

ANNUAL MEETING AT CAMERA OBSCURA

By Ruthann Lehrer

The Annual Membership Meeting of the Santa Monica Conservancy will be held on Sunday, January 25th at 2 pm at the Senior Recreation Center, 1450 Ocean Avenue.

The Annual Meeting features a talk about the building by Board member and architectural historian Marcello Vavala, who recently guided our Landmarks Bus Tour. In addition to board elections (material will be mailed to members), the program includes volunteer recognition and a roundtable discussion with attendees. The Camera Obscura will be open for the occasion, providing an opportunity to become acquainted with this unique attraction.



This mid-century modern building that opened in 1955, was designed by noted local architect Weldon J. Fulton. Local philanthropist Marcellus Joslyn commissioned the new recreation center at Palisades Park. with the Camera Obscura incorporated into the structure's design. To mark this feature, Fulton designed bold script lettering spelling "Camera Obscura" and combined it with the image of a box camera on a tripod. The architecture of the building includes Palos Verdes stone cladding combined with glass walls, sloping roof forms, projecting canopies, exposed rafters, and large cursive signage slanting upwards. Similar features are found at the Montana and Fairview

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3

HOLIDAY PARTY AT KATZ HOME By Ruthann Lehrer



SHANGRI-LA HOTEL RETURNS

By Carol Lemlein

The Shangri-La Hotel, frequently considered the best example of Streamline Moderne in Santa Monica, is reopening after a \$30 million refurbishment. The hotel (then called the Shangri-La Apartments) was built and furnished in 1939 at a cost of \$370,000 by Tulsa oil man and cattle rancher Frank Gillespie, who spent his summers in Santa Monica. His architect, William Foster, who also designed the landmarked Colonial Revival Style Apartments at 423-431 Ocean Avenue, the Pilgrim Lutheran Church on Wilshire and 18th, and the Regency Moderne-style apartments at 212 San Vicente Boulevard.

The Streamline Moderne style expressed an architectural love affair with the new CONTINUED ON PAGE 3



Photo Courtesy of the Santa Monica Public Library Image Archives

You won't want to miss this year's annual holiday party at the charming home of Wendy and Marty Katz at 215 Palisades Avenue on Sunday, December 7, from 3 to 5 pm. Their romantic Spanish Colonial Revival home was built in 1926 and has been enhanced by luxuriant landscaping created by Wendy Katz, principal of Ruby Begonia Fine Gardens. The home features a series of outdoor patios combining water fountains, plantings and architectural elements.

The house was renovated and expanded by Fred Segal in 1979 and 1982. He added the pool and spa, and installed many hand-crafted architectural features made in Mexico. The Katz family purchased the house in 1993 and removed some interior walls to create a spacious family room. Shortly thereafter, The 1994 Northridge earthquake did major damage to plaster walls and fireplaces, all of which have been beautifully restored.

The party is FREE for Conservancy members as an expression of appreciation for your membership support. If it's a nice day, come early to pick up a copy of our self-guided tour of historic homes on Palisades Avenue. Members may bring a nonmember guest who will be encouraged to join. Please rsvp by calling 310-496-3146, or email

rsvp@smconservancy.org Delicious refreshments will be served by our dedicated volunteers. We hope to see you there!

THE CONSERVANCY BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Our board comes from neighborhoods throughout the city and includes:

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MEMBERSHIP DUES

Individual Membership	\$35
Household Membership	\$45
Low Income Membership	\$15
Sustaining Membership	\$100
Supporting Membership	\$250
To support the Conservancy at h levels, or with a business membe (310) 496-3146	0

THE NEWS STAFF

Alice Allen	Dick Orton
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Sherrill Kushner	Judy Parsons
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HOW TO CONTACT THE SANTA MONICA CONSERVANCY Phone us at

(310) 496-3146 -and leave a message Website www.smconservancy.org. E-mail info@smconservancy.org Mail address: Santa Monica Conservancy P.O.Box 653 Santa Monica, CA 90406



MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Carol Lemlein

One of the many strengths of the Conservancy is its enthusiastic and committed membership, now at an all-time high of over 330 members and households. Since our founding in 2002, we have provided all members with the same benefits - a subscription to this quarterly newsletter, advance notice and discounts for programs and events, and complimentary admission to our annual holiday party.

