



SANTA MONICA CONSERVANCY NEWS

VOL 7 No 4

ENSURING THAT THE PAST HAS A FUTURE
DECEMBER 2009

THE HOLIDAY PARTY RETURNS



The Conservancy holiday party is known for its great refreshments.

The Santa Monica Conservancy thanks our members for their support with an invitation to a holiday party, which has become a favorite annual tradition. This year's celebration takes place on Sunday, December 6, from 3 – 5 PM at 524 Alta, the home of Santa Monica High School English teacher Berkeley Blatz. Mr. Blatz is himself a "famous landmark," having taught at SAMOHI for many decades.

The English Tudor home was built in 1927 by Mr. Blatz's grandfather as a retirement home, and has remained in the family for three generations. Its original architectural features are intact and beautifully maintained, inside and out. Refreshments, music and the company of Conservancy members make this a popular event. The party is free for members, but reservations are requested: call 310-469-3146, or use the website, www.smconservancy.org.

SAVE THE DATE



ANNUAL MEETING

**SATURDAY, JANUARY 23,
2 TO 4PM**

**MILES PLAYHOUSE
1130 LINCOLN BLVD. (in Reed Park)**

This Landmark 1929 structure designed by architect John Byers was built with \$25,000 bequeathed by former City Councilman J. Euclid Miles in memory of his wife, Mary.

MILLS ACT – POWERFUL PRESERVATION TOOL by Ruthann Lehrer



Left: 3018 Third St.; Right: 405 Palisades Ave. in a 1951 photo from the Santa Monica Public Library Image Archives.

The Mills Act is one of the most powerful incentives for historic preservation in the state of California. By signing a contract with the City of Santa Monica to preserve, restore and maintain a designated landmark building or structure of merit, the owner(s) receive a property tax reassessment that often provides significant financial savings.

The amount of the savings is calculated by a complicated formula, and is greatest for new and recent owners who have new assessments. The financial savings resulting from the Mills Act provide needed funds to accomplish the restoration and maintenance of the historic property, a public benefit for the preservation of the City's heritage.

The contract is accompanied by a preservation plan that is prepared by an architect, is reviewed by staff and the Landmarks Commission, and finally ratified by City Council. The contract is tied to the property title and passes on to subsequent owners. It's a ten year contract, but is renewed each year automatically unless canceled, ensuring that it always has ten years more to run. The Mills Act can motivate owners of qualified properties to seek landmark designation if preservation of the building is consistent with their wishes.

Each year the Landmarks Commission reviews applications for Mills Act contracts, and recently recommended approval for a number of them at their October meeting. They are: 405 Palisades Avenue, 514 Palisades Avenue, 236 Adelaide Drive, 2219 Ocean Avenue, 3018 Third Street and an amendment to a previously approved contract for 2612 Third Street.

THE CONSERVANCY BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Our board comes from neighborhoods throughout the city and includes:

- Carol Lemlein, President
- John Zinner, Vice-President
- Tom Cleys, Treasurer
- Susan McCarthy, Secretary
- Joel Brand
- Ken Breisch
- Bruce Cameron
- Mike Deasy
- Michael W. Folonis, FAIA
- Nina Fresco
- David Kaplan
- Sherrill Kushner
- Ruthann Lehrer
- Nancy O'Neill
- Doris Sosin, Emeritus

MEMBERSHIP DUES

| | |
|-----------------------|-------|
| Individual Membership | \$35 |
| Household Membership | \$45 |
| Low Income Membership | \$15 |
| Sustaining Membership | \$100 |
| Supporting Membership | \$250 |

To support the Conservancy at higher levels, or with a business membership, call (310) 496-3146.

THE NEWS STAFF

- | | |
|-----------------|------------------|
| Alice Allen | Margaret Bach |
| Nina Fresco | Sherrill Kushner |
| Ruthann Lehrer | Nancy O'Neill |
| Dick Orton | Judy Parsons |
| Marcello Vavala | Susan Zinner |

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

Why did the Conservancy support the plan for 1012 Second Street?

Last month, many of you received email from your neighborhood organizations asking you to support the appeals of planning commission approval of the condominium project at 1012 Second Street. The appeals were based in part on the project's impact on a landmark Victorian cottage. You may have been surprised to hear that the Conservancy Board supported this project, and it is important to tell you why.

