of this event?

This is an opportunity for San Diego's citizens to recommit themselves to making Balboa Park and its institutions financially stable so it can be sustained into the future. Also, by showcasing Balboa Park through a national campaign, we can reclaim some sense of civic pride about America's Finest City.

**8. Have you been involved in efforts to rebuild and sustain museums and cultural institutions the city? Yes  No**  San Diego is home to a number of very important cultural facilities. How do you plan to protect and sustain the museums and cultural institutions in Balboa Park, the NTC Promenade, Downtown and in our neighborhoods?

Yes. Given the city's financial constraints we need to explore innovative approaches, such as conservancies and public-private partnerships. I have begun meeting individually with cultural leaders like Lou Spisto and Jeff Kirsch to explore and understand the many possibilities that we might pursue.

**9. Are you aware of the City's Public Art Master Plan and what it does? Yes  No**  Many of the world's great cities are renowned for their public art. San Diego's public art includes a range of works from early 20<sup>th</sup> century to contemporary. Name three pieces of public art that you like in the City of San Diego.

The Fountain outside Birch Aquarium, La Jolla  
Storytime, Doyle Park Recreation Center  
Sun God, UCSD

**10. Do you consider yourself a supporter of arts and culture both personally and publicly? Yes  No**

**Have you met officials of the arts and cultural organizations located in the district(s) served by the elective office for which you are running? Yes  No**

**Which organizations do you or members of your family support? (As an audience member, volunteer, donor, subscriber and/or patron, staff member, board member)**

I am a regular audience member, subscriber, patron and supporter of the following organizations:  
La Jolla Playhouse  
Old Globe Theatre  
Birch Aquarium Museum  
Children's Museum

Email to: [yasd@yasandiego.org](mailto:yasd@yasandiego.org)

or

Mail hard copy to:

Young Audiences of San Diego

Attn: Hilliard Harper

4007 Camino del Rio S., Ste. 212

San Diego, CA 92108

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