We've recently added additional benefits for members donating at least \$100, in recognition of those who can make a more substantial financial commitment to the Conservancy's mission. We've also initiated an outreach campaign to the local business community, led by board member Michael Folonis, offering new benefits such as advertising in the newsletter for Business and Corporate members.

Many of you have just received our annual request for renewal of your membership. We hope that you will look back on what the Conservancy has accomplished and express your enthusiasm for our ongoing efforts to protect our architectural heritage by making this annual financial commitment.

Thank you to all for your support! I look forward to seeing you at the holiday party on December 7.

and

MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS

All members	Receive a subscription to our quarterly newsletter, discounts to programs and events, and complimentary admission to our annual holiday party.
\$100 Sustaining Members	Receive the quarterly newsletter, discounts for programs and events, and complimentary admission to our annual holiday party, plus a special listing in the newsletter and two complimentary tickets to the Downtown Walking Tour.
\$250 Supporting Members	Receive the benefits of Sustaining members, with an additional six tickets to the Downtown Walking Tour, which may be scheduled as a private group tour by appointment. New and upgrading members also receive a book gift, currently Santa Monica, A History on the Edge by Paula Scott (value \$25).
\$500 Benefactors	Receive all the benefits of Supporting members, along with priority notification of special events.
\$1000 Patrons	Receive the benefits of Benefactors, plus two complimentary tickets to an exclusive reception at a private home of exceptional architectural and cultural interest.
\$2500 Landmark Patrons	Receive the benefits of Patrons, as well as a coffee table book gift, currently Irving J. Gill, Architect, 1870 – 1936, by Marvin Rand (value \$50), and two complimentary tickets to educational programs, lectures and tours.
\$250 Supporting Business Members	Receive the quarterly newsletter, discounts for programs and events, and complimentary admission to our annual holiday party, plus a membership certificate suitable for framing and a special listing in the newsletter and on the Conservancy website.
\$500 Business Sponsors	Receive the benefits of Supporting Business Members, plus a business card-sized ad in the quarterly newsletter.
\$1000 Business Patrons	Receive the benefits of Supporting Business Members, plus a 1/8 page ad in the quarterly newsletter and two complimentary tickets to an exclusive reception at a private home of exceptional architectural and cultural interest.
\$2500 Business Landmark Patrons	Receive the benefits of Business Patrons but with a 1/4 page ad in the newsletter, as well as a link on the SMC website and a coffee table book gift, currently Irving J. Gill, Architect, 1870 – 1936, by Marvin Rand.

ANNUAL MEETING CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

VOLUNTEER PROFILE

by Judy Parsons

branch libraries and at Zucky's, also designed by Fulton. The building and Camera Obscura are contributing features to the historic and cultural significance of Palisades Park, which the city designated as a historic landmark in 2008.

The Camera Obscura was an attraction of Santa Monica's burgeoning seaside resort, located originally near the North Beach Bathhouse. This optical device projected images from outside onto a screen inside a room. It was a popular novelty at that time, although the technology dates back hundreds of years. The city purchased the device in 1910 and moved it to Linda Vista Park (now Palisades Park). There it continued to attract visi-

SHANGRI-LA CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

symbols of speed and transportation: the ship, the train, the airplane and the automobile. The curved corners, upper level step-backs, bands of windows and nautical railings are typical features of that style.

Over the decades, many celebrities found refuge at the Shangri-La, including Stan Laurel, Diane Keaton, and Japanese architect Arata Isozaki, who designed the Museum of Contemporary Art's main building on Grand Avenue. Perhaps less well known is the role the hotel has played in national defense. Late in World War II, the Shangri-La and several other resort hotels in Santa Monica were taken over as Army Air Force Redistribution Centers – providing quarters for returning combat veterans undergoing personnel and medical evaluations. Later, during the height of tors, despite new forms of entertainment provided by movie cameras.

This program is free to members and guests. Refreshments will be served. Parking is available in adjacent city parking lots on Second and Fourth Streets or in the parking lot for Santa Monica Place. Please RSVP to 310-496-3146, or rsvp@smconservancy.org.

