

The Conservation Society of San Antonio THE PRESERVATION ADVOCATE

THE
CONSERVATION
SOCIETY
OF SAN ANTONIO
MAKING HISTORY BY SAVING HISTORY.

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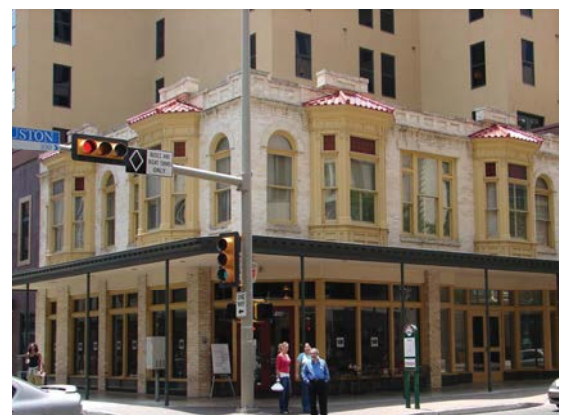
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WHAT WE DO

Giving back to the community

Brandi Hayes, Preservation Specialist/ Properties Restoration Manager
The Conservation Society of San Antonio

When asked what I like most about my job, I immediately think of our Community Building Grants program. This program began in 1990 to help restore and rehabilitate San Antonio's vast trove of historic structures. As prices rise and skilled craftspeople are harder to find, providing a funding source is one way the Society can help. Proceeds from A Night in Old San Antonio (NIOA)® help us fund the grants program. Every chicken on a stick you buy goes to a great cause! Each year I meet owners that share a love for preservation and I am proud to be part of helping them complete their projects.



Our grants cover exterior work that would not be considered maintenance, such as roof replacement, foundation work, or window and porch restoration. We have covered everything from restoring an iconic neon sign to rebuilding a whole caliche block wall. They are offered once a year, with applications opening the first week of August. The grants are competitive, not guaranteed, as much as we wish we were able to fund everyone that applies each year. The structure must be at least 50 years old, and the project must not have begun prior to being awarded a grant. Our grants are reimbursements, distributed after the project has been completed according to the scope.

WHAT WE DO - CONTINUED ON PAGE 5



FROM THE PRESIDENT

Lewis Vetter, President

As I complete my first term and look forward to my second as your President, I wanted to reflect on our collective achievements. When I became President last summer, I stated that my goal was to celebrate our successes and those who made them possible.



We had a strong year in advocacy, with Board and Staff traveling to Austin and Washington, D.C. to meet with our legislative representatives and advocate for the Historic Preservation Fund, investment tax credits and cultural heritage in general. We traveled to New Orleans for the PastForward conference of the National Trust for Historic Preservation and promoted our heritage conservation mission in many ways and through many outlets.



Our members and volunteers responded to the challenge by packing into City Council hearings

on digital advertising, contacting the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality regarding the Guajolote Ranch project threatening our water supply, and urging state and national legislators to support historic preservation.

In many ways it has been a challenging year. Our extensive efforts to save the Texas Pavilion/Institute of Texan Cultures building failed, despite achieving State Antiquities Landmark status. Yet even in the face of a loss, we can thank the many volunteers and staffers who helped move our effort along, notably Board Member Betty Bueche, who attended and spoke at numerous meetings, and Librarian Beth Standifird, who represented us at the State Antiquities Landmark hearings in Tyler in July and Odessa in October.



Despite the loss, our lawsuit challenging the demolition of the Texas Pavilion led to prominent media coverage online, in print, and on radio and television. We stuck to our mission and put our money where our heart is. Public officials were reminded that we will defend our heritage with all the tools at our disposal. I want to thank the following who have served the Society this year and completing their term: **John Bloodsworth, Allison Elder, Lisa Garza, Terry Schoenert and Torrey Stanley Carleton.** Each of you have contributed to the success of the Society in so many ways. I hope you will remain active and involved in the various committees and service areas.

