The Conservation Society of San Antonio
THE PRESERVATION ADVOCATE

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

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From Demolition to Destination - The Preservation Journey of HemisFair

Maria Watson Pfeiffer, Longtime Conservation Society Member

As business leaders anticipated San Antonio's 250th anniversary in 1968, they saw it as the occasion to transform San Antonio. Following the boom years of the 1920s, few significant buildings had been completed downtown during the 1930s and World War II years. After the war, the Federal government adopted legislation to clear urban blight and modernize America's cities. The Urban Renewal program, Federal Housing Act and Federal Highway Act were key to accomplishing these goals.

Though post-war highway construction encouraged new suburbs outside of San Antonio's historic core, its downtown remained the center of retail and entertainment in the immediate post-war years. By the late 1950s, however, downtown retailers followed the national pattern of moving to the suburbs. These changes alarmed Jerome K. Harris, who operated a men's clothing store on Alamo Plaza. In response, in 1958, he proposed the idea of a fair to focus national and international attention on the city by highlighting relationships between North and South America. Congressman Henry B. Gonzales, whose 22nd Congressional District included downtown, contacted his close friend, retailer Bill Sinkin, who convened a group to discuss the idea on February 15, 1962. A feasibility study was commissioned and San Antonio Fair, Inc., was granted a state charter on December 27, 1962. Within months, $7.6 million in underwriting had been raised.

By mid-1963, a 92-acre site within walking distance of the river and the Alamo was selected for the fair. It included fine examples of 19th and early 20th century architecture, some of which had fallen into disrepair, qualifying the area for Federal Urban Renewal funds. A city bond election, held in January 1964, provided local matching funds to purchase land, clear the site and construct a Civic Center. Finally, in November 1965, the Bureau of International Expositions approved the fair, dedicated to the theme, "Confluence of Civilizations in the Americas," to be held from April 6 to October 6, 1968.

PRESERVATION JOURNEY OF HEMISFAIR CONTINUED ON PAGE 3

From the President

Lewis Vetter, President

It's hard to believe that two years have passed since I was elected as President of the Conservation Society of San Antonio. I value the many friendships I have made during my tenure and will miss seeing and interacting with you daily. I sincerely appreciate

our talented and dedicated staff and the support they have provided to me and the Board of Directors. Term limits exist for a reason and it's time for me to turn the reins over to a new President. My sincere best wishes to our new President Betty Bueche and to her Board of Directors. A good friend of mine has reminded me numerous times there is a song which says, "How can I miss you if you won't go away!" That may be true, but I'll be around if you need me.

Now on to the good things! So many of you have made huge contributions during these years. I have always said that we need to celebrate our successes and those that make it happen. I would be remiss if I didn't recognize some of you who have made such huge contributions to the Society's success. Monica Savino has chaired the Yturri-Edmunds Committee for three years. She and her committee have made major contributions to that complex. As an architect, she has used her skills and trade to help the Society turn the YE into a more usable complex for future gatherings and events. This summer, remodeling of the kitchen and bathroom is occurring. Thank you Monica and committee for all you have done and continue to do. Then there is the NIOSA Committee. Julie Terrill and her committee have made significant progress with cost-cutting efforts to improve the profitability of NIOSA. From having painting parties instead of paid labor to using cups from previous years, these activities affect the bottom line. It is true that the weather played a huge role again in attendance on Tuesday, but when you look at the numbers on Friday, it felt like the old days when everyone wanted to party at NIOSA.

Cristina Escobedo, as Chairman of the Program Committee, has rolled out monthly events for young professionals and members. As well as making the General Membership Meetings more exciting with door prizes and different speakers, she has increased membership along with Thelma Parker and her Membership Committee. They have come up with creative ways for members to get together and have fun all while learning about preservation. Check out their "Save the Dates" to see what Cristina and Thelma come up with next!

National Historic Preservation Month Activities were held this past May. You can read about these events in Elaine's Article celebrating May! Treasurer Ron Stinson and his finance committee have streamlined many of the financial operations of the Society and Foundation and optimized the earnings opportunities of our assets.

After a ten-month nationwide search for a new executive director the search team finally identified Angelica Docog, pictured right, as the candidate we have been searching for. She will join the leadership team in July of this year.

