



**SANTA MONICA  
CONSERVANCY**  
Celebrating Our Architectural Heritage

# NEWS

December 2011 • Vol 9 No 4



*When was the last time YOU rode the carousel? Join us on the Pier on December 11 for the Annual Holiday Party. photo courtesy of the Santa Monica Pier Restoration Corporation*

## Holiday Party Returns to the Pier Carousel

Celebrate the holidays with the Conservancy at Santa Monica's most festive location – the Pier Carousel. Join the festivities at our annual Holiday Party on Sunday, December 11, between 7 and 9 pm. See page 8 for party details.

Originally called Loeff's Hippodrome, the Carousel was built by Charles Loeff in 1916 as the signature building on the new Santa Monica Pleasure Pier, an amusement park adjoining the existing Municipal Pier. Loeff was a pioneering entrepreneur of amusement parks around the country, starting out as a carver of carousel creatures at Coney Island

in 1876. The Loeff Hippodrome, named after the ancient Greek equestrian race track, is a National Historic Landmark, the highest level of historic significance. The Pleasure Pier, with its games, rides and roller coaster (replaced many times), is the last remaining seaside amusement pier in California. In the first half of the 20th century, many such piers dotted the California coast, including several in Ocean Park. Time has washed away this part of our cultural history, except in Santa Monica, where the old-fashioned amusement pier survives and thrives.

*continued on page 4*

## Annual Meeting Set for Historic Church *by John Zinner*

The Santa Monica Conservancy will hold its annual meeting on January 29, 2012 from 3:00 to 5:00 P.M. at the Unitarian Universalist Community Church of Santa Monica (UCCSM). See page 8 for meeting information. The Church is at the corner of 18th St. and Arizona Ave.

At last year's annual meeting, SMC recognized the Church for converting a 1914 cottage on the lot adjoining its sanctuary into church classrooms and meeting space, choosing preservation and adaptive reuse over demolition and new construction.

The Unitarian Church of Santa Monica (the original name) was organized in 1927. The church bought a lot in 1929 from one of the founding members of the congregation, Fred Taft, and built its sanctuary in 1930, at the beginning of the Depression. It was designed by Santa Monica architect John Byers, who also designed the Miles Playhouse in Christine *continued on page 3*



*The Unitarian Church of Santa Monica as seen in a 1937 post card. Photo provided by the Church historian.*

## New Downtown Walking Tour Sponsorship *by Carol Lemlein*



*Docent Winston Chappell shares the history of the 1875 Rapp Saloon with visitors.*

We are very pleased to welcome Downtown Santa Monica, Inc. (DTSM, Inc., formerly the Bayside District) as the presenting sponsor for our Downtown Walking Tour. The Bayside District was a very early supporter of the Walking Tour, featuring it in a two-page article in the April 2007 edition of their newsletter, "The Bayside Beat." Kathleen Rawson, CEO, was a guest lecturer in our first docent training course, describing the history of the Promenade from its early days as the Santa Monica Mall to the present.

The new sponsorship agreement will

provide enhanced marketing of the tour and support development and printing of a second edition of the "Downtown: a Walk through History" brochure. This gives us the opportunity to add material about the "Ocean Avenue Extension" from the Shangri-La to the Georgian Hotels. We will also include other landmarks such as the Gussie Moran House and the nearby section of Palisades Park.

down  
town  
santa  
monica

## 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  
Sarah Bernard  
Bruce Cameron  
Mike Deasy  
Michael W. Folonis, FAIA  
Mario Fonda-Bonardi  
Nina Fresco  
David Kaplan  
Sherrill Kushner  
Cristyne Lawson  
Ruthann Lehrer  
Barbara Whitney

