



# SANTA MONICA CONSERVANCY NEWS

VOL 7 No 1

ENSURING THAT THE PAST HAS A FUTURE  
MARCH 2009

## WHAT COLOR WAS THE SHOTGUN HOUSE?

By Sherrill Kushner

Another step has been taken toward rehabilitating the shotgun house. Avigail Charnov, a member of Historic Resources Group, visited the house to take paint samples to gather clues to determine what might have been the house's original colors.

With the diligence of a surgeon, rubber-gloved Charnov used a scalpel to take small samples of the paint down to the wood substrate in parts of the house that were most protected from the elements and from use. Each sample was numbered and placed in a plastic bag. She conducted a visual analysis

CONTINUED ON PAGE 7



Avigail Charnov of Historic Resources Group examines paint samples from the shotgun house to determine its original exterior and interior colors.

## LANDMARK COMMISSION REPORT LEGAL VICTORY FOR TERITON

by Ruthann Lehrer

In an important legal decision made in November 2008, the U.S. District Court upheld the landmark designation of the Teriton, 130 San Vicente Boulevard, in a suit brought by Or Khaim Hashalom (OKH). The challenge was based upon a claim that properties owned by religious organizations are exempt from historic landmark designation. CONTINUED ON PAGE 6

## 2009 PRESERVATION AWARDS ANNOUNCED AT ANNUAL MEETING

by Carol Lemlein



Top: Carol Lemlein gives award to Tehmina Adaya and her colleagues Dino Nanni and Marc Smith.

Below: Shangri-La Hotel in 1958

Two outstanding restoration projects received 2009 Preservation Awards at the Conservancy's Annual Meeting, held at the Senior Recreation Center and Camera Obscura on Sunday, January 25.

The first award went to the recently reopened Shangri-La Hotel on Ocean Avenue, frequently considered the best example of Streamline Moderne in Santa Monica. Owner Tehmina Adaya and her colleagues Dino Nanni and Marc Smith were recognized for their roles in updating the hotel while taking great care to maintain its historic character.

The second award went to a project of a much different scale – the painstaking restoration of the last remaining beach-facing cottage on Ocean Avenue in Ocean Park by its current owners John and Donna Heidt.

Photo credits: Top two by Dick Orton; Shangri-La picture courtesy of the Santa Monica Public Library Image Archives; Ocean Avenue cottage photo by Marcello Vavala



Top: Carol Lemlein honors John and Donna Heidt for their preservation of an Ocean Ave. treasure.

Below: Heidt's cottage on Ocean Avenue.

The cottage, circa 1905, was threatened with demolition in 2006, when a group of neighbors rallied to support its designation as a city landmark. The building was in very poor condition when the Heidts purchased the property in early 2008. They worked for months to clean and refurbish it as their home.

In other business at the Annual Meeting, Ken Breisch, Bruce Cameron, Tom Cleys, Mike Deasy and Marcello Vavala were reelected to the Board of Directors, and current President Carol Lemlein gave an overview of the Conservancy's 2008 successes and challenges ahead. Ruthann Lehrer was honored for her many outstanding contributions but especially as program chair. The meeting concluded with a talk on the Camera Obscura by Marcello Vavala.

## THE CONSERVANCY BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Our board comes from neighborhoods throughout the city and includes:

Carol Lemlein, President  
 Susan McCarthy, Vice President  
 David Kaplan, Secretary  
 Tom Cleys, Treasurer  
 Marcello Vavala, Past President

Joel Brand  
 Ken Breisch  
 Bruce Cameron  
 Mike Deasy  
 Michael W. Folonis, FAIA  
 Nina Fresco  
 Sherrill Kushner  
 Ruthann Lehrer  
 Nancy O'Neill  
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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 higher levels, or with a business membership, call (310) 496-3146

### THE NEWS STAFF

Alice Allen      Dick Orton  
 Ruthann Lehrer      Nina Fresco  
 Sherrill Kushner      Judy Parsons  
 Marcello Vavala

### HOW TO CONTACT THE SANTA MONICA CONSERVANCY

Phone us at  
**(310) 496-3146**  
 -and leave a message.