In 2006, the City Council, with strong support from the Landmarks Commission, unanimously approved changes to the zoning code to facilitate preserving small historic houses on large parcels of land. Certain specific variances for new construction on such lots would be allowed so long as the landmark is maintained in a way that is consistent with the Secretary of the Interior Standards, the "gold standard" for historic preservation projects. This is an important incentive, intended to make projects incorporating designated landmarks more economically feasible as compared to new development. If such incentives were not available in Santa Monica, where land values are so

high, a property owner could claim an economic hardship to justify demolition of a landmark.

The Conservancy Board reviewed reports by City staff and preservation experts and concluded that the project at 1012 Second Street met the requirements for the allowed variances. We felt it was important to make a public statement in support of the principle of creating incentives to encourage preservation - and specifically that this project was a suitable application of the procedures established in 2006. We can be much more successful at preserving the unique character of our city if we continue to work together to provide owners with meaningful incentives for appropriate restoration and adaptive reuse of our historic structures.

Carol

Note: Look for the article in this newsletter about another important preservation incentive, the Mills Act, which allows property tax benefits for the owners of historic properties.

CITY PHOTO QUIZ



To see what this quiet residential neighborhood is like today, turn to page 7. Photo courtesy of the Santa Monica Public Library Image Archives.

VOLUNTEER PROFILE

NEW LEADER OF THE BEACH HOUSE DOCENTS by Judy Parsons

Photo provided by Eileen Kawas.

Since the Annenberg Community Beach House (ACBH) opened in April, Santa Monica Conservancy's docents have escorted approximately 9,000 guests through sun-lit rooms and beach-view balconies once glamorized by Marion Davies, William Randolph Hearst and the rich and famous of yesteryear.

As in any production of this magnitude, one must have a group leader, and filling the role of guest house docent leader is Conservancy newcomer Eileen Kawas.

When the news went out earlier this year about the Conservancy's new docent program, Eileen joined the Conservancy and immediately volunteered for the docent

program. She rose quickly through the ranks to a responsible supervisory position, taking charge of the docent calendar and scheduling.

Many of the docents, Eileen included, had little or no prior knowledge of the former Davies estate. "We've all been thoroughly educated," she said. "I was particularly intrigued by Marion's circle of friends – celebrities, luminaries and their place in the history of our community, not to mention the world stage.

"The guest house has given the Conservancy incredible visibility in the community. I believe it's the responsibility of the Conservancy to help educate the community about the efforts of preservation, and the ACBH is an outstanding venue to spread the word to a much larger, diverse audience. Every visitor is reminded of the past glory of the guest house, and is encouraged to recognize the value of preserving history for future generations.

"Our docents find it particularly rewarding to share local history with our visitors and then see their faces light up. Our visitors leave with a greater appreciation of Marion, Hearst and Julia Morgan (original site architect), not to mention the generosity of Wallis Annenberg who helped make all this possible by preserving the site."

Eileen and her team work hard so that visitors feel the wonder of the rich history

surrounding them as they walk through the rooms. "If only these walls could talk," she laughed.

NEW: TECHNOLOGY UPGRADE

by Carol Lemlein

You may have noticed some changes in our on-line payment system when you renewed your membership or made your reservations for the Yellow Cottage Open House. What you saw was the first visible evidence of a major project to upgrade our payment processing and database technology. The new system immediately integrates data on donations and event registrations into the database, making it much easier to keep our records up to date and to respond to your inquiries in a timely manner.

The next step of this effort should be in place before the end of the year - using the same system for our email notices. As we look forward, we anticipate much greater reliance on email to keep you up to date on preservation issues and upcoming events. For the new system to be most effective we need current email addresses for as many members as possible. If you have not been receiving email announcements from the Conservancy, please send your email address to info@smconservancy.org or use the update form on the website.

OTHER VOLUNTEER NEWS

Kay Pattison



Carol Lemlein



Alice Allen



Nancy O'Neill



Thomasine Rogas



Susan Zinner

Longtime docent Kay Pattison, (profiled in 9/2007), has assumed responsibility for scheduling the docents for the weekly Downtown Walking tour. She is also focusing on marketing the tour. Thank you Kay!

Thanks also to Carol Lemlein, Alice Allen, Nancy O'Neill and Thomasine Rogas

for staffing the Conservancy booth at the recent Archives Bazaar held this year at USC. Our participation was in conjunction with La Senora Research Institute and the Adamson House Museum. Also representing our area were the Santa Monica Public Library and the Pacific Palisades Historical Society.

