



BUY YOUR TICKETS:

JULY 13TH • 7PM,
DOORS OPEN 6PM

**SYDNEY POLLACK &
JOE MORGENSTERN**

AT THE AERO THEATRE

**“THEY SHOOT HORSES,
DON’T THEY?”**

Article this page

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www.smconservancy.org

CONSERVANCY HOSTS AERO SCREENING

Director Sydney Pollack Discusses Film, “They Shoot Horses, Don’t They?” with Film Critic Joe Morgenstern at Historic Aero Theatre, July 13, 2005, 7pm

The Santa Monica Conservancy brings acclaimed director-actor-producer Sydney Pollack to Santa Monica’s recently refurbished historic Aero Theatre to discuss the filming of “They Shoot Horses Don’t They?” This period piece, directed by Pollack, was filmed in Santa Monica and will be discussed in an interactive question and answer format moderated by Joe Morgenstern, film critic for The Wall Street Journal and KCRW radio. Pollack will introduce the movie at 7:00pm .

Pollack directed the movie in 1969, creating a meticulous replica of a marathon dance ballroom on the Santa Monica pier. This spotlighted Santa Monica’s role in the morbidly fascinating craze known as Dance Marathons, a phenomenon at its peak during the Great Depression. Pollack received a nomination for best director, Gig Young won the Academy Award for best supporting actor, and Jane Fonda was nominated for best actress in a leading role. Pollack will introduce the movie at 7:00 pm

Pollack has directed nineteen films which have been nominated for a total of 46 Academy Awards. Among his many other awards are two Golden Globes for Best Director and the Directors Guild of America John Huston Award, conferred by the Artists Rights Foundation. He is a founding member of The Sundance Institute, Chairman Emeritus of the American Cinematheque, and on the Board for The Motion Picture and Television Fund.



Morgenstern, who lives in Santa Monica, is the Pulitzer Prize-winning film critic of The Wall Street Journal. He also reviews films for KCRW, and is a co-founder of the National Society of Film Critics.



Michael Sarrazin (above) stars with Jane Fonda in the dance marathon saga, “They Shoot Horses Don’t They?”

“They Shoot Horses Don’t They?”

AERO THEATRE

1328 Montana Ave., Santa Monica,
July 13, 2005 • 7pm

Tickets will be sold in advance by the Conservancy (not American Cinematheque). This event is likely to sell-out, so get tickets early.

Conservancy members\$25
Non-members\$30
Join the Conservancy and attend\$40
Tickets at the door, if available will be ...\$40

Includes free soda and popcorn.

**THE THEATER SEATS 425.
TELL YOUR FRIENDS.**

Checks for advance sales should be made payable to SMC and mailed with a self-addressed, stamped envelope to P.O. Box 653, Santa Monica, CA 90406 or pay online with Paypal at the Conservancy’s website, www.smconservancy.org. Advance tickets must be paid by July 10th. Tickets will be mailed. Questions? Call (310) 485-0399.

WHERE TO FIND VINTAGE PHOTOS & LOCAL HISTORY

Santa Monica Library

Looking for a vintage photo of your house? Curious about what Ocean Avenue looked like in the 1930s? Well, the Santa Monica Public Library may have it in its repository of historic photographs, postcards, and slides. You can access and order the images online or in person at the library. The collection, known as the Image Archives, is supervised by librarian and Santa Monica Conservancy member, Cynni Murphy.

The Archives contain images that illustrate the history of the Santa Monica area from 1875 to the present. It focuses on the city and its landscape, including views of Palisades Park, the beaches, the piers, historic buildings, hotels, bathhouses, Douglas Aircraft, streets, Venice, Malibu, Topanga, the Southern Pacific Railroad and more.

The images have been donated to the library from both public and private collections. Cynni Murphy continuously updates the collection with photographs she takes as the city develops. Photographic prints or digital reproductions may be ordered from the library or online at www.smpl.org. For more information, call (310) 485-8630 or email cynni.murphy@smgov.net.

SM Historical Society Museum

Since its founding in 1975, the Santa Monica Historical Society Museum has been collecting and preserving the history, art and culture of the Santa Monica Bay Area. Its extensive collection includes historic documents, photographs and negatives, maps, telephone directories, rare books, school yearbooks, textiles, paintings, artifacts, and memorabilia. More than 500,000 images and negatives originate from the Museum Collection, Senator John P. Jones Collection (cofounder of Santa Monica), Outlook Newspaper Collection, Bill Beebe Collection, Bob Smith Collection, City Scene Newspaper Collection, Santa Monica Chamber of Commerce Collection, and US Bank Collection.

The museum displays permanent and changing exhibitions and offers historic research and photo reproduction services by appointment only. The museum is open Tuesday through Friday, 10 – 4:30pm, and the 2nd & 4th Sundays of each month 1 - 4pm. It is located at 1539 Euclid Street between Broadway & Colorado. Call (310) 395-2290 for more information or visit www.santamonicahistory.org.

