

Annual Report



Stuemke Barn

107 King William

As one of the Society's 17 historic properties that it owns and maintains, the August C. Stuemke Barn has a unique history of how it came to be on the Wulff House grounds. In 1982, the Society acquired the two-story, native limestone barn from Frost Bank. Each stone was numbered and photographed by master stonemason Curtis Hunt Jr. It was carefully dismantled at its original location on North Flores Street and then pieced together again, stone by stone at its new location.

Annual Report
Fiscal Years 2024-2025
The Conservation Society of San Antonio
And San Antonio Conservation Society Foundation
Advocacy

The Conservation Society continued its effort to save the Texas Pavilion (Institute of Texan Cultures) building. After Texas Historical Commission (THC) hearings in Tyler and Midland, the building was named a State Antiquities Landmark. Despite this, a demolition permit was issued by THC in December and demolition began in February. The Conservation Society sued the City of San Antonio and UTSA in March, asking for an injunction to stop the demolition. The District Court dismissed the case without considering the issues of violating the State Antiquities Act and the National Historic Preservation Act, so the Society appealed to the 15th Court of Appeals. That court again refused to hear the case in April, by which time demolition had reduced the building to a skeleton.

While the effort to save the building failed, press releases at each stage of the lawsuit gained wide traction, with article online, in print media, and on radio and television. Society President Lewis Vetter spoke at a press conference in front of the Bexar County Courthouse on April 2. Press releases detailing the issues were also released April 10, 14, 16 and May 13 and 15, generating considerable media coverage and follow-up interviews.

Another loss was the Society's yearslong effort to fight the blight of digital billboards. One billboard company proposed a "Digital Arts and Media Pilot Program" to integrate billboards with permanently installed artworks on buildings. Despite 71% of the public objecting to the idea, the pilot program of up to 10 billboards was approved by the lame duck City Council in June 2025, pitching it as a way of funding the arts. Digital billboards cannot go on landmark buildings and any downtown locations without a review by the Historic and Design Review Commission.

Society Librarian Beth Standifird and Executive Director Vince Michael continued to serve on the Civil Rights subcommittee for the new Alamo Visitors Center and Museum which will include a Civil Rights exhibit at the site of the Woolworth's lunch counter. The Society continued to participate in the Brackenridge Park Stakeholders Advisory Committee to facilitate public engagement, share information, and provide feedback on City projects related to the park.

The Society's internal Historic and Design Review Committee advocated for the preservation of more than two dozen structures and sites, in front of the City's Historic and Design Review Commission as well as the Planning

Commission, Zoning Commission, Board of Appeals and City Council. Highlights included the effort to preserve the Badge and ID Building at the airport, new buildings in Hemisfair Park, and zoning changes for transit-oriented developments along the proposed Rapid Green and Silver VIA lines.

Awards

Led by Board Member John Bloodsworth the Publication Awards took place on Friday, March 21, 2025, at the Estancia Del Norte San Antonio Hotel, honoring the following recipients : Arte del Pueblo: The Outdoor Public Art of San Antonio by Dr. Frederick Preston and Dr. Carmen Tafolla; Battleground Béxar: The 1835 Siege of San Antonio by Richard L. Curilla; Beneath Sacred Ground: The Mission San Antonio de Valero Burial Records Transcribed, Translated and Annotated by Art Martinez de Vara; Brackenridge: San Antonio's Acclaimed Urban Park by Lewis F. Fisher; Comanches, Captives and Germans: Wilhelm Friedrich's Drawings from the Texas Frontier by Dr. Daniel J. Gelo, C.B. Hopkins, Dr. Christopher J. Wickham, and Bryden E. Moon, Jr.; A History of the Waco Mammoth Site: In Pursuit of a National Monument by Calvin Smith and David O. Lintz; The Legend of the Fire Stag (Children's Book) by Sheri Phillabaum and Roy Ellzey (illustrated by Liz Painter); Miraflores: San Antonio's Mexican Garden of Memory by Anne Elise Urrutia; Preston Morgan Bolton, Texas Architect and Civic Leader by Lillian C. Woo; The Road to San Jacinto: Retracing the Route of Sam Houston's Army by Dave Dyer; Unheard Witness: The Life and Death of Kathy Leissner Whitman by Jo Scott-Coe.