Emeritus:  
Ken Breisch  
Doris Sosin

## How to Contact The Santa Monica Conservancy

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

**Website:** [www.smconservancy.org](http://www.smconservancy.org)

**E-mail:** [info@smconservancy.org](mailto:info@smconservancy.org)

**Mail:** Santa Monica Conservancy  
P.O.Box 653  
Santa Monica, CA 90406

## Membership Dues

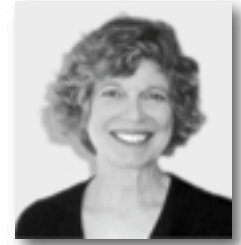
Individual Membership	\$35
Household Membership	\$45
Low Income Membership	\$15
Sustaining Membership	\$100
Supporting Membership	\$250

To support the Conservancy at higher levels, or with a business membership, visit our website [www.smconservancy.org](http://www.smconservancy.org) or call (310) 496-3146.

## The News Staff

Alice Allen	Margaret Bach
Carol Lemlein	Ruthann Lehrer
Nancy O'Neill	Dick Orton
Kay Pattison	Barbara Whitney

## Message from the President *Carol Lemlein*



I recently attended the annual Conference of the National Trust for Historic Preservation in Buffalo, New York. I returned home energized and inspired by the programs and tours, as well as the casual conversations I had with other supporters of preservation at the national, state and local level. I wished I could clone myself in order to attend simultaneous sessions on such subjects of interest as cultural tourism, preservation easements, application of the Secretary of the Interior Standards, preservation as an economic engine, using social media - as well as those on individual projects like the Frank Lloyd Wright's Martin House. A highlight of the trip was seeing the wonderful Martin House, still very much a work-in-progress, during an all-day tour of Wright projects in the Buffalo area.

Special events were held in some of Buffalo's most important buildings, such as Eliel and Eero Saarinen's Kleinhans Music Hall, which has been described as one of the greatest concert halls ever built in the United States. The Los Angeles Downtown Women's Center received an Honor Award at the Preservation Awards ceremony for its restoration and renovation of a dilapidated six-story shoe factory to provide housing and support services to homeless women on Skid Row. Conservancy members Christy McAvooy of the Historic Resources Group and Ray Adamyk of the Spectra Company were honored for their roles on the development team.

One thought I brought home came from a presentation by Trust President Stephanie Meeks at the opening session. She asked "Why are there so many people who actively share our values, and want to preserve the character of our neighborhoods and our locally and nationally historic places, who are not members of any preservation organization?" They are history buffs, lovers of architecture, community-conscious parents, and young activists - your friends and neighbors - who may be aware of the Conservancy but have never thought of joining. Now is a perfect time to engage them - invite them to our Holiday Party, give them a membership or Downtown Walking Tour certificate as a gift, or share this newsletter. You can use the membership application on page 7 or go to our website [www.smconservancy.org](http://www.smconservancy.org) and click on "membership." You can also order Downtown Walking Tour gift certificates by clicking on "Downtown Tour" on the website.

Finally, please don't forget to renew your own membership or include the Conservancy in your year-end donations. Every member strengthens our voice to preserve the places we cherish in our community!

*Carol*

## Update on the Preservation Resource Center:



We have much work to do - and funds to raise - before we can begin the actual renovation of the Shotgun House. But we are pleased to tell you that the City has awarded a contract to reconfigure the parking lot next to the Ocean Park Library at 2nd and Norman Place where the Center will be located. The lot will be re-graded to improve drainage and resurfaced; then the existing 11 parking spaces will be re-positioned to make space for the Shotgun House and our dedicated parking space.



Robin Venturelli has one of those "HELLO" faces, open, warm and inviting. This is someone you definitely want to know.

Volunteer Profile:

# Hoppin' around with Robin

by Robin Venturelli and Kay Pattison

A Southern California native, Robin graduated from UCLA and attended UC Irvine as a graduate student. After receiving her teaching credential she taught in the Orange County school system.

Robin and husband Scott moved to Pacific Palisades after they married, and when children London and Hunter joined the family, Robin started a second career as a portrait photographer so she could work from home. Today she combines her skills by teaching photography classes to young people and volunteering in the Read To Kids program.

