

SANTA MONICA CONSERVANCY Celebrating Our Architectural Heritage

September 2015 • Vol 13 No 3

Fall Salon at Award-Winning Home

By Ruthann Lehrer

Members and friends are invited to explore the renovation and expansion of a rare mid-century home in Santa Monica at the Conservancy's Annual Salon on October 10 from 4-6 pm.

The Vukadinovich house received a Preservation Award from the Santa Monica Conservancy this year, and was featured in a recent Dwell Magazine tour. Designed in 1950 by Frederick Monhoff, the house contains classic International Style features, along with such architectural innovations as angular walls and ceilings.

At the time of the Vukadinovich purchase in 2008, the home was deteriorated but pristine, as the original owner/builder had lived in it until 2006. The Vukadinoviches selected Abeer Sweis of Synthesis as their designer-builder to restore the house, include renovations in the spirit of Monhoff, and to add on a new wing for



Photo: Chang Kyun Kim

their family's needs.

The Salon will include fabulous food curated by the talented Phyllis Conkle, a

wine bar, and a talk by Ms. Sweis about her work on the house. See page 8 for ticket information.

Conservancy Receives City Grant

The Santa Monica Conservancy was recently awarded an Organizational Support grant from the City of Santa Monica, along with 12 other organizations. The unrestricted grant provides the Conservancy with \$7,800 each year from 2015- 2019.

Santa Monica has a long record of investing in artists and arts organizations in order to provide residents with a broad array of cultural programs and services. The Organizational Support Program (OSP), created in 1997, is intended to promote community access to cultural opportunities by providing stable, multiyear funding for basic operational expenses of the City's core organizations, enabling them to achieve their long-term artistic and administrative goals.

The grant application process, which included extensive financial, program

CITY GRANT continues on page 5

New Zoning Ordinance Unveiled

By Nina Fresco

n June of this year, City Council adopted a new zoning ordinance for our city that was many years in the making. The new zoning ordinance updates many policies to conform with our recent Land Use and Circulation Element (LUCE) and was reorganized in a way that is hoped to make use easier.

A team from the Conservancy and members of the Landmarks Commission went through the draft zoning ordinance with a fine-toothed comb based on their decades of collective experience with areas where failure to make exceptions for historic buildings resulted in much more extensive changes than seemed necessary. Their goal was to ensure that if an owner of an older building that has the potential to be designated as a landmark wanted to restore it, there would not be requirements that would get in the



Tony Berlant's home and studio from the 2014 Preservation Awards. Photo: India Bushnell

way of a rehabilitation, and if the building were a designated landmark or contributor to a historic district, an even higher level of zoning code relief would be afforded to pave the way for the most authentic possible rehabilitation with the least red tape.

The areas of code relief are too numerous

ZONING ORDINANCE continues on page 5

2 Board Members Appointed to Planning Commission

OUR MISSION

The Santa Monica Conservancy is the leading voice for preserving our historic places. The Conservancy promotes understanding of the cultural, social, economic and environmental benefits of historic preservation through education, assistance and advocacy.

THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Our board comes from neighborhoods throughout the city: Carol Lemlein, President John Zinner, Vice-President Susan McCarthy, Vice-President Tom Cleys, Treasurer Sherrill Kushner, Secretary Kaitlin Drisko Michael W. Folonis, FAIA Mario Fonda-Bonardi, AIA Nina Fresco Chris Grav David Kaplan Ruthann Lehrer Libby Motika Tom Neary Laurel Schmidt

Emeritus: Ken Breisch Doris Sosin

HOW TO CONTACT THE CONSERVANCY

Phone: (310) 496-3146, leave a message.

Website: www.smconservancy.org

E-mail: info@smconservancy.org Mail: Santa Monica Conservancy

P.O.Box 653 Santa Monica, CA 90406

MEMBERSHIPS

The Santa Monica Conservancy exists because of the involvement and generosity of people like you. Please help strengthen our voice for preserving Santa Monica's architectural and cultural heritage by becoming a member.

See page 7 for membership information.

