

Spirit of the Senses began with an idea: To bring a diverse group of talented people that I knew together to meet, converse and exchange ideas. The time was ripe for a synergy of ideas, thoughts, and creative inspiration. Many people had a hunger for meeting others to learn, express their curiosity, and find a sense of place. The potential for something special to develop from introducing the people I knew and their ideas together seemed both appealing and natural. I wanted to celebrate the Valley and make it a more engaging place to live in.

Since it's beginning in 1983 there have been many people who have contributed to Spirit of the Senses, in all kinds of ways. Most significantly, when my wife Patty Barnes became involved several years later, her partnership and insights diversified and evolved the

salons into the potential of what it is today.

Over the years Spirit of the Senses has been featured in The Washington Post, The New York Times, and on ABC TV's Good Morning America. To our knowledge there is not another salon group that is as eclectic in people, place and topics. More than 5,000 conversations have taken place, mostly in living rooms around the Valley. In addition to private homes, private spaces such as FineMark Bank in Gainey Ranch, Taliesin West, Cosanti, and other locations also host salons. The salons have afforded members the experience to be in many neighborhoods and to have the hospitality of gracious hosts. In this way, the salons offer one to feel a part of the whole City.

Spirit of the Senses salons are

gatherings for conversations and performances. The wide range includes the arts, the sciences, law, medicine, architecture, politics, literature, history, philosophy, world culture, and more. Patty and I invite the most interesting people we

investigate an idea and follow a thread of imagination to new areas of interest.

At the salons people develop friendships. People have the chance to meet face to face, and hear out loud the thoughts they wish to share with people whom they respect. There

is a chance to begin to understand different points of view, start creative partnerships, find new passions and have a sense of being part of the larger community. The mix of people change with each topic, each host, and each month. A new appreciation can also be found for the many thinkers, leaders, and talents that converse as presenters.

It has been an adventure to take our salon concept to other cities or to their great universities, institutions, homes, and architectural treasures, to visit with extraordinary people. In small groups, we have traveled to the New York City area, Boston, California, and even as far as Florence, Italy to meet with authors, scientists, historians, and other

brilliant thinkers at Princeton, Columbia, Harvard, MIT, and Yale. We have visited the California institutions UCLA, UCSD, and Scripps Institution of Oceanography. We have visited the Editors of the Papers of John and Abigail Adams, Thomas Jefferson, and Benjamin Franklin. We have met artists, dealers, curators, and critics of the art world. We have had conversations with some of the leading scientists researching the brain, consciousness, emotion, and memory. And we have learned about the minds of dolphins, whales, octopus, and primates.

The salons add a very special component to many people's lives. You can find information about Spirit of the Senses at [www.spiritofthesenses.org](http://www.spiritofthesenses.org) or by calling (602) 906-0091. III



## Curiosity in Action

By Thomas Houlon

can find to speak about their passions or to express their talents. Presenters from all walks of life engage our members in lively conversations.

There are lots of questions. Some of the questions that will be discussed this spring include: Why should we care about the future? How could we see more colors than in the rainbow? What is the relationship of sleep and dreaming? What is it like to be with a political reporter at the State Capitol? What was the relationship of the Civil War with six U.S. Presidents? What can neuroscience inform us about literature. There are also musical performances, conversations at artist studios and architectural visits. At the salons, one thing leads to the next, and there becomes the opportunity to