Your Conservation Society continues to maintain the historic properties owned by the Society and Foundation by replacing and repairing roofs, walls and other structural needs. We continue to be an important influence on preservation work throughout the community through our advocacy and attention to the various commissions and bodies responsible for preservation.

The future for our Conservation Society is bright. With the help of you, our members, and your continued dedication to our purpose, there is no limit to what we will accomplish in this new century. I wish all of you happiness, good health and hope to see you at future meetings and events.

Preservation Journey of HemisFair

continued from page 1

The fair's vision soon converged with the already-completed *Paseo del Rio* plan that envisioned the San Antonio River as a linear park with zones of activity. In addition to the civic center, the fair would include the first extension of the riverwalk, laying the foundation for a visitor industry that changed the face of downtown.

The prospect of widespread demolition of historic properties alarmed preservationists who argued that, while past fairs featured faux historic streets and villages, San Antonio must remain true to the preservation ethic that had preserved the city's river, missions, and other landmarks. Old buildings must stand side-by-side with new in this uniquely San Antonio fair. Two surveys of the fair site were undertaken to determine which structures could be saved, renovated and adaptively reused. In January 1967, after completing the exhaustive and wrenching exercise of recommending which buildings should be preserved, the Conservation Society forwarded its list to the Department of Commerce. When Public Law 89-685 providing Federal funding for the fair was adopted, it carried Senator Ralph Yarborough's amendment requiring preservation of historic structures to the maximum extent possible. As a result, twenty-two historic buildings were preserved. Remarkably, most of the preserved buildings survived the long hiatus of neglect that followed the fair's closing in 1968. Today, just as envisioned, they are part of an eclectic mix of old and new waiting to be integrated into a future landscape that has yet to be fully formed.

Community Grants

Our **Community Building Grants** program began in 1990 to help restore and rehabilitate San Antonio's vast trove of historic structures. 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.

Over the years, the San Antonio Conservation Society has helped many organizations in the completion of their educational projects. Our **Community Educational Grants** have been used for professional editing services, web designs, transcriptions, publications, interview recordings, document digitization, catalogue & index digitization, creation of multi-media map, and creation of a living history presentation.

The full application, with complete list of requirements and limitations, will be available on our website at: https://www.saconservation.org/what-we-do/ The deadline for submitting grant applications this year will be **Friday, September 25**.

The Society Celebrates May: National Historic Preservation Month

Elaine Vetter, Historic Preservation Month Chair & Board Director

Established in 1973 by the National Trust for Historic Preservation, Preservation Month is celebrated each May to raise awareness of the importance of protecting America's architectural, cultural, and historical heritage. The month-long observance grew out of efforts by the National Trust and Congress. In San Antonio, the Office of Historic Preservation (OHP) coordinates events throughout the city, and this year the Conservation Society of San Antonio hosted two events: "Hemisfair: Past, Present and Future" and "Meet Me at the Clock."

The first event, "Hemisfair: Past, Present and Future," was held on Saturday, May 2nd at 10 a.m. at 643 Nueva Street in San Antonio. The program featured a panel discussion with historian and archivist Maria Pfeiffer; architect and Principal at Ford, Powell and Carson Architects Allison Chambers; architect, educator, HPARC member, and former Society President Sue Ann Pemberton; Chief Creative Officer of Silver Ventures Bill Shown; and moderator Monica Savino, architect. Closing remarks were provided by architect, preservationist, and architectural historian Angela Lombardi, Ph.D.

Maria Pfeiffer opened the program with a vivid history of Hemisfair. She shared memories of growing up in the Hemisfair/King William area and described watching the Hemisfair tower being built, even marking its progress on her home's window.

The panelists then shared their perspectives on the present and future of Hemisfair. Together, the panel offered a thoughtful and unique insight into how and why Hemisfair developed as it did.

After Angela Lombardi, Ph.D., concluded the seminar, attendees had the opportunity to speak directly with the panelists, ask questions, and learn more about Hemisfair.