THE NEWS STAFF

Alice Allen Tom Hofer Sherrill Kushner Ruthann Lehrer Carol Lemlein Nancy O'Neill Kay Pattison Laurel Schmidt Barbara Whitney

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

We are looking forward to the recently approved update of the Historic Resources Inventory. Architectural Resources Group will survey all properties built through 1977. There will be an emphasis on historical and cultural significance as well as architecture, including a focus on the Pico, Sunset Park, Mid-City, and Bergamot Station areas. Also to be studied are the social and cultural histories of the African-American, Latino and Japanese communities and themes like bungalow courts/courtyard apartment complexes, or Works Prog-



ress Administration (WPA)/Public Works Administration (PWA) projects. This will require much more emphasis on community outreach than past surveys, and we expect that members and friends of the Conservancy will be eager participants. It is not too soon to begin thinking about the aspects of your own neighborhood that you will want to be sure are recognized, and we will keep you informed as the survey gets underway.

Co-chairs Doris Sosin and Tom Cleys join me in thanking the founding members of the new Leadership Circle, a visionary group of donors who have made annual commitments of \$1000 or more to the Conservancy to enable us to reach a new level of effectiveness in our educational and advocacy programs, including the hiring of an executive director to leverage the efforts of our enthusiastic and very capable volunteers. Leadership Circle donors will receive an invitation to an annual private event in a historic venue, as well as periodic briefings discussing important Conservancy concerns and initiatives. Donors at higher levels will receive two complimentary tickets to all educational programs, lectures and tours, and those giving \$5,000 or more will also have the opportunity to hold a private event at the historic Shotgun House.

If you are interested in becoming a member of the Leadership Circle, please contribute on our website,www.smconservancy.org or send your check with the form on page 7. Those who join before year-end will be recognized as founding members.

... and thank you to all for your ongoing support!

—Carol

Leadership Circle Donors as of 7/31/15

- Pamela Burton and Company Steven Cerasale and Mary Katherine Cocharo Tom Cleys Downtown Santa Monica Leah and Sam Fischer Sherrill Kushner Ruthann and Bob Lehrer Carol Lemlein and Eric Natwig Nora Lerer
- Susan McCarthy Carole and Sid Meltzner Libby Motika Tom Neary Nancy O'Neill Laurel Schmidt Doris Sosin Juan Viramontes, Georgian Hotel John Zinner

Structure of Merit Designation Upheld

The City Council recently upheld the Structure of Merit designation for the courtyard buildings located at 2002 - 2008 21st Street. Courtyard housing is unique to Southern California, taking advantage of our temperate climate to encourage neighborliness and easy outdoor access. Constructed between 1949 and '50, these low-scale buildings are considered rare examples of Mid-Century Modern style courtyard housing. Few unaltered examples of this type remain in the City and these are surprisingly quite intact. Speakers in support of designation were Landmark Commissioners Margaret Bach and Leslie Lambert, and former Commissioners Roger Genser and Ruthann Lehrer (also a Conservancy board member). Pico Neighborhood Association also sent a letter of support. Council member Gleam Davis, one of five votes in favor of upholding the designation, commented that it was important to err on the side of preservation because these buildings are irreplaceable. City Council member Pam O'Connor opposed and Council member Terry O'Day was absent.

VOLUNTEER PROFILE Audree Fowler: A Pioneer Spirit

By Jan Jackson



When visitors are lucky enough to have Audree Fowler leading their tour of the Marion Davies Guest House, they might be surprised and impressed that this lively woman with a twinkle in her eye is a highly respected and accomplished UCLA research biochemist. Now retired, Audree was first introduced to volunteering in Santa Monica by way of the UCLA Ocean Discovery Center, which is now the Santa Monica Pier Aquarium. She expanded her involvement by giving tours of the Palisades Park hosted by the Santa Monica Conservancy and became a dedicated Conservancy member. When the Conservancy announced that it was looking for docents for the Marion Davies Beach House, Audree responded, enjoyed the training classes and signed up. At UCLA, she was aware of the historic Marion Davies Children's Clinic founded by the very actress whose life she now shares with visitors at the Guest House property.

Santa Monica has been Audree's home for over 40 years. She grew up in Carson on her family's farm and followed her brother into science, as her choices were then limited to either

science or home economics and shop. Audree says she "has always been married to science." Her extraordinary career in biochemistry gave her many opportunities to excel and she was certainly a pioneer in a field where at that time she was often the only woman.

Audree became a founding member of the Docent Council. With her emeritus status and an office still on the UCLA campus, she generously arranged the most recent and successful docent group outing utilizing her considerable connections at the university. Docents and their guests were treated to a day at UCLA, learning about yet another aspect of Marion Davies' philanthropy and her commitment to children's health and welfare.