NOT A MEMEBER YET? FILL OUT THE MEMBRSHIP FORM ON PAGE 7

Cold War tensions in 1962-63, it was one of 12 structures in Santa Monica qualified as fallout shelters to protect and feed over 5000 people in the event of nuclear attack.

The newly renovated hotel is being described as a balance of past, present and future. It will feature a total of 71 rooms and suites with the latest technology, a new pool and cabanas in the courtyard, a new restaurant, a rooftop bar and lounge, and upgrades throughout to improve access for persons with disabilities. All of this was accomplished, however, with great care in maintaining the historic character, working with the Landmarks Commission and the planning department to ensure that nothing was done to jeopardize its potential for city landmark status and/or listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

CITY PHOTO QUIZ. Do you know where this was? See page 7 for the answer.



Photo courtesy of the Santa Monica Library Image Archives Collection



It seems fitting that Rita Schneir would be a docent on the Conservancy's downtown walking tours. She and her husband Jerry have enjoyed walking tours across the United States and throughout Europe. "How better to see and get to know a city," she pointed out.

Because of her love of walking, a notice in a local paper caught her attention. "I read that the Conservancy was looking for docents for their new walking tours. I could hardly believe my good fortune."

During each tour she picks up new information from her walking audience. "One of my favorite stories came from an old-time Santa Monica resident. She remembered seeing Shirley Temple and her mom (Santa Monica residents) regularly shopping at Henshey's Department Store (now REI)."

A native Angelino who has lived her entire life here, Rita knows a great deal about our city. She recalls summer weekends sunning and swimming in Santa Monica. "It was 58 years ago that I met my husband on a Santa Monica beach," she reminisced. Nineteen years ago she and her pharmacist husband sold their big house in the Valley where they raised four children and moved to a Santa Monica condo. "It's just nine blocks from the beach where we first met."

Rita was a PTA mom when her children were growing up, and active in the LA League of Women Voters. "When my fellow league member Joy Picus, ran for LA City Council in 1977, I volunteered to campaign. And when she was elected I went to work for her as a legislative aide. I enjoyed working in LA City Hall for 16 years."

Today, Rita and her husband are retired and active in Santa Monica College's Emeritus program, and Rita still finds time to hike every week with the Sierra Club in the local mountains.

WINTER PRESERVATION EVENTS: PICK



Candelight Tours of the Doctors' House Museum Saturdays, December 13 and 20, 2008 6:30 – 8:30 pm. Glendale Historical Society Brand Park, 1601 W. Mountain Ave., Glendale. CA

818-242-4290

Continuous tours of the musuem decorated with greenery and antique ornaments, Tableaux Vivants (docent actors) in all rooms, live music and refreshments, ornament sale. Admission \$1 per person.



Seeing Greene & Greene: Architecture in Photographs Through January 4, 2009, Wednesday – Sunday, 12:00 - 5:00 pm.

The Pasadena Museum of California Art 490 East Union Street, Pasadena, CA 91101

626-568-3665

Presented through the lens of some of the twentieth century's leading photographers of art and architecture, this exhibition presents a different take on the architectural work of the architects celebrated for creating iconic bungalow style houses as part of the American Arts and Crafts movement. See website for details and admission costs. http://www.pmcaonline.org/



L.A. Unfolded: Maps from the Los Angeles Public Library Through January 22, 2009

Los Angeles Central Library, Getty Gallery 630 W. 5th St., Los Angeles, CA 90071

213-228-7500

The exhibition focuses on Los Angeles and California and features topographic surveys, tourist guides, real estate maps, pictorials, illustrations and more.

Free. Open during regular library hours

www.lapl.org

CENTENNIAL YEAR FOR SM PIER By Alice Allen



Exciting events are being planned in 2009 to celebrate the centennial of the Santa Monica Pier. The Pier Restoration Corporation (PRC), sponsors of the year-long centennial celebration, are incorporating memorable moments from its past into the festivities. Saving the pier became a grassroots political movement in the 1970s, and was coupled with the adoption of the city's first landmarks ordinance.

The Santa Monica Municipal Pier opened on September 9, 1909 after 16 months of construction, Although originally built for the City's sanitation needs, the pier soon became a magnet for other activities.