I also want to thank you, the members of the Society. You are the backbone of the great successes we celebrate together.



FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Vincent Michael, Executive Director

On May 16 The Conservation Society of San Antonio was denied an emergency injunction by the 15th Court of Appeals in its lawsuit against the University of Texas at San

Antonio and the City of San Antonio regarding the Texas Pavilion building in Hemisfair. As in the April 14th District Court decision, there was no hearing on the issue of whether UTSA and the City followed the law regarding demolition of a State Antiquities Landmark and National Register property.

By the time of the May decision, most of the wall and roof panels from the iconic 1968 building had been removed. What began as a remediation project in February quickly turned into a demolition, but no court would hear our request for relief and a pause.

The saddest part of our multiyear effort to save this building is the fact that a public hearing on the future of the building was never held. The building is being taken down with public dollars but no public hearing. The only opportunities to speak were the County hearings starting in January, where Conservation Society Board Member Betty Bueche articulated our case.

Having exhausted legal avenues and with even less of the building to save, the Society reluctantly ended its legal efforts. As President Lewis Vetter said at the time. "They have removed or prepared for removal almost all of the wall panels. The bridge leading to the building is gone, as is the fountain that symbolized how Texans came together out of so many cultural influences. Even if we were to succeed in our appeal, there is little left to save. It is already gone."

The Conservation Society has been pushing for public hearings on the building

since 2022. We successfully listed the Texas Pavilion on the National Register of Historic Places and as a State Antiquities Landmark in 2024.

The site has been proposed as a potential new Spurs stadium, part of "Project Marvel," proposed by the City of San Antonio and



including additions to the Convention Center, a redo of the Alamodome, a new hotel and a concert venue in the 1968 US Pavilion, most recently used as a courthouse. The Conservation Society has consistently said that the Texas Pavilion could be used as part of Project Marvel.

After a year of speculation, Project Marvel was revealed in November, although only a single image of the concept has been released. The City – with a new Mayor and Council – is hosting two-day workshops on Project Marvel in each Council district during June and July. Updates can be found online at <https://www.saspeakup.com/sportsdistrict>.



What next? In the short term, we are keeping an eye on the

Kallison Block and other properties owned by UTSA. They also own the former Ursuline Academy, which the Society purchased and saved in the 1960s and then donated to the Southwest School of Art. The Conservation Society still holds a preservation easement on that property, which means we must approve any changes to the historic buildings.

The Conservation Society did what it could in a David-and-Goliath battle to try and save the Texas Pavilion. While it is hard to accept the loss, please rest assured that with your support we will continue to fight for the heritage of our city and region.



REFLECTIONS ON TIME WELL SPENT

Torrey Stanley Carleton, Hon. AIA, Historic Preservation Month Chair & Board Director

As the Conservation Society's year begins to wind down, I enjoy thinking about all that we have done together.

I was honored to be asked to Chair the Society's 2025 Historic Preservation Month lecture. The lecture, **'For the Love of Concrete,'** was a grand success. Presented by noted architectural historian Stephen Fox on the evening of Thursday, May 22, this free talk explored the origins and evolution of concrete in architecture.



Trinity University's Dicke Hall was nearly at capacity with Society members, local architects, and preservation enthusiasts, all of whom were eager to learn more about this humble, expressive material. Fox took us on an encyclopedic journey through time ending with an editorial comment in support of the Society's recent efforts to preserve the Institute of Texan Cultures Building.

Like the challenging work of preservation, events like these do not just happen. They are the result of collaboration by dedicated volunteers. I'd like to salute the hard-working members of my Historic Preservation Month Lecture Committee all of whom shared generously their time and talent: **Allison Chambers** who connected us to our lecturer Stephen Fox; **Sue Ann Pemberton** who refined the concept

and gave a title to the lecture; **Lisa Garza** and **Natalie Curran** researched venue options at Trinity University hoping to offer our mid-century lecture in a space that spoke to that



era. **Allison Elder**, **Charles John**, and **Isabel Garcia** shared their vast knowledge of preservation as we developed our direction. Even Society President **Lewis Vetter** joined our meetings to keep our work on track and coordinated with other programming. It does take a village!