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

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

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



## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Carol Lemlein

In preparation for our Annual Meeting, I was asked to reflect on our accomplishments in 2008 and what challenges were ahead. We've had wonderful programs – the Adelaide Tour, the screening of "Chris and Don" and the reception at Don Bachardy's home, as well as the Holiday Party at the home of Marty and Wendy Katz. Our weekly Downtown Walking Tour continues to offer residents and visitors a unique view of Santa Monica history and architecture - and now we have been selected by the City of Santa Monica for the exciting new docent program at the Annenberg Community Beach House (415 PCH).

We've made significant strides in each of the areas we set as priorities for the year. Our membership is at an all-time high of 390, with over 100 new members. We asked the City for – and got - much more specific inclusion of historic preservation and tools such as transfer of development rights in the Land Use and Circulation Element (LUCE) Strategy Framework. And we made progress toward making the Preservation Resource Center at the Shotgun House a reality.

The challenges ahead are many, not the least of which is the economic uncertainty that affects us all. There is so much more to do to ensure that preservation becomes a community-wide imperative, that we can encourage sustainable preservation and reuse strategies at the earliest stages of project planning, rather than by painful intervention as demolition is threatened. We need to build an effective network of professional and volunteer preservation advocates – and to do that, we rely on your ongoing support and that of your friends and neighbors.

Together we will ensure that the past has a future in Santa Monica!

Carol

### 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

## VOLUNTEER PROFILE: MARIO FONDA-BONARDI by Judy Parsons

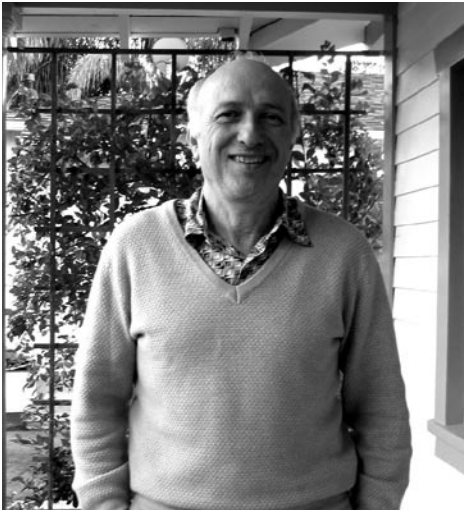


Photo provided by Mario Fonda-Bonardi

Local architect and Santa Monica Conservancy member, Mario Fonda-Bonardi isn't a Santa Monica native but he may as well be. He's been coming to Santa Monica's beaches since he was a child, and he's lived

in Ocean Park for 32 years. So, his affection for our city's urban fabric and wanting to preserve its sterling qualities – such as the Shotgun House – are understandable. Mario has been responsible for all architectural issues relating to the shotgun house, including detailed construction drawings.

"I became interested in the Shotgun House when I was active in Ocean Park Community Organization (OPCO)," he said. "This style used to be the dominant form in Ocean Park and now it's practically extinct. When it was slated for demolition in 1998, I talked with others about saving it as a historical artifact. It's been a 10-year ride of epic proportions – the house has been moved twice and OPCO has died. But now we have the Conservancy's Shotgun House Committee under the leadership of Sherrill Kushner – and I feel we'll be definitively moving ahead."

Thirty years ago when Mario started his practice, he quickly saw that some of

the old buildings targeted for demolition were worth preserving, expanding and adaptively reusing. "I found myself studying and appreciating these older buildings more and more as I tried to design them into the next decades of their life," he said.

While he also works with new homes, and is currently designing a 43-home ecological tract development in Ventura, Mario's clients often ask him to restore and rebuild older buildings. In 1995 he brought new life to his own home. "The original house was built in 1898 as evidenced by newspapers we found inside the walls when we remodeled in 1995. Unfortunately, the house was added onto over the decades in five stages in such a way as to make it practically impossible to return the house to any semblance of its original character. While meeting the Secretary of the Interior standards is the ideal goal in any historic rehab, sometimes keeping the building pleasant, alive and functional is just as good."