Sponsors and donors included: Documation, Karbach-Brown, John Bloodsworth, Japhet Media, Torrey Stanley Carleton, and the City of San Antonio Office of Historic Preservation.

Community Grants

In 2024, the Conservation Society awarded Community Building grants totaling \$100,000 to individuals or organizations for the following 16 properties: 221 Pereidafor window restoration; 230 E. Travis St. for fabrication of cast stone units; 234 W. Woodlawn to assist with foundation and columns; 339 Mary Louise Dr. for fabrication of the windows; 401 Villita St. to refinish the doors; 449 CR 5226, Old D'Hanis for stabilization of the existing walls; 525 S. St. Mary's St. for the south side window restoration; 602 E. Myrtle St. for porch foundation; 711 Mason St. for porch restoration; 722 W. French Pl. for wood skirting restoration; 1002 Kampmann Blvd. for mortar restoration; 1143 West Kings Hwy for foundation work; 1333 Buena Vista for roof replacement; 1554 W. Rosewood Ave. for foundation work; 1730 E. Houston St. for foundation work; and 1902 W. Gramercy Pl. for brick repair

Eight recipients received 2024-2025 Educational Grant funding from the San Antonio Conservation Society Foundation totaling over \$35,000,

including Bexar County Heritage Center to create an educational short film; Erika Arrendondo-Haskins to support the publication of Texas history children's book series; King William Association to create a historic home walking tour app; Mexican American Civil Rights Institute to help create an interpretive exhibit on the life and legacy of pioneering Mexican American architect William Merriweather Peña; Main Plaza Conservancy to create signage and displays in Plaza de Las Islas (Main Plaza); San Antonio Living History Assn. to help produce a CPE course for teachers; Texas Heritage Project of AITSCM(American Indians in Texas at the Spanish Colonial Missions) for solid state storage device and ArcGIS computer; and Wilson County Historical Society for four 12-panel exhibits highlighting aspects of Wilson County history.

Heritage Education Tours

Led by Board Member Rick Hernandez, the Conservation Society restarted its Heritage Education Tours this year, bringing some 800 fourth graders to the Yturri Edmunds Homestead and Mission San Juan in November, co-sponsored by the Mirza Trust, Edouard Foundation and HEB. These heritage tours have brought Texas fourth graders studying Texas history to World Heritage Missions and other historic sites for over 60 years.

Historic Farm and Ranch Complexes

The Historic Farm and Ranch Committee assisted in arranging tours for three groups of fourth grade students from McAndrews Elementary in Boerne to the Hiedemann Ranch complex where they were able to learn about living in Texas in the 1800s. Unfortunately heavy rains in May prevented the committee from touring the Beauregard Ranch in Wilson County, but it will be rescheduled. Finally, Ramon Vasquez, Director of the American Indians in Texas at the Spanish Colonial Missions, has invited the committee to revisit the Land Heritage Institute; the tentative date will be in September 2025.

Historic Preservation Month

The Conservation Society, led by Board Member Torrey Stanley Carleton, celebrated Historic Preservation Month with the lecture, "For the Love of Concrete." Presented by noted architectural historian Stephen Fox on May 22, this free encyclopedic journey through time explored the origins and evolution of concrete in architecture, ending with an editorial comment in support of the Society's recent efforts to preserve the Institute of Texan Cultures Building. Trinity University's Dicke Hall- a new mass timber building- was nearly at capacity with Society members, local architects and preservation enthusiasts, all eager to learn more about this humble, expressive material.

Junior Membership

The Juniors, with committee chair and Board Member, Julie Terrill, teed off their year at the historic Cool Crest Miniature Golf Course on September 8th.