EDITOR'S NOTE: The Newsletter welcomes Susan Zinner to our staff. In this issue, she is performing the critical job of proofreading. Watch for her byline in future issues.

2009 LANDMARKS BUS TOUR HIGHLIGHTS by Sarah Barnard

On Sunday October 4, Conservancy members and friends boarded a chartered Big Blue Bus for a fun-filled afternoon with architectural historian and guide, Marcello Vavala. This was the fifth annual exploration of Santa Monica's wealth of landmarks new and old, including residences, commercial buildings, signage and even a very special Moreton Bay Fig tree.

Some of the more unusual sites included the Zephyr Surf Shop (the earliest known home of extreme sports) and my personal favorite, an original metal Quonset Hut. In addition to seeing the sites, guests learned about preservation basics, landmark procedures and tax incentives for historic property owners.

Thanks go to bus tour volunteers Marcello, Sarah Barnard and Stephanie Speights, the Conservancy's Program Committee for planning the event, and the Fairmont Miramar Hotel for graciously accommodating the tour during the intermission. The Big Blue Bus was underwritten by the City of Santa Monica Cultural Affairs Division through its Arts Transportation Grant Program, which provides access to arts and culture activities.



Top left: Marcello Vavala, far right, greets Robert Rosenberg, Jane Rineer, Jean Hulse, and Martha Gruft as they board the bus. Top right: Marcello narrates the tour. Above: The group prepares for their adventure.

SALON AT KNOP/KING HOME DELIGHTS

The fall Salon held at the home of Patricia Knop and Zalman King was a dazzling experience for all in their historic, art-filled home. We are very grateful to our hosts for their generous hospitality. Rob Fresco played classical guitar, and got rave reviews. Thanks to these volunteers for making the event a splendid success.

- Kitty Bartholomew
- Kate Bransfield
- Claudia Brentwood
- Phyllis Conkle
- Mary Dodds
- Dwight Flowers
- Ursula Kress
- Evelyn Maggiore
- Nancy O'Neill
- Judy Parsons
- Thomasine Rogas
- Ruth Shari
- Stephanie Speights



Top: Ruthann Lehrer with Winslow King, Chloe King and Pat Knop.

David and Rachel Evey in front of a unique painting.

Bottom: Eric Natwig and Peyton Hall have a chat in the entrance room.

GETTING TO KNOW THE LANDMARKED QUONSET HUT by Sherrill Kushner

You may have missed the recent Landmarks Bus Tour and didn't get the story behind Santa Monica's historic Quonset hut. So you may be asking, what's a Quonset hut and why is this one landmarked?

A Quonset hut is a prefabricated structure made of corrugated galvanized steel. The structure was developed in World War II. In 1941 the U.S. Navy needed an all-purpose, lightweight building that could be easily shipped anywhere and assembled without skilled labor. The name derives from the location where they were first manufactured—Quonset Point, Rhode Island.

The original design was a 16'x 36' structure framed with steel members with an 8' radius. Their interiors were insulated and had pressed wood lining and a wood floor. The flexible interior space was open, allowing for its use as barracks, latrines, offices, medical and dental

offices, isolation wards, housing and bakeries.

Between 150,000 and 170,000 Quonset huts were manufactured during World War II.



Santa Monica's landmark Quonset hut awaits rehabilitation as part of a new mixed-use project.

After the war, the U.S. military sold the surplus Quonset huts to the public for \$1,000 each.

Santa Monica's cylindrical Quonset hut is located at 829 Broadway and has been on the site since 1946. It has been adaptively reused as a commercial space. The Quonset hut received its Landmark status in 2008 as the last surviving Quonset hut in the city.

Recently the Landmarks Commission issued a Certificate of Appropriateness for a rehabilitation of the structure as part of a new mixed-use project. The owner will rehabilitate the hut by replacing non-original stucco panels with authentic corrugated metal infill panels, adding two new awning-type aluminum frame windows on the north and south elevations, and painting it gray-green.

Main information sources: Lynne Bronstein, "Vintage Quonset Hut at 829 Broadway, the Subject of an Adaptive Reuse Project Approved by the Landmarks Commission;" Santa Monica Mirror; and Wikipedia.

SALON AT KNOP/KING HOME DELIGHTS



Our hosts, Pat Knop and Zalman King.



Top: Our photographer, Dick Orton caught his own image in a colorful bathroom.
Below: Katya Peppler, Helanye Levy and Gala Peppler enjoy the afternoon event.