## SANTA MONICA'S CAMERA OBSCURA: A CLOSER LOOK

by Marcello Vavala

While the city's pier is celebrating its centennial this year, the nearby Camera Obscura is quietly approaching its 111th year as a Santa Monica attraction. Site of the Conservancy's 2009 Annual Meeting, this venerable device has a fascinating history closely associated with our city's early development and two of its most selfless citizens.

Santa Monica's Camera Obscura was the product of Robert F. Jones' civic pride and fascination for cameras and photography. Jones, nephew of city co-founder John P. Jones, served as mayor of Santa Monica for nearly eight years and, during that time, constructed the Camera Obscura. It debuted in July 1898 and was an immediate success. So successful, in fact, that Jones responded within months to a request to have his device placed in Los Angeles' fashionable Westlake Park for two years.

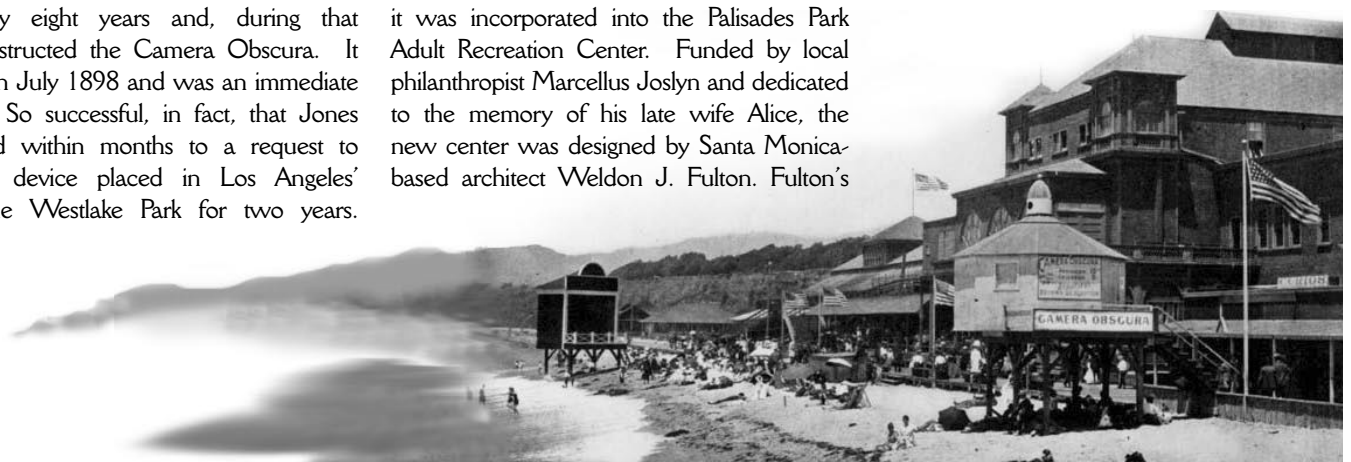
Upon its arrival back in Santa Monica, the Camera Obscura returned to its location next to the North Beach Bathhouse. Tourists waited in long lines for a chance to see clear, moving images of the beach and coastline—perfectly reproduced, color images that were projected onto a circular disc within the darkened chamber. Recognizing the lucrative tourist-drawing potential of the Camera Obscura, the city purchased the device in 1910 and installed it next to the streetcar station in Linda Vista Park (today's Palisades Park) for maximum effect.

The final home for Santa Monica's Camera Obscura was realized in 1955, when it was incorporated into the Palisades Park Adult Recreation Center. Funded by local philanthropist Marcellus Joslyn and dedicated to the memory of his late wife Alice, the new center was designed by Santa Monica-based architect Weldon J. Fulton. Fulton's

characteristic signage—rear-lit cursive lettering oriented in an upward slant—continues to advertise Jones' venerable novelty with flair to park visitors and motorists along Ocean Avenue.

Today, Jones' Camera Obscura is one of the last of its kind in the nation. Palisades Park was designated a city landmark in September 2007, and both the Camera Obscura and the Fulton-designed Senior Center are protected as contributing features.