This year also marks the conclusion of my service as a member of the Conservation Society's Board of Directors. Since first joining the Board in 2013 I have enjoyed years of fulfilling engagement. The work I have done has enriched my career and broadened my network. As I look back, there are special moments that stand out. I am particularly proud to have been a part of the team that refreshed the Conservation Society's brand and developed the 'Purple Book' that so lyrically documents our timeline of accomplishments. Together with many volunteers, that work was facilitated by a long-time Society member and PR whiz, Skip Wood, and his talented team at The Wood Agency.

In 2021 I was fortunate to bring a new Endowment to the Society. The \$110,000 bequest, made by the late George Seely from Houston, TX, will ensure that the memory of his beloved grandmother, Amanda

Cartwright Taylor, one of the Society's founders, lives on via an annual fall lecture in her name.

In 2023-2024, I was honored to work alongside Barbara Johnson and Kathy Rhoads to execute the Society's Centennial Gala. I will never forget the thrill of meeting Michel Picaud and hearing first-hand his journey to restore Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris!

Thank you for trusting me with this important work. Volunteering for the Conservation Society of San Antonio has been an honor.

In parting, I urge that each of you renew your commitment to fulfilling the purpose set forth by our founders. Look ahead with hope and courage and work collaboratively for the greater good. That, and only that, will ensure a bright future for the organization we all know and love and for the city that we call home.

WHAT WE DO

continued from page 1

The full application, with complete list of requirements and limitations, will be available on our website at: <https://www.saconservation.org/what-we-do/building-grants/>

The deadline for submitting grant applications this year will be **Friday, September 26**. Our Building Grants Committee reviews each one and takes a whirlwind tour of the final candidates before selecting recipients to present to our Board for approval in November. Recipients are then notified the first week of December and have one year to complete their project. I meet with the recipient and contractor on site before work is started to review the scope and this is where I get to see our mission being carried out in real time.



Our before and after photos speak for themselves, but it always amazes me to see the finished projects. Hearing from our recipients that our grant made a difference is also very rewarding. Many times a recipient is able to pursue and complete other projects on their building as a result, and we do enjoy following up to watch the progress. This past year, a recipient said to me, "This house has been around for almost 100 years, and thanks to your help with this grant, I can make sure it stays around for 100 more." That's exactly what we want to hear and why I enjoy what I do!

Your 2025-2026 Board of Directors

Elected Officers



Lewis Vetter
President



Betty Bueche
1st Vice President



Mark Kusey
2nd Vice President



Patricia Seidenberger
3rd Vice President



Julie Terrill
4th Vice President



Dolores Guzman-Farias
5th Vice President



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Ron Stinson
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Appointed Officers



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NIOSA® Treasurer



Margaret Priesmeyer
Parliamentarian



Patti Zaiontz
Presidential Advisor
Former President



Virginia Van Cleave
Chaplain

Directors



Gary Cox



Erwin De Luna



Glenda Duffin



Cristina Escobedo



Rick Hernandez



Thelma Parker



Lisa Pierce



Bob Sartor



Rolette Schreckghost-Smith
Former President



Linda Skop



Elaine Vetter

Your 2025-2026 Junior Officers



Ashtyn Moore
President



Kaiden Dorsey
Vice President



Aria Smith
Historian



Hailey Moore
Secretary

Thank you to our 2024-2025 Junior Officers:

*President, Ryder Moore
Vice President, Sarah Walker
Secretary, Ela Anderson
Historian, Ashtyn Moore*



LISA'S GOODBYE

Lisa Pierce, NIOSA® Chairman 2024 & 2025, Society Fourth Vice President

This wraps up my second term as NIOSA® Chair and Fourth Vice President of The Conservation Society.