In October, they had a "spooktacular" tour of the Odd Fellows and Alamo Masonic Lodge cemeteries, led by Sylvia Reyna, MLS, CA with the San Antonio Public Library.

In November, the Juniors were surprised with an exclusive tour of the San Antonio Fire Museum, presented by Hector Cardenas. While closed to the public, the Associates were able to learn more about the history of firefighting.

With December came the annual Gingerbread House Decorating, hosted by Mission Title. A group of 13 Juniors were guided by Chef Cynthia De La Fuente in decorating their individual Gingerbread Houses.

The Juniors started the new year by celebrating José Antonio Navarro's birthday in February. They were toured the Casa Navarro State Historic Site and were able to learn how to make their own adobe bricks.

Between March and April, the Juniors that were graduating wrapped up their Scholarship application presentations and participated in service hours by unloading flower sticks at NIOSA. They also continued the Fiesta celebrations by riding in the King William Parade on an antique firetruck provided by the San Antonio Fire Museum.

To wrap up their year, the Juniors met to elect new officers for 2025-2026: Ashtyn Moore, President Kaiden Dorsey, Vice President Hailey Moore, Secretary and Aria Smith, Historian. The Society thanks the former officers Ryder Moore, President; Sarah Walker, Vice President; Ela Anderson, Secretary; and Ashtyn Moore, Historian for a very successful year, and congratulations to the following Senior members of the Juniors whom have all been awarded a \$1000 scholarship and complimentary one-year membership to the Society: Ryder Moore, Albert W. Van Cleave V, and Sarah Walker.

Library

Collections Management

The library digitized 303 architectural drawings. Continued collection weeding resulted in the deaccession of 145 items while volunteers formatted 441 news articles. Eighty percent of the collections are now unpacked.

Collaboration and Outreach

The Librarian Beth Standifird participated in the Alamo Trust's Civil Rights Subcommittee, the Institute of Texan Cultures Building Coalition, and the Office of Historic Preservation's Homeowner Fair. The library also provided images for use by local news media (San Antonio Express-News, KSAT TV, Today's Catholic); books pending publication (Maverick Press and TAMU Press), and museums and heritage sites (Alamo Trust, Casa Navarro, San Antonio Museum of Art, and the World Heritage Center).

Research

Although individual library requests declined to 615 this year, the library contributed considerable research in support of advocacy efforts to save the Institute of Texan Cultures building. These included documenting architect Willie Peña's direct ties to the ITC design, providing extensive footnotes for the Society's rebuttal to UTSA's demolition request; and researching legal documents governing the ITC and the State's demolition review process. The library also oversaw public information requests made to the City of San Antonio, the University of Texas System, and UTSA.

Meetings, Conferences, Seminars and Workshops

The Society participated in the National Trust for Historic Preservation's annual PastForward conference in October, 2024 in New Orleans, with Executive Director Vince Michael presenting on a panel on National Register nominations. In November, the Society joined with the city's Office of Historic Preservation to host the second Michael C. Duda Preservation Forum in Dallas, sponsored by the Texas Historical Foundation and the University of Notre Dame.

President Lewis Vetter, Executive Director Vince Michael and third Vice President Virginia Van Cleave traveled to Washington, DC for Preservation Advocacy Week in March, visiting the office of six state Senators and Representatives. Michael and Van Cleave attended the Advocacy Day in Austin in February organized by Preservation Texas, visiting all 14 offices of state senators and representatives in the Society's region.

The Society's final Centennial event was a panel discussion on the Conservation Society's Endowed Professorship at UTSA on the occasion of the retirement of William Dupont, FAIA, who held the chair for the last 15 years. 100 people attended the March event at the UTSA downtown campus.

The Historic Preservation Month lecture featured Professor Stephen Fox speaking on the history of concrete architecture.

Membership Activities

Led by Board Member Cristina Escobedo, the Conservation Society hosted

regular General Membership meetings with guest speakers and timely topics at the San Antonio Garden Center.