Photo courtesy of the Santa Monica Library Image Archives Collection



# SPRING PRESERVATION EVENTS: VISIT A MUSEUM



Miracle Mile Walking Tour  
Saturday, March 14,  
10:00 am - noon

Art Deco Society of Los Angeles  
P.O. Box 972,  
Hollywood, California 90078

310-659-3326

Led by J. Eric Lynxwiler, the group explores the famed neighborhood block by block to see what the area was, what it is and what it will be. Advance reservations required. Members \$10, non-members \$15

<http://adsla.org/>



LA Heritage Day  
Sunday, March 22,  
Noon - 4 pm

Heritage Square Museum  
3800 Homer Street,  
Los Angeles, California 90031

323-225-2700

Come visit with members of historical societies and museums as they present their communities and heritage. This special event brings together LA's diverse historical communities whose work preserves the city's history.

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



2009 Spring Home Tour  
Sunday, March 29,  
9 am - 4 pm

Pasadena Heritage  
651 South Saint John Avenue,  
Pasadena, California 91105-2913

626-441-6333

Docent-led tours of private homes designed by Johnson, Kaufmann and Coate. See website for ticket prices and information.

<http://pasadenaheritage.org/>

## HOLIDAY PARTY JOYFUL

by Ruthann Lehrner

More than 100 members and friends enjoyed savory food and cheery company at the beautiful home of Wendy and Marty Katz at our holiday party in December. The Katz's gracious hospitality was truly appreciated by all. We were also very grateful to Marmalade Cafe and Catering, Via Dolce, and Pioneer Boulangerie, all on Montana Avenue, as well as Whole Foods on Wilshire Boulevard for donating delicious bounty for our food table. Our heartfelt appreciation to event co-chairs Kitty Bartholomew and Phyllis Conkle, the brilliant hostesses and cooks for this annual celebration. Thanks to their talents, we are famous for our parties!

Thanks also to volunteers Kate Bransfield, Tom Cleys, Mary Ann Hays, Dwight Flowers, Sherrill Kushner, Carol Lemlein, Dick Orton, and Nat Zappia for their support.

Top: Kate Bransfield and Bruce Cameron; Holiday fare from our sponsors; Nat Zappia staffed the bar, Middle: members of the Santa Monica High School Chamber Orchestra; Bottom: Marty Katz shows his clock collection; David Kaplan and Susan Hartley. Photos by Dick Orton



# AND LEARN ABOUT ANOTHER COMMUNITY



2009 California Preservation Conference:  
Palm Springs  
Thursday – Sunday, April 16 - April 19

California Preservation Foundation  
5 Third St., Ste. 424,  
San Francisco, CA 94103

415-495-0349

“The Culture of Leisure – Rethinking the California Dream.” Over 30 sessions and workshops on issues facing California’s historic, cultural and natural resources, tours of Palm Springs’ architecture, landscapes, tribal history and culture of leisure.

See website for details and cost information.

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



Mother’s Day Tea 2009  
Saturday, May 9,  
11 am and 2 pm

Save Historic Torrance  
2028 Gramercy Ave.,  
Torrance, CA 90501

310-320-0269

Fundraiser at the historic Zamperini Home with traditional tea menu, with a choice of two seating times. Two gift drawings per seating.

Reservations required \$30.00

[www.savehistoricoldtorrance.com](http://www.savehistoricoldtorrance.com)



20th Anniversary Museums of the Arroyo Day  
Sunday, May 17,  
11 am - 5 pm

Museums of the Arroyo  
See website for contact information for each museum

The diverse mix of art, architecture and history of the Arroyo Seco area can be found in the six unique history-based museums that preserve and perpetuate early Los Angeles life.

Free

<http://www.museumsofhearroyo.com/>



## Save the Date: Sunday, May 31, 1-5pm Santa Monica Landscapes

“Santa Monica Landscapes” is the first tour of garden environments ever offered by the Santa Monica Conservancy. Landscape provides an important setting and context for architecture, adding a new dimension of materials and design. Additionally, it’s a gift to the street for the enjoyment of pedestrians and neighbors, enhancing the streetscape and providing visual (and sometime fragrant) delights. A committee of volunteers, working with esteemed landscape design teacher Jim Yeager from Santa Monica College, is working on selecting various sites to exemplify different approaches to garden design, including sustainability and native plants. This tour, covering all city neighborhoods and presenting at least ten different site visits, will be an exceptional opportunity – don’t miss it! More information will be mailed to our members...so, mark the date in your calendar now.