Top: Julie Chambers and Michael Folonis.
Below: Janice Jerde and Alita Tiff on the upper deck.

LANDMARKS COMMISSION REPORT by Margaret Bach



The Builder's Exchange Building at Fourth and Broadway, a 1927 Churrigueresque-style commercial structure.

88, 89, 90 AND COUNTING....

At recent meetings, the Landmarks Commission approved three new landmarks, bringing the total number of Santa Monica designated landmarks to 90.

The Builder's Exchange Building, at the southeast corner of Fourth Street and Broadway, is an outstanding local example of a Churrigueresque-style commercial building. It was built in 1927 as the city's business district began its expansion into what were previously residential areas. Designed by local architect M. Eugene Durfee (who also designed the Georgian Hotel, another designated landmark, and the Central Tower Building), the building features a rich array of decorative details, including fine grillework and cast-stone ornamentation. The building is a favorite on the Conservancy's downtown walking tour.

The Santa Monica Doctors' Building, a Streamline Moderne medical office building designed in 1946 and built in 1952, makes an impressive architectural statement at the northwest corner of 22nd Street and Arizona Avenue. With its three stacked levels, curvilinear lines, and overhanging eaves, the building also exemplifies the development of medical facilities in Santa Monica's post-WWII years. The designation was initiated by the Art Deco Society of Los Angeles.

Built in 1912, the residence at 405 Palisades Avenue offers a fine example of the Craftsman style, with a low-slung porch configuration, the cross-gabled roof, and shingle-and-clapboard siding, among other details. The house was one of the first constructed in the

Palisades Tract and offers a glimpse of this early period in the city's residential development. The landmark application was filed by the property's current owner, Scott Cohen.

Over the past several months, the Commission has also been busy reviewing Mills Act contracts (see accompanying article).

And, on a final, sad note: On September 8, on a 5-2 vote, the Santa Monica City Council overturned the landmarks designation of 3030 Nebraska Avenue, a distinctive mid-century modern industrial building and former home of SCI-Arc. This, despite a staff report that recommended upholding the designation. In approving the appeal by the property owner, the way has been cleared for the structure's demolition.

CITY PHOTO QUIZ ANSWER



The picture on page 3 is of the northeast corner of Fourth St. and Santa Monica Blvd. This photo is courtesy of Digammo.

UPCOMING PRESERVATION EVENTS

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA CHRISTMAS

December 13, 2009

1:00 pm – 5:00 pm

Workman and Temple Family Homestead Museum

(626) 968-8492

www.homesteadmuseum.org

ETHNOBOTANICAL GARDEN TOUR

December 20, 2009

1:30 pm – 2:30 pm

Southwest Museum of the American Indian

(323) 667-2000

<http://www.autrynationalcenter.org/>

DESIGNER HOLIDAY HOUSE TOUR

Weekends through January 3, 2010

Heritage Square Museum

(323) 225-2700

http://www.heritagesquare.org/calendar_of_events.htm

EVENING WITH MARC WANAMAKER, AUTHOR OF "HOLLYWOOD 1940 TO NOW"

January 13, 2010

7:30 pm

Hollywood Heritage, Inc.

(323) 874-4005

<http://hollywoodheritage.org/>

FIFTH ANNUAL PALM SPRINGS MODERNISM WEEK

February 12-21, 2010

National Trust for Historic Preservation, California Preservation Foundation, Palm Springs Art Museum, and the Palm Springs Modern Committee

(760) 322-2502

www.modernismweek.com

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

| | | |
|-----------------|------------------------|----------------------------------|
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| Margaret Berger | Paula Fritzke | Rhoda Newman |
| Michael Chiang | Bill and Pauline Henry | Kate Lehrman and Howard Robinson |
| Kristin Diehl | Jon and Janice Jerde | Robin Venturelli |
| Parke Eager | Harvey Kern | |

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WE THANK YOU ALL FOR YOUR SUPPORT



- Time to renew?
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SANTA MONICA CONSERVANCY

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P.O. Box 653 SANTA MONICA, CA 90406-0653

Celebrate!

SUNDAY DECEMBER 6TH

 details inside.

The party site is an English Tudor home built in 1927 and owned by the same family for three generations. With extensive woodwork, leaded glass windows and handcrafted details, it has been beautifully preserved by its devoted owner and our generous host, Berkeley Blatz.

This English Tudor home, built in 1927, will be the site of this year's Holiday Party.