The General Membership meeting on Wednesday, September 25, 2024. Sue Ann Pemberton, FAIA, FAPT and former President of the Society, presented "How 100 Years of Experience Can Inform the Future of Cultural Heritage." A Committee Fair was held prior to this meeting, where members could talk with Society Committee Chairs about possible volunteer opportunities.

With the success of the Juniors tour of the East Side cemeteries, a special tour of the Alamo Masonic Cemetery was led by Maria Watson Pfeiffer and Georgia Meyer.

December 4, 2024, the Society hosted its annual Weihnachtsfeier (German Holiday Party) at the Woman's Club of San Antonio. Guests enjoyed carols performed by the Beethoven Männerchor, and an opportunity to win a Gingerbread House decorated by Chef Cynthia De La Fuente.

Fierce storms postponed the January meeting to the 30th at St. John's Lutheran Church. Vincent Michael partnered with Cory Edwards from the City's Office of Historic Preservation to present "100 Years of Preservation Innovation in San Antonio."

February 26, 2025, guest speaker Frates Seeligson, Executive Director of the San Antonio River Foundation, presented "Presence of the Past: Reclaiming San Antonio's Diverse History Along San Pedro Creek." Bylaw considerations were reviewed and voted on by active members, resulting in new Bylaws.

March was a very busy month for Society member. On the 15th the Society celebrated three decades of The Conservation Society Endowed Professorship with William Dupont, FAIA and UTSA Historic Preservation program graduates. New Society members attended a Centennial Open House at the Society's new headquarters with a tour and the opportunity to meet members of Executive Committee and Board of Directors. Finally, authors of the best recently published books on Texas history were celebrated at the Publication Awards luncheon.

After celebrating NIOSA®, directors and officers were elected by the active membership at the annual membership meeting on May 28, 2025.

June 25, 2025, new directors and officers were installed, and certificates of appreciation were awarded to members celebrating 25 and 50 years with the Society.

NIOSA®

Led energetically by Society Fourth Vice President Lisa Pierce for the second year, NIOSA 2025 kicked off with a parade through La Villita, led by two Parade Marshals, Jennifer Fraga of the City of San Antonio, and Bobby Magee of Escalera Capital, owner of the La Villita Assembly Building. The four-night event, April 29th through May 2nd, came alive with 10,000+ volunteers, 12 bands, and 166 booths toting classics like Chicken on a Stick or Bongo Kabobs. New booths included "Rosie's Street Tacos" in Haymarket; Fruit Cups in Clown Alley; the return of Strawberries & Cream in Main Street; and NIOSA Tattoos in China Town. 2025 marked the return of Glazier's Beer & Beverage as the 2025 official beer provider for A Night in Old San Antonio, with a variety of beverages including Miller Lite, Dos Equis, and El Jimador Margaritas. Patrons were happy to find that Preparadas went back to its original recipe.

New merchandise stating "NIOSA-Where Good Friends Meet" celebrated NIOSA's legacy as a place that welcomes back family and friends year after year. Other new merchandise included the popular new Rain Rock medal alongside the traditional NIOSA medal and Beer Cup medal, as the NIOSA Christmas ornament. The artwork for the 2025 NIOSA medal, designed by David Durbin, gave a "shout out" to NIOSA's 14 distinct areas that pay homage to the city's diverse culture. The medal showcased how important every member of the NIOSA team is, from the office staff to the area chairmen, and finally to the volunteers, without which the Society could not produce this "Celebration of Preservation."

Please save the date for NIOSA 2026: April 21 – April 24, 2026. Viva NIOSA!

NIOSITAS®

NIOSITAS, a small version of NIOSA, are presented to private groups. There were no NIOSITAS® scheduled this past year due to heavy construction in and around historic La Villita.

Parades

Led by Board Member Linda Skop, the Conservation Society participated in four parades during Fiesta 2025: the Texas Cavaliers' River Parade, the Battle of Flowers Parade, the King William Fair Parade, and the Fiesta Flambeau.