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## SMC TO TRAIN DOCENTS FOR BEACH HOUSE



Photo courtesy of Friends of 415 PCH

by Ruthann Lehrer

The Santa Monica Conservancy will become the City's partner at the highly anticipated opening of the Annenberg Community Beach House by developing a new docent program to introduce visitors to the site. The themes of this tour will embrace cultural as well as architectural history, and the fascinating personalities who once made the site a destination for celebrities and heads of state.

The original residence was built beginning in 1929 for actress Marion Davies by William Randolph Hearst and architect Julia Morgan. The centerpiece was a 110-room mansion that was demolished many years ago, but several historic elements remain. The site recalls the scale and grandeur of the "beach house" community that predominated on Santa Monica's Gold Coast, when it was the location for seaside residences of many Hollywood luminaries.

Thanks to a generous grant from the

Annenberg Foundation, the remaining historic parts are being restored, and new construction, designed by Fred Fisher & Partners Architects, adds recreational facilities to the new public beach house. The Annenberg Community Beach House is expected to attract crowds of residents and visitors when it opens to the public in mid-April.

Some years back, when the concept of developing a public beach house at the site evoked controversy, the Santa Monica Conservancy initiated a community support group known as "Friends of 415 PCH." Led by Board member Joel Brand, the Friends rallied hundreds to the cause of preserving the historic site and renovating it for the public's use. Happily, they prevailed.

With the success of our weekly Downtown Walking Tours, we are now positioned to accept this new responsibility with enthusiasm. Docent training classes will begin March 7th.

Check our website for details.

## ANOTHER PAUL WILLIAMS GEM



by Marcello Vavala

Our article "Paul Williams in Santa Monica," which appeared in the December 2008 issue of our newsletter, led to an unexpected result. The article cited three of Williams' known surviving works in Santa Monica, and prompted

some of our members to contact us with information about a fourth that is less widely known.

The Tucker House, located at 1958 20th Street, is a Colonial Revival style residence that Williams designed in 1937 for Santa Monica's first black physician: Dr. Marcus O. Tucker. The residence features elegant bow windows flanking the central door, which is set within a recessed, pedimented entrance. We'd like to thank Conservancy member Nat Trives for informing us about this significant piece of Santa Monica's heritage.

Photo by Marcello Vavala

## TERITON CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

The Teriton, constructed in 1949-50, was designated primarily for its architectural significance as a fine example of mid-century Modern International style, designed by recognized architect Sanford Kent. Its pinwheel site plan was a sophisticated and unique variant of adjacent garden apartment complexes on San Vicente Boulevard. The building contains 28 rental units.

The court's decision was based in part on its finding that the property was a commercial property at the time of purchase, as OKH was created in conjunction with its purchase of the Teriton. California law permits an exemption from landmark designation to properties used for religious purposes if they determine that landmark status will impose a hardship.

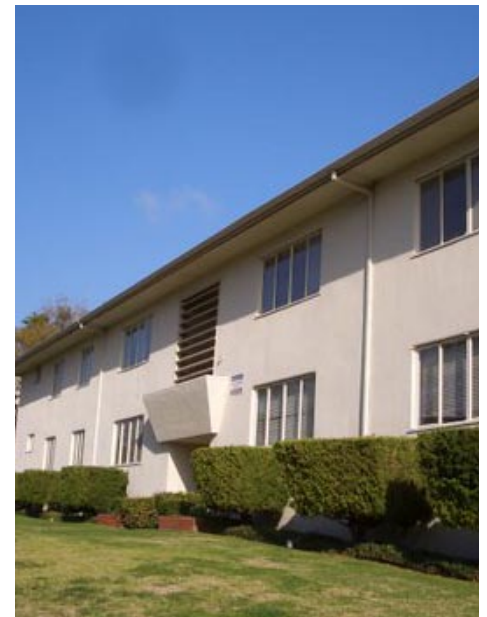


Photo courtesy of Ruthann Lehrer

But the Teriton was a residential commercial property, and OKH did not have a religious purpose at the time that it initially sought to demolish the Teriton. The potential misuse of religious exemptions was recognized by the court as amounting to an unconstitutional subsidy of the religious group owner at the expense of other landmark property owners.