In February, 1916, carousel manufacturer Charles I. D. Looff purchased land south of the pier to create Santa Monica's first successful amusements, including the Blue Streak Racer roller coaster and the Hippodrome to house the carousel. The Looff family ran the pier until 1923 when they sold it to a group of local businessmen intent on expanding the amusements. That expansion included the lavish La Monica Ballroom.

In 1940, the pier's neon entrance sign and pedestrian roadway were added. The sign has become a symbol of Santa Monica and marks the pier as an internationally recognized tourist destination.

Walter Newcomb purchased the pier in 1943, and his family operated the pier for 40 years. Their efforts kept the pier operating through the 1950s and 1960s as other famous **CONTINUED ON PAGE 5**

PAGE 5

AN EXHIBIT OR PICK A HOLIDAY



Mexican Calendar Girls Through February 1, 2009 Wednesdays thru Sundays, 11:00 am - 4:00 pm.

California Heritage Museum 2612 Main Street Santa Monica, California 90405

310-392-8537

Exhibit includes more than thirty images from the vibrant popular culture of post-revolutionary Mexico where beautiful young women embody Mexican history, culture and aspirations.

See website for details and admission costs.

http://www.californiaheritagemuseum.org

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

amusement piers in Southern California disappeared in the face of more contemporary amusements like Disneyland. They sold the pier to the City in the early 1970s.

In 1973 the City Council proposed to demolish the pier to make way for a man-made island and a resort hotel. Residents of Santa Monica not only opposed the plan, they voted out of office three Council members who supported the proposal. Their replacements promised the pier would never be torn down.

In 1983, nature almost accomplished what politicians could not. A pair of violent winter



Be My Valentine, Victorian Valentine Tour Sunday, February 8, 2009 1 – 4 pm.

Grier Musser Museum 403 South Bonnie Brae Street Los Angeles, CA 90057

213-413-1814

Guided tours and refreshments There will be antique valentines, teddy bears, and kewpie dolls on display.

storms destroyed over a third of the pier's length,

taking with it cafes, shops, and the harbor pa-

trol station. The City formed the Pier Restora-

tion and Development Task Force, which later

became the Pier Restoration Corporation (PRC),

to oversee reconstruction and day-to-day opera-

tions. By April, 1990, the entire western struc-

the full-scale amusement park with the West

Coaster, the first roller coaster on the pier in sixty

years. The beloved carousel, now a National

Historic Landmark, still works its old-fashioned

Pacific Park opened in 1996, bringing back

See website for details and admission costs.

http://www.griermussermuseum.com

Tea & Tunes Saturday, February 14, 2009

Banning Residence Museum 401 East M Street, Wilmington, CA 90744

310-548-2005

Enjoy tea sandwiches, sweets and a selection of teas. Live entertainment will be provided and complimentary self-guided tours of the Museum will follow the program.

See website for details and reservations

http://www.banningmuseum.org/

magic on 21st century children.

The Santa Monica Conservancy will participate in the year-long celebration, starting on March 8 with the presentation of a lecture and book signing for the PRC's upcoming new book about the pier's history. Watch for more details in the mail. For additional information and to order tickets to the Winter Lectures, visit our website at

www.smconservancy.org.

For more information on centennial activities at the Santa Monica Pier, visit their website at www.santamonicapier.org.

SAVE THE DATES: 2009 WINTER LECTURES

FEBRUARY 8, 2009

Our annual winter lectures start on Sunday, February 8 at 5:00 p.m. when author and photographer Tom Zimmerman will discuss his recent publication, *Paradise Promoted*: The Booster Campaign That Created Los Angeles 1870-1930. Tom will focus on Santa Monica, particularly Douglas Aircraft, where his father was employed for decades.

MARCH 8, 2009

ture had been rebuilt.

A month later on Sunday, March 8th, author Jim Harris will discuss his forthcoming book about the Santa Monica Pier, in celebration of the pier centennial in 2009. See the accompanying article on page 4

Both events will be hosted by the Ruskin Group Theatre Company at the Santa Monica Airport. Their theater was originally an industrial building that has been renovated and converted into a new use. This acclaimed group offers theatrical presentations and educational classes. We thank Mike Myers, managing director, for his generosity in sharing his space.