Her third career: author. Robin and daughter London have co-written a book; titled *Or-*

*ganize Yourself So You Can Have Fun* (Available at Amazon.com and BarnesandNoble.com). Fun is always on the horizon around Robin. Ask anyone who has worked with her at the Beach House where she is one of the original docents.

Hobbies? Robin has been painting since she was a child and has sold some of her work. Is there a fourth career coming on? She knits, does needlework and can "Help You Pick a Mate," one of the chapters in her book. Believe it! Robin set out one St. Patrick's Day to find a husband and by 9:00 p.m....Done! Robin and Scott have been married 27 years. Robin, long may you chirp.



The Unitarian Church of Santa Monica today. Photo by Carol Lemlein

### Annual Meeting, continued from page 1

Emerson Reed Park. Byers was a self-taught architect who previously worked as a language teacher at Santa Monica High School. Fascinated by the adobe buildings he saw in his travels to Latin America, he revived adobe construction locally around 1920, fused with Spanish Colonial Revival and Monterey Revival architectural design. He later earned an architectural degree and became successful as a designer of homes for celebrities and prestigious clients. Interested in using authentic decorative craft adornments for his homes, he established craft workshops for wrought iron, carved wood, decorative tiles and terra cotta roof tile.

Until purchased by UUCSSM in 2004, the cottage was owned for 80 years by descendants of another founding member of the congregation, Thurlow Taft. There are no original records relating to the cottage, but local real estate agents believe it was built by the original owner as a "kit house," shipped from the Midwest or East as a package ready to be assembled. As such, there is no credited architect. The meeting location promises to provide Conservancy members with another interesting window on a lesser-known historic part of Santa Monica.



## Docent Council Report

Joyce Roseblum, Michelle Schrupp, Judy Castle (Tour Guide), Andrea Hackin, Robin Venturelli, Claire Nelson, Cindy Winthrop, Margi Falk, Moonie Fishburn at the Adamson House.

A highlight of the year for the Docent Council took place November 6 – 7. We took an exclusive tour of the Hearst Castle, arranged through the generous hospitality and support of the Museum Director, Hoyt Fields. Hearst Castle and the Beach House both were the home of William Randolph Hearst and Marion Davies from the 1920s to the 1940s, and involved architect Julia Morgan. Annenberg Community Beach House docents hosted a group of their counterparts from the Castle shortly after the Beach House opened to the public in 2009, and found their mutual interests to be strong.

Since then, a visit to the Central Coast to see the Castle has been anticipated. Tour arrangements for travel by charter bus plus an overnight stay were handled by docent Phillis Dudick, assisted by Elaine Cohen.

Docents who missed the July visit to the historic Adamson House in Malibu visited the site on October 2nd. Thanks go to Judy Castle who led the tour and Robin Venturelli who arranged the event. Everyone enjoyed learning about the Rindge family and the amazing Malibu tile that make this site a unique landmark.

# A BIG PALISADES PARK TOUR THANK YOU

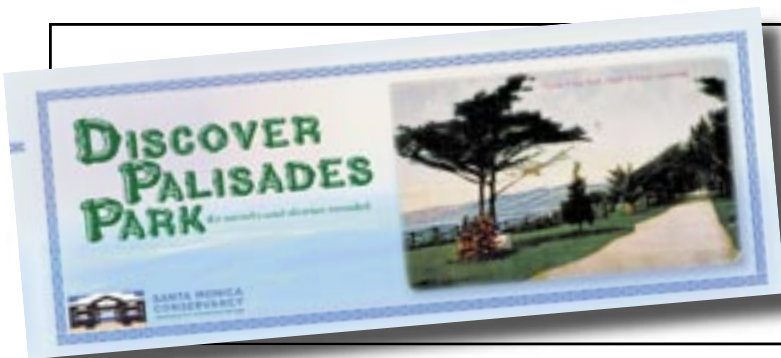


The tour route included the pergola that inspired the Conservancy logo. Upper right: Volunteers Julia Denholm and Thomasine Rogas at the Totem Pole. Lower right: Robin Venturrelli introduces Arcadia Bandini Stearns Baker at her statue.