All attendees received a purple Conservation Society tote bag that included a National Historic Preservation Month pin featuring artwork of the Wood Courthouse and Hemisfair Tower, a map for their self-guided tour of Hemisfair historic properties, and membership information. The tote was filled with snacks and water. Several members of the Board of Directors and others helped underwrite the cost of the seminar. Due to contributions received and admissions paid, there was no cost to the Society for either seminar. Event attendees remarked that they enjoyed the topics and presenters so much they wished it had lasted longer and asked when the next seminar would be held!

The second National Historic Preservation Month event was "Meet Me at the Clock!" On Wednesday, May 13th, 2026 at 11:30 a.m. members of The Conservation Society of San Antonio, staff and guests met at the corner of North St. Mary's and Houston Streets to celebrate the long-awaited ribbon cutting ceremony to celebrate the repair of the Hertzberg clock and its return to keeping time for San Antonio. Crafted in Boston by E. Howard & Co, the 17-foot-tall-cast-iron timepiece was installed in San Antonio for the Eli Hertzberg Jewelry Company in 1878. The clock was donated by the Goodman Family in 1982 to The Conservation Society of San Antonio. The event was free and open to the public.

Kathleen Carter shared the history of National Historic Preservation Month, and President Lewis Vetter spoke about the Hertzberg Clock and its importance to the city. Lewis Vetter and International Bank of Commerce representative Lorraine Kosub cut the ribbon. Attendees received a commemorative pin celebrating National Historic Preservation Month which featured the Hertzberg clock and the tagline

"Meet Me at the Clock." Seventy-seven people attended the event, and media coverage included KENS 5, Texas Public Radio, the San Antonio Business Journal, and others.

Brandi Hayes, Society Restoration Manager, explained how the clock works to the media and guests. Attendees were also able to look inside the clock to see the 200 pound weight that helps keep the clock functioning. Special thanks go to our Board of Directors, Society Staff, Sponsors and the Society's National Historic Preservation Month Seminar Committee for their support, talents, and participation.

Members of the 2026 National Historic Preservation Month Seminar Committee for the Society are: Elaine Vetter, Chairman; Kathleen Carter, Vice Chairman, Ex Officio Member, and Society President; Lewis Vetter; Kathy Babb, Tammy Karpowicz-Dorsey, Adolph Garcia; Diane Lynch; Thelma Parker; Margaret Priesmeyer; Monica Savino; Linda Skop; Beth Standifird, Ron Stinson; and Virginia Van Cleave.

Congratulations to the 2026 Historic Preservation Award Recipients

Left to Right, Seated: Angela Lombardi, Monica Savino, Dawn Herrera, Erwin De Luna, Kate Ruckman, Andrés Andújar Standing: Lewis Vetter, Mark Kusey, Lisa Garza, David Stone, Gary Houston, David Adelman, Oscar Alvarado

Your 2026-2027 Board of Directors

Elected Officers

Elizabeth Bueche
President

Patti Zaiontz
1st Vice President

Mark Kusey
2nd Vice President

Elaine Vetter
3rd Vice President

Julie Terrill
4th Vice President

Ron Stinson
5th Vice President

Judy Hartmann
Secretary

Wayne Hartmann
Treasurer

Appointed Officers

Dolores Guzman-Farias
NIOSA® Treasurer

Kathleen Carter
Parliamentarian

Lynn Bobbitt
Presidential Advisor

Virginia Van Cleave
Chaplain

Former President

Sue Ann Pemberton

Directors

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Gary Cox

Erwin De Luna

Kathy DeWaal

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Rick Hernandez

Ginger Klaerner

Robyn Moore

Thelma Parker

Lisa Pierce

Margaret Priesmeyer

Kate Ruckman

Deborah Sibley

Linda Skop

Stella Teonrio De La Garza

Mari Tamez

Your 2026-2027 Junior Officers

Ashtyn Moore
President

Hailey Moore
Vice President

Aria Smith
Historian

Jaelynn Navarro
Secretary

Thank you to our 2025-2026 Junior Officers:
President, Ashtyn Moore; Vice President, Kaiden Dorsey; Secretary, Hailey Moore; Historian, Aria Smith

2026 NIOSA® Wrap-up

Julie Terrill, NIOSA® Chairman 2026 & 2027, Society Fourth Vice President

If you've ever cracked a cascarón over someone's head at NIOSA, you know the magic isn't the egg itself — it's the explosion of colorful confetti that comes pouring out. This year, as I look back on "A Night In Old San Antonio" 2026, I think of NIOSA as a giant cascarón. The shell is the event itself — the music, the food, the laughter, the lights, the traditions, the history and the joy that fills La Villita every Fiesta. But the real magic inside that shell is the tens of thousands of colorful, dedicated, funny, resilient, hardworking volunteers who make this event come alive every year. And when NIOSA "cracked open" last April, San Antonio was showered with their energy, generosity, spirit, fun, and love for this city. And what an incredible year this was!