It has been the greatest honor of my life, besides being a mom and a grandmother. I loved every moment of it! We tried all sorts of new things over the past two years—stocking stuffer prices at wintertime; the Beer Cup medal; the Rain Rock medal; “NIOSA®—Where Good Friends Meet” t-shirts and koozies; aggressive Social Media campaign; adding the famous Mariachi Campanas



de America; new lighting and several digital light shows—and San Antonians loved it all!

As always, the NIOSA® army of 10,000+ volunteers came through with flying colors, led by my six indispensable NIOSA® Vice Chairs (Glenda Duffin, Wayne Hartmann, Julie Terrell, Jackie Fellers, Erin Angle and Tisha Smith-Pruski), NIOSA® Treasurer Judy Hartmann, and the incomparable NIOSA® Stagers led by Brad Dietrich: Rick Zertuche, Chris Celis, Juan Garcia, Ray Moreno and Artie Dietel. My amazing staff has continually carried me through these past two years: Business Manager Fernando Villarreal, Bookkeeper Lisa Schneider, Administrative Assistant Mandy Rodriguez and Warehouse Guys Mario Gloria and Richard Montemayor. After running the largest celebration for preservation in the nation with a solid year of preparation, it will take a few months for the NIOSA® team to put

2025 to rest and release final budget figures. However, as chairman of this incredible four-night festival, I can proudly share it was a huge success in so many ways.....definitely, the biggest marker of success was the thousands of volunteers who showed up and made NIOSA® happen, even with threatening rain and thunderstorm warnings.....community sponsors who worked closely with us to ensure as much profit as possible goes back to the Conservation Society for its important preservation efforts. We especially thank Bolner's Fiesta Spices, Jennifer Fraga of the City of San Antonio, Bobby Magee of Escalera Capital, and Glazer Beer & Beverage.....and what about that Rain Rock (and lots of prayers)! Even though the forecast was its gloomiest on Friday with menacing thunderstorm warnings, the volunteers and our festival-goers poured in—making Friday our most attended night!.....



and, as always, our San Antonio Police Department who made NIOSA® one of the safest places to be! Thanks to our Wine and Beer booth volunteers who underwent advance TABC training, and the SAPD who watched over every booth serving alcohol, we did not have any TABC violations. Just remember: every time you think of NIOSA® 2024 or 2025, that is a love message of thanks from me—for everything you do to make “A Night In Old San Antonio®” a Celebration of Preservation!



WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

February 13, 2025- June 25, 2025

Associate Members

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Misty Avila
Michele Blaker
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Mason Brown
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Irma Carranza
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Michelle Sanchez
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Melanie Young

THANK YOU DONORS!

February 13, 2025 - June 23, 2025

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Preservation Alliance For Greater Philadelphia



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The purpose for which the San Antonio
Conservation Society was formed is to
preserve and encourage the preservation
of historic buildings, objects, places and
customs relating to the history of Texas,
its natural beauty and all that is admirable
and distinctive to our State; and by such
physical and cultural preservation to keep
the history of Texas legible and intact, to
educate the public, especially the youth of
today and tomorrow with knowledge of our
inherited regional values.

SAVE THE DATES !

Friday, August 1, 2025 - Friday, September 26, 2025

BUILDING GRANT APPLICATION OPEN

Courand House: 1146 S. Alamo Street, 78210

Monday, September 1, 2025

LABOR DAY

Offices will be closed for the holiday

Wednesday, September 24, 2025 at 5:30pm

GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

San Antonio Garden Center: 3310 N New Braunfels Ave, 78209

Thursday, November 27, 2025 - Friday, November 28, 2025

THANKSGIVING

Offices will be closed for the holidays

Wednesday, December 10, 2025, 4:00pm-6:00pm

SOCIETY WEIHNACHTSFEIER CELEBRATION

The Woman's Club of San Antonio: 1717 San Pedro Ave, 78212