The Conservancy's second offering of the popular "Discover Palisades Park" tour on September 18 was a resounding success. Our heartfelt thanks go out to volunteer docents and others who helped tour goers discover the secrets and stories of the Park, as they explored the park's history and features along the one mile walk:

- |                 |                   |                 |                |                |
|-----------------|-------------------|-----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Gigi Smith      | Dorothy Jewell    | Claire Nelson   | John Zinner    | Phyllis Dudick |
| Julia Denholm   | Anita Roglich     | Joyce Rosenblum | Phyllis Conkle | Carol Lemlein  |
| Thomasine Rogas | Robin Venturrelli | Clare Ellinger  | Diane Locklear | Ruthann Lehrer |
| Libby Pachares  | Kay Pattison      | Michael Crosby  | Ellen Holden   |                |

Thanks also go to Gigi Smith and Julia Denholm, who recruited sponsors for the tour, and Kate Bransfield, of Coldwell Banker, who ran announcements of the tour in her ads in the Santa Monica Daily Press. Special thanks go to our wonderful sponsors Blue Plate on Montana Avenue, and Blue Plate Oysterette on Ocean Avenue.



If you missed the tour, or would like to explore on your own, the tour booklet, "Discover Palisades Park" is available for \$3.00 at the Convention and Visitors Bureau. Visit the Convention and Visitors Bureau headquarters at 1920 Main Street, or the Kiosk on the Promenade (1300 Block, across from Foot Locker) or the Kiosk on the Pier (across from Bubba Gump). The booklet is not available at the Visitors Center in Palisades Park.

## Holiday Party, continued from page 1

The original Looff carousel and its hand-carved menagerie is long gone, but the replacement is delightful and historic, built in 1922 by the Philadelphia Toboggan Company. It was once installed at the Venice Pier, but moved here after a pier fire in 1947. Music is provided by an original Wurlitzer Automatic Band Organ. The carousel is also renowned for its role in the

film, "The Sting," starring Robert Redford.

Architecturally the carousel building is a concoction of fantasy and exotic, with Moorish and Byzantine overtones. The building is two-stories, with small apartments above the carousel. A cast of colorful character – artists and oddballs – lived in the apartments upstairs. Charles Looff himself was the first resident, during construction of the pier. Joan

Baez was a frequent visitor to a political activist who lived there in the 1960s and 1970s.

After a fire in 1974, the units were remodeled as offices, today serving the Pier Restoration Corporation. During the Holiday Party, guests will be able to ride the carousel and visit the upstairs area. Our thanks to the Pier Restoration Corporation for opening the doors to us.



## Pamela Burton appointed to the Architectural Review Board by Carol Lemlein

Conservancy member Pamela Burton, Fellow of the American Society of Landscape Architects, was recently appointed to the Santa Monica Architectural Review Board. Her firm, Pamela Burton & Company, is an internationally recognized and respected

landscape architecture firm known for creating sustainable designs that evolve from a site's cultural and physical environment. Burton's projects include private residences and public landscapes in California, Idaho, New York, Brazil, Japan, Korea, and Taiwan. Well-known local projects include the Santa Monica Public Library with Moore Ruble Yudell Architects, and the park at Yahoo Center, featured in the Conservancy's

first Landscapes Tour in 2009.

Pamela has published two books: *Pamela Burton Landscapes* in 2010 and *Private Landscapes: Modernist Gardens in Southern California* in 2003. The latter profiles residential gardens designed by such twentieth century modernists as Richard Neutra and Rudolph Schindler.

