

# Historical Society Urged in El Cajon

EL CAJON — When the city purchased the old Knox Hotel from the S.H. Mathews Estate it inherited, so to speak, an historic treasure chest that sparkled from the gleam in Al Van Zanten's eye.

But it also purchased a wealth of responsibility that goes along with preserving, stocking and operating a structure that has historical significance.

Van Zanten, the city councilman most responsible for bringing the 96-year-old building under the city's control, does not believe local government should take the initiative away from private citizens of turning the hotel into a prized landmark in El Cajon.

So with the concurrence of his colleagues on the council, an El Cajon Historical Society has been proposed that would not only take responsibility for operation of the Knox Hotel but of other facilities of historical importance in the city.

The chamber of commerce probably will be one of the principle movers in the creation of such a society.

Council Thursday, at an informal conference session with the chamber's executive committee, asked that the chamber help in the formation of the society.

Chamber president Howard Reinheimer promised that this request will be submitted at the board of directors' next meeting.

The proposed historical society, as Van Zanten envisions it, would start making plans for 1976, when the hotel turns a century old and, coincidentally, when the country celebrates its bi-centennial.

Van Zanten believes that these two coinciding birthdays should be played up by the city and the historical society that would attract the attention of El Cajon residents if not the county, state and nation.

Van Zanten's ideas were backed up by councilman Bob Cornett, who has received several calls from interested parties about the future plans for the hotel. Both admitted that, if the chamber did not agree to help form the historical society, they personally would initiate something.

The hotel, once located at Magnolia and Lexington avenues, recently was moved to Judson Park on North Magnolia, where it will be permanently located.

The proposed historical society would be in charge of operating and staffing it, possibly with assistance from other interested organizations, and making recommendations to the city on such things as improvements to the surrounding area.

Reinheimer appeared optimistic that the chamber board will look favorably on the city's request. A decision probably will be made at the board's next meeting Dec. 14.

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## Historical Society Organizes

EL CAJON — The new El Cajon Historical Society is now a growing organization of 70 members whose first order of business is restoration of the historic Knox Hotel.

Some 100 persons were in attendance when the organization held its first general membership meeting Wednesday to organize committees and to ratify interim officers.

As a result of the meeting, the society attracted 70 paid members and support from El Cajon Woman's Club and the local chapter of the Native Sons and Daughters of the Golden West.

Interim officers who were ratified to serve until July 1 were Emil Maiden, president; Craig Knudsen, first vice president and treasurer; Arlene Boyers, secretary; Harriet Stockwell, parliamentarian; Tom Murphy, legal counsel; and Hazel Sperry, historian.

The officers will meet monthly from now on. The next general membership meeting was scheduled for June 20 at 7:30 p.m. in Ballantyne Elementary School.

Maiden said the society will operate out of the chamber of commerce office until a regular office can be established in the Knox Hotel, now located at Judson Park, Magnolia and Cypress avenues. This is expected to occur in about two more months.

The organization established seven standing committees including finance, membership, activities, furnishings, architectural, nominating and budget. Chairmen for each of the committees except activities have been selected.

Members of the organization Wednesday also approved the dues schedule for membership which is \$3 a year for individuals; \$5 for families; \$1 for students; and \$25 for corporate members.

EL CAJON HISTORICAL SOCIETY