

“Nothing makes you more tolerant of a neighbor’s noisy party than being there.”

— Franklin P. Jones

METAMORPHOSIS

Just off the steady pulse of University Avenue, the Cable Lofts building is camouflaged by Hillcrest’s sporadically wooded landscape, and a cluster of aging apartment buildings. Once an austere PacBell spooling plant, the canyon-side building was a sturdy, well-built structure — one worthy of metamorphosis as new millennium housing.

After a fitful and protracted gestation, the old Telco building emerged from its scaffolding-encased chrysalis the archetype of a modern urban habitat. Long awaited, the condo conversion had a near instant waiting list of buyers. “The property agent told me it had just sold,” says resident Dan Stephen of the model unit he viewed. “So, I wrote a check, slipped it in her purse, and left. Two weeks later, she called. The unit had fallen out of escrow and did I still want it?” A shy smile sneaks across Stephen’s face. “I know what I like.”

A retired banker and naval officer, Stephen is also a board member at Balboa Park’s San Diego Museum of Art, and not surprisingly, an avid art collector. Among his impressive collection of masterworks are canvases by neo-modernist John Joseph Enneking, etchings by Richard Diebenkorn, and lithographs of Wayne Thiebaud’s urban landscapes. “It was perfect for my collection,” adds Stephen. “I only wanted this unit.”

ACCIDENTALLY ON PURPOSE

There’s a maxim familiar to all members of the military: Never volunteer for anything. Alas, no dictum exists for when someone else volunteers your services for you. “My neighbor



Dan Stephen (left) in his loft with neighbor Henry Parke and Sydney.

thought I would be a good candidate to head up an arts acquisition committee,” says Stephen. “During one of our homeowner’s association meetings, we were airing the usual complaints when Henry (Parke, his neighbor) volunteers

me to lead an art committee.”

Besides being an officer and a gentleman, the loft’s resident, and foremost, collector had access to world-class collections and artists. His skills would serve the group well. “There was an