What is the Architectural Review Board? The ARB's purpose is to assure that buildings, structures, signs or other developments are in good taste, promote good design, are harmonious with surrounding developments, and in general contribute to the preservation of Santa Monica's reputation as a place of beauty, spaciousness and quality. ARB approval is required for new construction, additions or remodels of existing buildings in all zones except the single family residential zone (R1). The Board has discretionary review over structures, major contour grading, landscaping, parking lots, mechanical equipment screening, and signs within the City of Santa Monica.

## Explore Santa Monica's Noir Side!

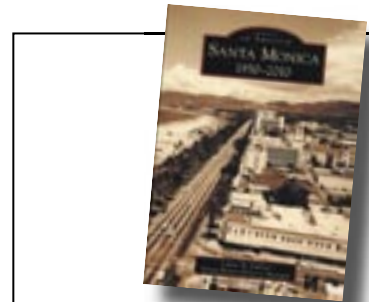


"It was a cheap looking building for so prosperous a town. It looked more like something out of the Bible belt....The building was of three stories and had an old belfry at the top, the bell still hanging in the belfry." from "Farewell, My Lovely" by Raymond Chandler. 1938 photo courtesy of the Image Archives Santa Monica Public Library.

### Monday March 12

The Conservancy partners with the Beach=Culture at the Annenberg Beach House to present "Raymond Chandler's Sense of Place: Santa Monica and the Westside," a virtual tour of Santa Monica places associated with Raymond Chandler and his novels. The

illustrated talk by author Judith Freeman with photographer Helen K. Garber is part of "NoirFest Santa Monica," the inaugural integrated arts festival using Noir as a unifying theme. (See [www.noirfestsm.com](http://www.noirfestsm.com)). Freeman is the author of *The Long Embrace: Raymond Chandler and the Woman He Loved*.



### New Santa Monica History Published

Congratulations to Louise Gabriel and the Santa Monica History Museum on the publication of Louise's new book, *Santa Monica 1950-2010*. The book completes the narrative begun in *Early Santa Monica*, published in 2006. Louise B. Gabriel is the president and founder of the Santa Monica History Museum. The new book includes over 200 photographs from the museum that reflect Santa Monica's post-World War II growth and change. Both books are available at the Santa Monica History Museum, 1350 7th Street (310-395-2290, [www.santamonicahistory.org](http://www.santamonicahistory.org)), as well as local book stores and on-line from Arcadia Publishing.

Another Chandler novel, *Lady in the Lake*, will be the focus of the Santa Monica Public Library's "2012 Citywide Reads," a community reading program in February and March that invites everyone to read and discuss the same novel in book clubs and other events held around the city.

## The Mills Act—An Incentive for Historic Preservation *by Ruth Shari*



1063 26th Street, the "Brecht House." photo by Ruth Shari

**Q:** What could be more appealing than the seductive daily pleasure of living in a distinctive property, rich in character, history and cultural fabric, one that manifests architectural integrity and may be a community icon?

**A:** Having all that AND getting the property tax savings that result from a Mills Act contract!

This September, the Landmarks Commission reviewed and recommended approval for Mills Act contracts with owners of the following properties: 1063 26th Street, called the Brecht House because Berthold Brecht lived there and wrote seminal works during several years in the 1940's; 2504 Third Street; 1501-1515 Fourth Street; and 2616-2618 Third Street.

Owners who sign a contract with the City of Santa Monica to preserve, restore and maintain a designated landmark or structure of merit receive a property tax reassessment that can provide significant savings, sometimes as much as 60 percent. The savings is calculated

by the LA County Assessor's office using a formula too complicated to define here. Suffice it to say that the tax savings is greatest on properties purchased recently with the highest tax valuations.

Integral to the contract is the requirement to commit to a 10-year restoration and maintenance work plan, generated by a certified architect hired by the owner. Periodic inspections are conducted by city staff to ensure the work plan is being followed. The contract remains in effect for the property even after it changes ownership, serving as a strong incentive for buyers to preserve these properties.