Fueled by her love of travel and Scottish country dancing, Audree's pioneering spirit continues to benefit visitors, the docent program, and the work of the Santa Monica Conservancy. All this, and a twinkle too.

Beach House Docents Visit UCLA

On July 17, a group of Annenberg Community Beach House docents explored Marion Davies' contributions to children's medical services at UCLA. The Marion Davies Center at UCLA Medical School displays an oil portrait of Ms. Davies and a plaque honoring her founding of the Children's Clinic there in 1952 with a gift of nearly \$2 million, then the largest single donation to UCLA.

The History and Special Collections for the Sciences at UCLA Library contain archives with documents from the Marion Davies Foundation starting in 1926, before she was 30 years old, when she established a children's clinic near Olympic Boulevard and Barrington Avenue, designed by Julia Morgan. Marion's biographer, Lara Fowler, presented a talk about Marion's activities on behalf of children's health. The day's activities included a tour of the Mildred E. Mathias



Dorothy Jewell and Harvey Kern Photo: Ann C. Hayman

Botanical Gardens at UCLA (www.botgard. ucla.edu), one of the hidden treasures of Los Angeles, led by docents Dorothy Jewell and Harvey Kern.

Thanks go to docent Audree Fowler, assisted by Jan Jackson and Dorothy Jewell, who arranged the visit with UCLA staff. And thanks to librarian Russell Johnson who shared archival material on Ms. Davies as well as other rare items.

Downtown Santa Monica Honors Kay Pattison



At the recent annual meeting for Downtown Santa Monica (DTSM), Kay Pattison was one of four people recognized for commitment and dedication to the long-

term vision of Downtown Santa Monica. She was presented with The Envision Award, for her dedicated leadership of the Downtown Walking Tours. "What better way to plan for the future than by knowing where you came from?" said Kevin Herrera, Senior Communications Manager.

Downtown Santa Monica, Inc. (formerly Bayside District Corporation) is a nonprofit organization that works with the City of Santa Monica to manage services and operations in Downtown Santa Monica while promoting economic stability, growth and community life in this unique neighborhood.



Photo by Curtis Corbett (Margi's grandson)

New Walking Tour Co-Coordinator Named

The Downtown Walking Tour program has been expanding, fueled partly by an increase in requests for group tours, and by promotions using online coupons. Margi Falk has been tapped to become cocoordinator of the Downtown Walking Tour program. She will be working with Kay Pattison, who has headed the program since 2009. After retiring in 2009, Margi has led an active volunteer life including being a docent at the ACBH. Margi has lived in Santa Monica since the age of five, and now lives in Sunset Park.



174 Kinney Street/171 Pier Avenue (Pacific Electric Building)

Photo: Sherrill Kushner

Landmarks Commission Report

By Margaret Bach

At its July meeting, the Commission took a major step toward the establishment of Santa Monica's third historic district, voting unanimously to file an application to create the San Vicente Courtyard Historic District. The



212 San Vicente Photo from Historic San Vicente Coalition

proposed district, extending along San Vicente Boulevard from 1st Court to 7th Street (and omitting several properties on the north side of the street, west of 7th), contains 26 multi-family courtyard properties built between 1937 and 1956 that are deemed contributors to the district's historic significance. These courtyards represent nearly two-thirds of the properties in the district.

The nomination follows months of discussion and study, and was made possible by an amendment to the Landmarks Ordinance in 2014 removing potential obstacles to filing Historic District applications. The Commission's action was supported enthusiastically by the community, led by the Historic San Vicente Coalition, a stakeholder group, the Santa Monica Conservancy, and such neighborhood organizations as the North of Montana Association, Northeast Neighbors, and the Third Street Historic District. Final approval of the district rests with the City Council, once the required public information meeting and Landmarks Commission recommendation hearing are held over the next several months.

The Commission approved two new Santa Monica Landmarks. The building at 174 Kinney Street/171 Pier Avenue dates at least to 1926, when the Pacific Electric Railway constructed a two-story commercial building (facing Pier Avenue), and an attached onestory car garage (facing Kinney). The railway maintained an office on the Pier Avenue portion of the building from 1933-1953. This is likely the last remaining structure associated with the Pacific Electric in Ocean Park, occupying what was once the epicenter of railroad history in south Santa Monica.