Additional information about the lectures will be mailed, and will also be available on our website, www.smconservancy.org. To find out more about the Ruskin Group Theater Company go to their website,

www.ruskingrouptheatre.com.

PAUL WILLIAMS IN SANTA MONICA By Marcello Vavala

The incredible scope of Paul Williams' architectural legacy can be hard to define in simple descriptions. He was proficient in architectural styles spanning traditional to modernist, was adept at designing a host of building types, and designed public housing and postwar-era tract homes in addition to glamorous mansions for Hollywood stars. Santa Monica is fortunate to have some of his surviving structures.

Paul Revere Williams opened his own architecture office in 1922 at the age of 28. The following year, he became the first African American architect admitted to the American Institute of Architects (AIA). His dedication and perseverance in the face of a society shaped by racial prejudice and inequality made him a true leader and pioneer. He became one of Los Angeles' most prominent twentieth century architects, with his office responsible for approximately 3,000 built projects.

Williams and his firm designed and completed at least four buildings in Santa Monica, three of which survive: the Edwin Building, at 312 Wilshire Boulevard, and a pair of adjacent residences along the 2200 block of La Mesa Drive. A fourth, demolished long ago, was a Wilshire Boulevard drive-in market dating from the 1920s. We've profiled Williams' work in Santa Monica below to celebrate his architectural legacy.

The Edwin Building, declared a Santa Monica landmark in May 2008, has the distinction of being one of Williams' earliest commercial commissions. Completed in the fall of 1928, this elaborate Spanish Colonial Revival structure was commissioned by Lovell H. Turnbull, a wealthy Detroit transplant who retired to Santa Monica after a successful career in the produce distribution business. Churrigueresque detailing adorns the building's upper floor and arched entrance, which also features a pair of medallions depicting helmeted conquistadors. The wave-inspired motif spanning the top of the first floor adds a bit of regional identity.

A decade later, Williams designed a La Mesa Drive home for Mr. and Mrs. Charles Hess. Completed in 1939 at a cost of \$18,000, the Hess Residence was designed in a modified Georgian Revival style that was popular among Williams' residential commissions.



The distinctive three-story brick building with the corner tower is familiar to Promenade shoppers and to the Conservancy's downtown walking tour attendees. Its history and architecture are important enough for the Landmarks Commission to vote unanimously to designate the building as a landmark, based upon all six landmark criteria. Happily, the building owners concurred with this recommendation.

The Keller Block building opened in 1893 as a mixed use project with the Hotel Jackson above commercial storefronts. Its three-story scale and location on the corner of Broadway and Third Street shifted the business center from Second to Third Street and made Third Street the city's commercial heart from that time on. The 1890s were the decade in which Santa Monica grew from a small town to an urban center, with the Bank of Santa Monica established at the same time in an ornate Victorian building (demolished) at Third and Santa Monica Boulevard.

Architecturally, it's the only surviving example of Romanesque Revival in Santa Monica, a



Paul Williams House on La Mesa

Directly next door and completed that same year is the Warfield Residence, which Williams designed in an interpretation of Tudor Revival. Several of Williams' earliest residential commissions were in this style, though the Warfield Residence is unique with its stone exterior, rather than the more traditional facade of brick or stucco and half timbering.

The Conservancy recently rediscovered the existence of a fifth project that was never built: a building permit application with Williams' signature and an accompanying sketch for an apartment building intended for the northeast corner of Ocean and Margerita Avenues. It shows that Williams' career was so prolific that taking stock of the myriad projects to come out of his office is a task not yet completed.

style typically used for major institutional buildings such as city halls, courthouses and churches. Massive masonry walls, rough cut stonework, and arched windows and doors are features of this style. The Keller Block retains some of the original cast iron storefronts, with the manufacturer's logo - Llewellyn Bros. Los Angeles – emblazoned on the base. Ornamental detailing is worked into the brick, such as the parapet, some of which is reconstructed. The architect, Carroll H. Brown, designed many homes and other buildings, among them the Historic-Cultural Monument Stimson House in Los Angeles in a similar style, and Santa Monica's 1903 City Hall in Mission Revival style (demolished).