On opening night, Mother Nature certainly tested us with cold temperatures and rain, but true to NIOSA tradition, our volunteers showed up smiling, adaptable and determined. Ponchos appeared. Towels came out. Appliances were dried. Booths kept cooking. Music still played. Guests still laughed. And, even in the rain, NIOSA was truly magical.

As this was my first year serving as Chairman, I had new ideas, new approaches. Some things worked beautifully, and some things taught us valuable lessons for the future. But because of teamwork and commitment, we achieved some tremendous wins together.

We increased security throughout the grounds because keeping our volunteers and guests safe will always be money well spent. We increased the number of booth volunteers so we could reduce paid labor costs and increase profits. Volunteers embraced my "Slow Down, Stay Safe" mantra, which significantly eliminated mistakes, resulting in a smoother, safer event. Another huge accomplishment I am especially proud of: we had zero TABC violations this year. This is a direct reflection of the responsibility and professionalism of our servers.

And of course, there were unforgettable crowd favorites everywhere, and some popular new hits. The new Biergarten was a tremendous success. Chicken Gorditas quickly developed a loyal following. The non-alcoholic beer option was a hit.

Final numbers are still being calculated, but all signs point to this year's NIOSA being a great success — which means even more funding for the Conservation Society of San Antonio and its mission to preserve the historic buildings, cultural traditions, and unique heritage that make our city unlike anywhere else in the world.

That is the true purpose behind every ticket sold, every gordita served, every beer poured, every cascarón cracked, and every late-night cleanup shift. I thank several extraordinary leaders whose support made this year possible—my incredible Vice Chairs: Abbi Power, Lisa Pierce, Anita Gonzales

and Monica Reyes, and NIOSA Treasurer DeAnna Keesee, and the incomparable Stagers: leader Brad Dietrich, Rick Zertuche, Chris Celis, Juan Garcia, Ray Moreno and (and warehouse manager Scott Cox). Your countless hours, calm leadership, creativity and steady support helped carry this event from planning to reality. We also welcomed new Area Chairs into leadership roles: Richard Klamm Jr. in Irish Flat and Edward Falcon in Main Street. The future of NIOSA is bright because of leaders like you stepping up.

And speaking of stepping up! We owe enormous gratitude to some remarkable volunteers who retired this summer, but whose legacies will forever be part of NIOSA: Greg and Cindy Smith for 20 years running Arneson Theatre; April Smith for running Frontier Town for 30+ years; and Rose Moran for 15+ years of running the Haymarket area. And a belated, huge thanks to Gerald Wright and Julius Womack, who retired last year as Area Chairs of Froggy Bottom and South of the Border areas.

And just as deeply, thank you to every single volunteer — whether you worked one shift or twenty, chaired a booth, stocked supplies, checked IDs, set up booths,

sold cascarones, grilled and prepared food, decorated signs, or helped tear everything down after the last song ended. Thank you for believing in this event, believing in preservation, and believing in the importance of keeping San Antonio's history alive for future generations. You are the confetti inside the cascarón. You are the color, the joy, the tradition, the heart, and the soul of NIOSA. I am deeply honored to serve alongside you, and am looking forward to celebrating with all of you again as your NIOSA Chairman in 2027.

The online NIOSA store is live at https://www.niosa.org/p/gift-shop; you can buy this and past years' NIOSA medals and garden flags.

Juniors

Looking for fun for the whole family? Join the Juniors today! This membership is comprised of youths, ages 2-18 years. Some of our events this year were, touring the new World Heritage Center, marching in the King William Parade, exploring Blue Hole, and our annual Gingerbread event. Contact the office for more information: 210-224-6163.