The Art Moderne commercial building at 1213 - 1215 Wilshire Boulevard, historically known as Grove's Bakery and Callahan's Restaurant, also received Landmark designation based upon an application filed by the building's new owner. Dating from 1946, the building exemplifies the social and economic development of post-WWII neighborhoods in Santa Monica.

As a final note, the Commission, and the Conservancy, were successful in their advocacy of a rollback of increases in Landmark, Structure of Merit and Historic District application fees previously approved by the City Council as part of a City fee overhaul. As a result, the fee structure was returned to previous levels, a move that the Commission believes is in the community's interest.

Property Values Enhanced by Historic District

By Sherrill Kushner

As the Landmarks Commission and City Council consider the possible designation of a third historic district in Santa Monica -- courtyard housing on San Vicente Boulevard --the impact that historic districts can have upon property values becomes a more interesting and timely topic.

According to the National Park Service, historic districts are one of the oldest forms of protection for historic properties. The first city to begin the modern day historic district movement was Charleston, South Carolina, in 1931. Its ordinance restricted the alteration of any historic architectural features that could be viewed by the public from the street.

The effect of historic district designation has been extensively studied by independent

researchers in many states throughout the U.S. Economist Donovan Rypkema reports that "the results of these studies are remarkably consistent: property values in local historic districts appreciate significantly faster than the market as a whole in the vast majority of cases, and appreciate at rates equivalent to the market in the worst case."

According to a 2011 study in Connecticut, "property values in every local historic district saw average increases in value ranging from 4% to over 19% per year." In New York City from 1980-2000, local historic district properties on a price per square foot basis increased in value significantly more than non-designated ones. Further, historic district property values were found to resist market downturns better than the values of non-designated properties. A recent study investigating mortgage foreclosures of



The Conservancy led a tour of the 3rd Street Historic District last spring. Photo: Michael Crosby

single-family homes found that designated properties were significantly less likely to experience foreclosure.

In general, historic district designation has proven to protect property values from wild fluctuations and to provide stability in the housing market. Quoting Donovan Rypkema, "Simply put -- historic districts enhance property values."

Two Board Members Appointed to City's Planning Commission

We are proud to announce that two Conservancy board members, Nina Fresco and Mario Fonda-Bonardi, were recently appointed to the Santa Monica Planning Commission. The Commission is comprised of seven commissioners who are appointed by City Council. As one of the most important city commissions, it is the responsibility of the Commission to help residents and business and property owners articulate and achieve a vision for how they want their community to look and function in the future.

Nina Fresco



Nina is a past Board member of the Ocean Park Association and currently serves on the Ocean Park Association's land committee. use As the chair of the Civic Working Group, she is working with

Photo: Kathleen Whitbloom

ZONING ORDINANCE continued from page 1

for an exhaustive list; an example would be annotating the specific areas where the use of the California Historical Building Code

The Land Use and Circulation Element (LUCE). is part of a city's general plan that defines the overall policies and goals for how land is used in every part of the city. It describes a 20-year arc for every neighborhood in the city in the context of a series of goals from sustainability, to affordable housing, to historic preservation. The zoning ordinance is a very fine-grained set of laws that regulates every aspect of development in a way that helps the city meet the goals of the LUCE.

In addition to these important documents, Santa Monica also has a Historic Preservation Element and a Landmarks Ordinance that define preservation goals and polices and provide a set of laws to help us achieve them. But the preservation community felt that these were not enough to have a strong preservation program that would result in many new landmarks and proud owners.

staff and consultants to explore options for the future of the Civic Auditorium. A resident of Ocean Park since 1996, she fell in love with its small, charming older homes which were rapidly being replaced. When she discovered that Santa Monica had a Landmarks Ordinance and Commission, but that they weren't particularly proactive, it wasn't long before she became a Landmarks Commissioner, serving from 2001 to 2013. She has done extensive research into Santa Monica history resulting in an intimate, almost building-by-building familiarity with the current built environment.