The Texas Cavalier's 2025 River Parade theme was "Shine Bright: A Celebration of Light and Illumination for ALL." The Conservation Society barge was decorated with larger-than-life candelabras, representing its work in "lighting the way to preserving the city's historic character since 1924." Participants dressed in their finest 1920s attire, celebrating its start in 1924.

President Lewis Vetter and his wife Elaine—also a Board Member—participated in the antique car category in the Battle of Flowers parade. Riding in a bright red 1962 Corvette, the car represented the parade theme of "Melodies in Bloom, a Texas Serenade" with a playlist of "A Texas Road Trip: Songs to Travel By." The car welcomed back live flowers, provided by The Last Straw Florist.

The Junior Membership once again participated in the King William Fair parade. The theme this year was "Our Olympic Culture." The Juniors rode in an antique fire truck from the San Antonio Fire Museum while parents and guardians walked behind.

Later that evening, the President and his wife as well as two additional board members rode in the Fiesta Flambeau parade on the Flambeau train. This year the parade theme was "Deep in the Arts of Texas."

Properties Restoration and Repair

Led by Board Member Bob Sartor, maintenance and restoration work continues on the Society's properties.

At the Courand, restoration of the porte cochere, and first and second floor back porches were completed. Electrical systems and landscaping was upgraded; a fire alarm system was installed. At the Wulff House property, a post-move clean-up included sealing windows; clearing roll-off debris, and removing hazardous dead limbs and the long-standing "Bee Tree." Two trellises to enhance the rear terrace were constructed at the Gray-Guilbeau House. The patio bar and shed area roofs behind the Bombach House were replaced and several masonry repairs were made around the site. At the Yturri-Edmunds property, full roof replacement on the main house and partial replacement on the mill shed were completed with historic materials salvaged for future educational use. The Alaskan Palace welcomed new tenant SipSaam Thai.

Scholarships

Led by Board Member Glenda Duffin, scholarships for the 2024-2025 academic year included a \$2,500 scholarship each to Christopher Cennamo and Patricia Santamaria each received for the UTSA - College of Architecture for students pursuing a graduate certificate in Historic Preservation. This scholarship is funded partially by the Conservation Society Foundation, courtesy of the Eleanor Freeborn Bennett Educational Scholarship Fund. .

The Texas Architectural Foundation for the Brooks Martin Educational Scholarship Fund did not have any applicants this year. This scholarship is

awarded to outstanding students, in accredited departments or schools of architecture in Texas who have shown an interest in historical architecture, preservation, and adaptive reuse.

In June 2025, the Society awarded three scholarships to graduating seniors from the Junior Associates. Each senior received a \$1,000 scholarship.

Yturri-Edmunds Homestead House Museum

The YE Committee continued to work on exterior elements such as landscape maintenance and plantings, and developed a “tour protocol” for small and private tours. Two events for large groups included the 150th Birthday event and an Open House for Ernestine Edmunds in September. The Committee continued with YE House Collection assessment and digital inventory updates. A site visit, tour and work session with National Park Service interpretive staff was held in July 2024. A meeting with Society staff and the City of SA regarding right-of-way (or easement) abandonment for YE was held in August 2024 where it was determined the Society will work with the City to regain the small sliver of annex lot as well as the larger area along Mission Road outside the annex fence. This acquisition should occur before Spring 2026. YE also participated in COSA Transportation Oriented Development task force in the summer of 2024. The YE hosted a Capital Club Candlelight Tour and Event in October 2024. Wayfinding and signage work sessions were held throughout the year to develop a cohesive and comprehensive plan to be completed in 2025-2026. Partnerships were developed over the year with the goal to maintain them, including Roosevelt Park Neighborhood Association, Canary Islands Descendents Association, City of San Antonio City Council District 5, University of Texas at San Antonio, City of San Antonio Public Works Department, and the National Parks Service.