The work plan typically only covers exterior restoration, rehabilitation and general maintenance, but interior work is sometimes included, depending upon the nature of the property. Since 2007, the City has entered into Mills Act contracts with owners of 15 properties, and more than half of Santa Monica's landmarks are presently taking advantage of it. The Mills Act applies to both residential and commercial properties, owner-occupied as well as income-producing.



2502 Third Street." photo by Ruth Shari

### Kronish House Saved!

Beverly Hills' last intact Richard Neutra home, the 1954 Kronish House, has been saved from demolition. As reported in the September Newsletter ("Neutra's Kronish House Threatened with Demolition"), the Santa Monica Conservancy joined with the Los Angeles Conservancy and Dion Neutra, as well as other local and national organizations to ask the City of Beverly Hills to delay demolition in order to allow time to find a preservation-minded buyer. On October 14, the property was sold to a buyer who plans to restore the house.

Although the home is not in Santa Monica, your Conservancy board voted to join the effort to bring attention to the disturbing trend of demolition of important historic

buildings in Beverly Hills. The potential loss of the Kronish House rallied the preservation community, sending close to 600 letters to the City of Beverly Hills requesting not only a delay in demolition, but the creation of procedures to ensure that important structures in Beverly Hills are not easily lost. In response, the City has taken positive steps to review its preservation policies and move forward on a Mills Act program of property tax incentives.

The City of Santa Monica has a robust program for evaluating historic structures and providing tax incentives for property owners through the Mills Act. For additional information on the Mills Act program in Santa Monica, please see the Landmarks Commission Report above.

## Winter Preservation Events

### "A Journalist's Journey: Harold Norwood Hubbard (1899-1996)," Lecture & Book Signing

Thursday, December 8, 5:30 PM  
Pasadena Museum of History  
626-577-1660  
<http://www.pasadenahistory.org>

### Stone on Stone, Lecture and Book Signing

Saturday, December 10, 4 PM  
Society of Architectural Historians/  
Southern California Chapter  
800-972-4722  
<http://www.sahscc.org>

### Roger McGrath, Stories from Temescal Canyon.

Monday, January 16, 7 PM  
Pacific Palisades Historical Society  
<http://www.pacificpalisadeshistory.org>

### Shortboard Revolution, Surf Design 1967—1984

Continuing through April 22, 2012  
California Heritage Museum  
310-392-8537  
<http://web.mac.com/calmuseum>

### California Design, 1930–1965: "Living in a Modern Way"


Continuing through June 3, 2012  
Los Angeles County Museum of Art  
323-857-6000  
<http://www.lacma.org/>



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I've enclosed my contribution of \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Will your employer match your gift?**

Matching gifts can double or triple the value of your membership donation. Please request the relevant forms from your employer and send them to us.

**Thank you!**

Please contribute on our website or send your check payable to the Santa Monica Conservancy to P.O. Box 653, Santa Monica, CA 90406

The Santa Monica Conservancy is a 501(c) 3 non-profit organization. Your contact information will not be shared.



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## Coming Events

### *Holiday Party*



**at the Carousel, Santa Monica Pier**

**Sunday, December 11, 2011**

**7-9 pm**

Ride the carousel, listen to the mighty Wurlitzer,  
visit the upper floor,  
Chat with friends and enjoy the holiday refreshments.

The event is free for Santa Monica Conservancy members.  
Guests are welcome for \$20, applied towards membership  
if they join at the party.

**RSVP by December 7**

Online at [www.smconservancy.org](http://www.smconservancy.org),  
Email to [rsvp@smconservancy.org](mailto:rsvp@smconservancy.org),  
Leave a message at 310-496-3146.

Join or renew your membership online or at the door.

### *Annual Meeting*



**at the Unitarian Universalist  
Community Church of  
Santa Monica**

Corner of 18th St. and Arizona Ave.

**Sunday, January 29, 2012**

**3-5 pm**

- Guest Speaker,
- Board of Directors Election
- Volunteer Recognition
- and more

**Free**

Refreshments

Bring a Friend