Welcome New Members!

February 14, 2026 - July 14, 2026

David Adelman
Carie Arredondo
Joseph Baxter
Daniel Beauchamp
Terri Behling
Lori Bergstrom
Geri Bischoff
Daniela Cantu
Tony Cantu
Belinda Charles
Edward Conroy
Sabrina De La Rosa
Hudson DeLeon
Vicki Dieterle
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Rachel Dominguez
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Luz Enriquez
Clemen Garcia
Laura Georgakakos
Ann Marie Gonzales
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Christopher Hill
Betty Hooker
Julia Huber
Christine Jacobs
Epicmenio Jasso Jr.
David Jester
Charles Jones
Robert L. Jones
Matthew Kraus
Norma Langwell
Mike Lemoine
Mark Alexander Lindkvist
Connie Maldonado
Kassandra Maldonado
Thomas Masinter
Angelina Mata
Daniel McConnell
Roxi McCloskey Morris
Andrew McKeown
Maria McKeown
Modrea Mitchell-Reichert
Ronald Mullins, III
Merri Munson
John Neely
Stella Nelson
Sara Ramirez
Nancy Resendez Battram
Monica Reyes
Katherine Ring
Linda Ryan
Augustin Salazar
Rose Saldivar
Eric Salinas
George Sanchez
Richard Silva
Michael Simon
Susan Sorenesen
Bertha Soto
Isabella Tamez
Laura Tennant
Sherril Theis
Stewart Tiller
Noemi Trujillo
Darrold Usher
Santos Valdez
Maura Valenzuela
Victoria Wood
Isabella Wright

Young Professionals Group

The Conservation Society is expanding young professional involvement by creating fun, easy ways to connect socially while learning about historic preservation. Our monthly mixers bring people into historic spots where they can discover the story of the building and how the surrounding area has evolved. Instead of formal presentations, these gatherings give attendees the chance to experience San Antonio's architecture, culture, and landscapes up close. Each venue is selected for its rich history, and a speaker such as an owner, manager, architect, or historian offers a relaxed 15–25 minute talk. The event includes a networking social, with food and drinks available to order as attendees connect with other young professionals and enjoy the historic setting.

Watch your emails for more information on our up-coming events!

The Borden Creamery - August 20th

Angela Lomarbdi, Ph.D. - September 17th

Thank You Donors!

February 14, 2026 - July 14, 2026

HERITAGE HONOR

Sara Gallegos

GOLDEN EGG

Lisa Ort- Castro

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Margie Arnold
Randy Dietel

HONORARIUM: In Celebration Of...

DR. JOHN FREDERICK
Geoff Wool

CAROLYN PETERSON
Boone, Laura, and Leilah Powell

Recognition of Grants

The Foundation's library is the grateful recipient of grants from both the King William Association and the Daughters of the American Revolution. These funds will help digitize more historic materials from the library collections.

BEXAR COUNTY TX
BEXAR HERITAGE

The Society would like to thank Bexar Heritage for their generous grant. This grant has been used to support several membership programs throughout the year.

Capital Club Donors

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1146 S. Alamo St.
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The Preservation Advocate is published by The Conservation Society of San Antonio. Send letters, articles, or comments to conserve@saconservation.org.

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 !

Saturday, August 1 - Friday, September 25, 2026
Community Grant Applications Open
Courand House: 1146 S. Alamo Street, 78210
Online: https://www.saconservation.org/what-we-do/

Thursday, August 20, 2026
Young Professionals Event: The Borden Creamery
Watch your emails for more information

Monday, September 7, 2026
Labor Day
Offices will be closed for the holiday

Thursday, September 17 2026
Young Professionals Event:
Angela Lombardi, Ph.D.
Watch your emails for more information

Wednesday, September 23, 2026 at 5:30pm
General membership Meeting
San Antonio Garden Center:
3310 N New Braunfels Ave, 78209

Thursday, November 26 - Friday, November 27, 2026
Thanksgiving
Offices will be closed for the holidays

Wednesday, December 9, 2026, 4:00pm-6:00pm
Society weihnachtsfeier celebration
The Woman's Club of San Antonio:
1717 San Pedro Ave, 78212