

Down on Dream Street

May 31, 2009

At a charity auction, Douglas McCulloh won the right to name a street in a new development in San Bernardino County. He chose "Dream Street," and some months later heard from the county planning department: His street would run north and south, in a tract off the I-10, beneath the flight path of the Ontario airport.

Within an hour, McCulloh was at the site, with his camera and a tape recorder. He chronicled what happened next -- 12,891 photos, 47 1/2 hours of tape, three bankers' boxes of notes, maps and e-mails -- and out of that, he made a book. In it, you'll meet Pat and John Young, the development's builders, along with the graders, framers, slab guys, drywallers, plumbers, electricians, neighbors, salespeople, hopeful buyers and almost everyone else who showed up as Dream Street took shape.

The following photographs are from McCulloh's book, which was published last week. They tell a classic tale, recast for Southern California: the American dream, tied to the almighty dollar and abundant cheap labor, dependent, equally, on self-deception and inextinguishable hope.