In its careful and detailed review of the public hearings held by the Landmarks Commission and the City Council, the Court validated the findings of historical and architectural significance as well as the criteria for designation in the city's landmarks ordinance. This confirmation of Santa Monica's landmarks process was a triumph for the city – but an appeal is pending.

**SHOTGUN HOUSE COLORS** CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

under a stereo microscope, examining the stratigraphy (layers) of each sample. The goal was to find the layer closest to the wall, which logically would be the earliest layer of paint.

Part of the challenge is to distinguish between paint and dirt and to also consider the effects caused by pollution, light and aging. Chips were compared to the Munsell color system, used by preservationists as the standard to match paint colors.

Charnov has a Masters of Science degree in Historic Preservation (conservation) from Columbia University. Her services are being provided by Historic Resources Group, preservation consultants, as part of its pro bono support of the restoration of the shotgun house. We are grateful for their expertise and partnership in the shotgun house restoration project.

Although the exterior samples were quite hard to read due to severe weathering of the wood cladding, Charnov concluded that the wood was probably clear finished or not finished. The building may have been originally unpainted. "Due to the weathering, it is hard to differentiate the first layers from each other and to define their exact color," noted Charnov in her written report.

She concluded that the first painted layer on the building was a shade of white, either a white or a cream. The interior samples were much cleaner to read. The wood may have had a clear finish, but the first layer of paint was white. It is possible that the white was used as a primer. The rooms differ slightly in their paint layers, but at some point they all appear to have been painted mint green, light green, and white. Her conclusions will guide us in our future rehabilitation efforts.

**NEW MEMBERS**

- Craig and Florence Cardwell
- Carl and Carol Day \*
- Eric Faber
- Eileen Fogarty
- Marlise Fratinardo
- Amanda Kainer
- Relna Brewer McRae
- F. Claudette Richard
- Wright Rix
- Jack Walter \*
- Jon Wilson

\*Sustaining Member or higher

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- Angel City Press
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- Pamela Burton & Company
- Aleks Istanbulu Architects
- Keller Williams Realty Westside
- Moore, Ruble, Yudell
- Mary Ann Powell, Pacific Park
- John Strozdas, The Ambrose

**CITY PHOTO QUIZ ANSWER**

Sue's Ice Cream Parlour, shown on page 2 was once located at the northeast corner of Second and Broadway.

Since the 1920s the site has been occupied by The Hotel Carmel. Both images are courtesy of the Santa Monica Public Library Image Archives.



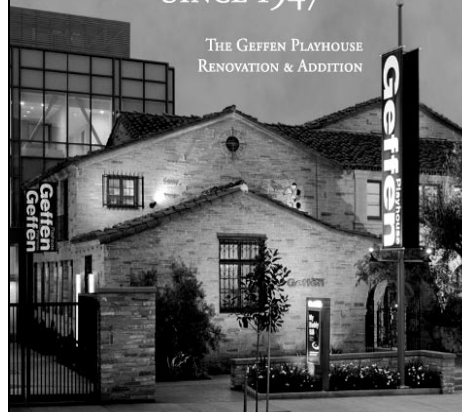
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Do We Have Your E-mail Address?

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

### WALKING TOUR DOCENTS VISIT ADAMSON HOUSE.



Back l. to r.: Thomasine Rogas, Christi Walden (Adamson House host), Bob Hensley, Jerome Robinson.  
Middle Row: Winston Chappell, Julie Berger, Kay Pattison, Rita Schneir, Linda Hensley, Carol Lemlein.  
Front: Ruthann Lehrer. Photo by Jerry Schneir.

### DO WE HAVE YOUR E-MAIL ADDRESS?

E-mail 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:

[rsvp@smconservancy.org](mailto:rsvp@smconservancy.org)

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