Nina has a long list of accomplishments for the Conservancy: membership chair, photographer, newsletter staff, creator of brochures and exhibits, and curriculum developer. Her brainchild, "Building a Neighborhood," gives third-grade students an understanding of how the story of Santa Monica and its residents is reflected in the changing materials, styles, and uses of its buildings. She has also been instrumental in planning the Preservation Resource Center.

could avoid unnecessary alteration while providing assurance of health and safety. Most of the items would rarely be used

CITY GRANT continued from page 1

and attendance data reporting, was rigorously reviewed by a panel of recognized professionals, selected for their expertise in the cultural and organizational activities of the various applicants.

"We are very pleased to have received this grant, our first from the OSP program. Many foundations and public agencies restrict such funding to large budget organizations,"





Architect Mario Fonda-Bonardi was instrumental in helping to save the shotgun house from demolition, finding a new location and use for the house and spearheading its Photo: Rich Schmitt rehabilitation into Preservation а

Resource Center - a process that has taken 16 years! He, too, lives in Ocean Park where he has resided for 40 years. He served for 17 vears on the local American Youth Soccer Organization and on various committees in local schools. He has actively participated in civic and political affairs of the city and hopes to work with the city and residents to reach sustainability goals. His articles about the city appear in the Santa Monica Daily Press which he writes as part of Santa Monica Architects for a Responsible Tomorrow (SMart).

but each provides the possibility that some historic feature somewhere in Santa Monica could be retained.

Conservancy President Carol noted Lemlein. "As the Conservancy prepares to open the new Preservation Resource Center in the rehabilitated Shotgun House, the grant will assist with our increased operating expenses, making it possible for us to expand our educational programs about preservation and the City's diverse cultural heritage."

Flying Our Colors in

the July 4th Parade

We definitely showed our colors in the 4th

of July Parade. Carol Lemlein and Mario Fonda-Bonardi led the way with our banner,

followed by Kay Pattison and Thomasine Rogas

with her grandchildren. Phillis Dudick, and

Carolyn Coughlin Grimm carried the Historic

San Vicente Coalition banner. Mario and John

Zinner handed out information and talked to

people in front of the Shotgun House. Thank

you to everyone who participated and everyone

who cheered us from the sidelines.



Photo: Jason Islas

New Downtown Walking Tour Booklet Released

The Conservancy's popular Downtown Walking Tour, now in its ninth year, has an updated booklet that reflects how the tour has expanded. The booklet includes new landmark designations and other developments relating to Downtown's historic buildings. The revised tour includes Ocean Avenue from the Shangri-La Hotel to the Georgian Hotel, as well as descriptions of Palisades Park and the Pier. Kay Pattison, a member of the original group of docents who has become the coordinator for the tour, developed the new route and, with Ruthann Lehrer, updated the booklet contents. Carol Lemlein, Thomasine Rogas, Sherrill Kushner, Robin Tung, and Libby Motika all contributed to the update as well. Dick Orton revised the booklet design



to include the new information.

Printing of the revised booklet was funded by Downtown Santa Monica, which has been our tour sponsor for four years.

HAVE YOU TAKEN OUR DOWNTOWN WALKING TOUR?



The tour is offered every Saturday morning at 10 am, or for groups by appointment.

See our website www. smconservancy.org for details, and for information on purchasing our booklets for the Downtown Tour or Palisades Park.

San Vicente Boulevard Tour

n August 9th, the Santa Monica Conservancy, in partnership with the grassroots Historic San Vicente Coalition, led walking tours of the courtyard apartments on San Vicente Boulevard between Ocean Avenue and Seventh Street. The tour was developed by the Conservancy following the action of the Landmarks Commission to nominate the San Vicente Courtvard Apartments as a historic district. Tour leaders Mario Fonda-Bonardi, Ruthann Lehrer, Libby Motika and Louis Scaduto discussed



515-521 San Vicente

Photo: Historic San Vicente Coalition. the architectural and cultural characteristics of the contributing buildings.

"Save the Pier," the Play

n the early 1970s, the Santa Monica City Council voted to build a 35-acre island in Santa Monica Bay featuring a high-rise hotel, a convention center, restaurants and other amenities. The Santa Monica Pier would be torn down and a four-lane bridge would be built in its place to provide access.