Henry Workman Keller, the developer of the Keller Block, was a leading entrepreneur of the time. He inherited Rancho Malibu from his father Matthew Keller, which he managed as a cattle ranch. He sold these holdings to Frederick Hastings Rindge in 1891, possibly to finance the construction of this building and other business ventures.

The building had deteriorated and was coated in white paint, having already lost its parapet, in the 1970s. Its restoration and adaptive use was spearheaded by the city and a private developer to launch the revitalization of the old mall into the Santa Monica Promenade in 1989.

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Marcello Vavala at the Fairmont Mirama

LANDMARKS BUS TOUR A SUCCESS

The Conservancy's Fourth Annual Landmarks Bus Tour offered tour participants an insightful look at Santa Monica's designated landmarks and the fascinating stories associated with them. Architectural historian and Conservancy board member Marcello Vavala pointed out architectural styles and details on many of Santa Monica's landmarks and highlighted the city's early growth and development. He was assisted on the bus by Nat Zappia and by Carol Lemlein at check-in.

Helping to make the Landmarks Bus Tour possible this year was a generous grant from the City of Santa Monica Arts and Cultural Transportation Grant Program, which provides funding to encourage the use of public transportation to visit cultural and arts destinations. Special thanks to Hamp Simmons of the Santa Monica Cultural Affairs Division for facilitating the grant, the Conservancy's Program Committee for planning the event, the Big Blue Bus, as well as the Fairmont Miramar Hotel for graciously accommodating the tour during the intermission.



This charming photo was taken at the foot of Pier Avenue in Ocean Park. The beach was the end of the bus line and in order to head back the other way, a turnaround was built to reposition the bus.

All that remains from those days is the former GTE Building now owned by Eli Broad and used to store his art.

NEW MEMBERS Stephanie E. Villet Berman Scott Cohen * Sunny Collins Julia Denholm **BJ** Dockweiler Elaine Draper Ann and Clive Piercy Leah and Sam Fischer Christopher and Dawn Fleischner Coral Goldsmith Steven Gordon Deidre Hall Chris Harding Elly and Maury Hart John and Donna Heidt James Jacobsen Boyd and Helena Krout Robert Langer Sue Larky Johnnie Loy Gregory Mullen Terry Norton-Wright Gwynne Pugh * Michael Rich and Debra Granfield Denise Simon Frank Stiefel

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The Santa Monica Conservancy is a 501(c) (3) non-profit organization.

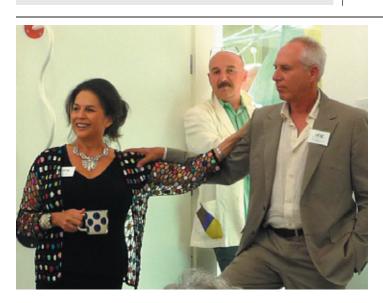
SANTA MONICA CONSERVANCY

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THE WONDERFUL WOSK RECEPTION

Attendees at the September 21st reception held at the Wosk residence on Adelaide Drive were treated to an extraordinary house, exceptional hors d'oeuvres provided by Lene Houk, and a fascinating dialogue between Miriam Wosk and architect Steven Ehrlich FAIA. We are deeply grateful to Ms. Wosk for hosting the event and to Mr. Ehrlich for participating. Thanks also to our volunteers Kitty Bartholomew, Sarah Barnard, Barbara Clare, Phyllis Conkle, Sherrill Kushner, Ruthann Lehrer, Diane Locklear, Dick Otto, Rita Schneir and Doris Sosin for helping to make this a memorable occasion.

Left: Miriam Wosk and Steve Ehrlich as Edward Goldman, art critic for KCRW looks on. Lower left: Bea Nemlaha, Rolfe Wyer, Doris Sosin, and Bruria Finkel.

DO WE HAVE YOUR EMAIL ADDRESS?

Email is a timely and cost-effective way to keep you up to date on events and preservation issues. If you have not been getting our email announcements, please send a short message with your current contact information to mail to:

rsvp@smconservancy.org

We will do our best to keep you informed, and we promise not to stuff your e-mail box!