"Save the Pier," a new play by pier historian Jim Harris, dramatizes the fight to stop the island plan and save the Santa Monica Pier. The play is based on interviews with people who worked together to save the pier

from being torn down and is presented to

2015 FALL PRESERVATION EVENTS

EXHIBIT

"Shelter: Rethinking How We Live in Los Angeles" **ONGOING THROUGH NOVEMBER 6** Architecture and Design Museum (213) 346-9734 aplusd.org

EXHIBIT

"To Live and Dine in L.A." **THROUGH NOVEMBER 13** Los Angeles Public Library, Central Library (213) 228-7000

apl.org

TOUR 2015 Classic Neon Cruise SEPT. 5, 12, & OCT. 3, 2015 7 - 10:30 PM Museum of Neon (213) 489-9918 neonmona.org

LECTURE

"2015/2016 Sidney D. Gamble Lecture Series"

BEGINNING SEPTEMBER 30 The Gamble House (Pasadena) (626) 793-3334 gamblehouse.org

TOUR

"Claremont Heritage Home Tour Weekend: Mission to Modern" **OCTOBER 8 - 11** Claremont Heritage (909) 621-0848 claremontheritage.org

EXHIBIT

"Craftsman Weekend" NOVEMBER 13 - 15 Pasadena Heritage (626) 441-6333 pasadenaheritage.org

EXHIBIT

"Victorian Christmas Display and Programs" **NOVEMBER 18 - DECEMBER 31** Grier Musser Museum (213) 413-1814 griermussermuseum.org

inspire the next generation of activists to work to build the community that they envision.

The play, produced by Carolyn Yost, directed by Paul Sand and performed by Loyola Marymount students, will be presented right on the pier for three nights, October 16, 17 and 18, 2015. Performances are free and open to the public.

YES! I WILL HELP PROTECT SANTA MONICA'S HISTORIC PLACES			
 \$35 Individual \$45 Household \$15 Student/Low Income \$100 Sustaining \$250 Supporting \$500 Benefactor \$1000 Patron * \$2500 Steward * 	 \$250 Business/Corporate Supporting \$500 Business/Corporate Benefactor \$1000 Business/Corporate Patron * \$2500 Business/Corporate Steward * \$5000 Business/Corporate Guardian * * LEADERSHIP CIRCLE MEMBERSHIP LEVELS \$ Donation 	Name (s)	
5000 Guardian *	\$ Total Contribution		
For Gift Memberships, Please use a separate sheet		Email Company (if applicable)	
New for Credit Card Payments!			
Automatic renewal for 2 years 3 years Credit Card Type: □Visa □Mastercard □Amex		THANK YOU! Will your employer match your gift? Matching gifts can double or triple the value of your membership donation.	
Credit Card #		Please mail this form with your payment to:	
Expiration Date	Code	Santa Monica Conservancy, P.O. Box 653, Santa Monica, CA 90406-0653	
Signature:		The Santa Monica Conservancy is a 501(c)(3) organization, Federal ID #75-3079169	

NEW MEMBERS

Brenda Anderson and Reynold Dacon John Paul Brozyna Alan and Suzanne Freedman Karen Lynn Hall Marcy Winograd

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RESERVATIONS SUGGESTED phone: 310-496-3146 email: dwt@smconservancy.org Presented by the Santa Monica Conservancy and Downtown Santa Monica, Inc. / www.downtownsm.com





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IN THIS ISSUE:

p1	Fall Salon at Award- Winning House
	Conservancy Receives City Grant
	New Zoning Ordinance Unveiled

- **p2** Message from the President Leadership Circle Donors Structure of Merit Decision Upheld
- **p3** Volunteer Profile: Audree Fowler Beach House Docents Visit UCLA Kay Pattison Honored New Walking Tour Co-Coordinator Named
- **p4** Landmarks Commission Report Historic District Enhances Value
- **p5** Planning Commission Appointments Flying Our Colors at the July 4th Parade
- **p6** New Downtown Walking Tour Booklet Take the Downtown Walking Tour Fall Preservation Events San Vicente District Tour "Save the Pier," the Play
- **p7** Membership Application New and Business Members
- **p8** Annual Fall Salon Annual Holiday Party



Photo: Chang Kyun Kim

Annual Fall Salon at a restored Mid-century Modern home *Tour, Wine, Refreshments, & Talk by the Designer* Saturday, October 10, 4 – 6 pm Tickets: \$150 (members) \$175 (non-members) Reserve at www.smconservancy.org

SAVE THE DATE

Saturday, December 5 3 – 5pm

Annual Holiday Party

Historic setting Good friends Good food

Details coming soon