CONSERVANCY BUSINESS

**RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP TODAY -
HELP CONSERVE SANTA MONICA'S PAST
SEE PAGE 5**



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CITY PHOTO QUIZ DO YOU KNOW WHERE THIS IS?



DO YOU KNOW WHEN THIS IS? The answer to both questions appears on page 5. This picture is part of a fun website from the city found at: <http://www.shapethefuture2025.net/quiz.html>. This picture is courtesy of Santa Monica Public Library Image Archives

DID YOU KNOW THAT...

- The former La Monica Ballroom on the Santa Monica Pier was billed as the largest ballroom in the world, accommodating 10,000 people in the 1920s.
- That Donald Douglas' first factory (in what is now Douglas Park in Santa Monica) was so small that the parts had to be lowered from the second story, one by one, down an elevator shaft for assembly at the nearby airfield.
- That Donald Douglas was responsible for the design and production of the first airplanes to circumnavigate the Earth.
- In the 1932 Olympic Summer Games in Los Angeles, many of the events took place in the Santa Monica Bay area, including bicycling races down Pacific Coast Highway.
- Beach volleyball started in Santa Monica.
- The first Mickey Mouse fan club was in Santa Monica.

DESIGNATED LANDMARK: 507 WILSHIRE BLVD.

The Conservancy has made a long-term commitment to document our city's rich architectural and cultural resources through the creation of a catalog. This ongoing project is called "Discovering Our Past." You can recommend other sites by filling out the form inserted in this newsletter. Below is one of the first installments of the catalog, prepared by Paula Scott.

The building at 507-517 Wilshire Boulevard is identified in the Historic Resources Inventory as being both a contributor to a potential historic district as well as having individual historic significance. Initially built as the LLO-DA-MAR bowling alley in 1940, the 14,000-square foot structure was erected at a cost of \$29,000. The large one-story bowling alley, designed by architect W. Douglas Lee, also included a mezzanine area of offices, plus a coffee shop and cocktail lounge.

The building is constructed of reinforced masonry and is capped with a wood truss, arched roof with a surrounding parapet. Architecturally, this two-story Streamline Moderne commercial building has a wide, asymmetrically placed, central bay rising above the roof line with a large rectangular field of glass brick in the center. The eastern and western extensions have horizontal bands of windows on the second floor with protruding sill and hoods. The wings curve into the central bay which is slightly inset and the meeting of the eastern extension is embellished with vertical fins. The front parapet is capped with a narrowly protruding cornice.

This building is a good example of the Streamline Moderne architectural style. The

Streamline Moderne style was one of two (Art Deco being the other) of the more dramatic examples of American architecture that broke with the tradition of reviving historical styles in the 1930s. While Art Deco captured the spirit of the moment, the modern age, Streamline Moderne offered a glimpse of the future. This ultra modern style displayed an intense fascination with speed. Its visual vocabulary (the curve, the teardrop, and the uninterrupted horizontal line) was derived largely from the form of high-speed modern transportation machines: the automobile, the airplane and even the ocean liner. A rapid sense of motion was imparted by narrow horizontal bands of windows that often wrapped around corners and by horizontal layering on the buildings façade that used changes in color or materials. The Streamline Moderne style incorporated smooth and articulated stucco, architectural glass block, asymmetrical composition, horizontal banding and a variety of metals used in detailing.

The building is found in the Central Business District bounded by Second Street, Wilshire Boulevard, Seventh Street and Colorado Boulevard. Commercial buildings may be found there from each period of Santa Monica's development, from the founding in 1875 to the present day. Their styling and historic associations provide a physical document of the commercial history of the city.

(Adapted from the Evaluation report prepared prior to designation by PCR Services Corporation, Santa Monica)

SANTA MONICA CYN GAS STATION UPDATE

By Elizabeth Terry



Canyon Service Station on Entrada Drive, Santa Monica Canyon's beloved historic gas station, has been saved. Sort of. In May 2005, the Los Angeles City Council approved historic-cultural monument status for the tiny three pump-station that was built in 1924 by members of the pioneering Marquez family who at one time owned most of the land in the rustic seaside enclave as well as neighboring Pacific Palisades.

The future of the gas station became uncertain in 2002 when Marquez family descendant Monica Queen and four of her relatives decided to sell the station after the death of Queen's mother, Angelina Marquez Olivera. Brian Clark had operated the gas station (leasing it from Queen) from 1995-2004, installing the old-time orange-and-white gas pumps and embellishing the décor with signs and logos reminiscent of the 1920's era. Clark offered full service to everyone who drove in, charging self-service prices. Soon, fashion shoots were taking place at the photogenic locale. Residents treasured its existence not only for nostalgic reasons, but also because it provided a much needed service and a sense of community. The re-invented gas station so warmed the hearts of locals that when Queen died, a group of homeowners and business people (including Clark) offered to buy the station and keep it functioning with its old world charm.

But that's when the bidding war started. One potential buyer, Chris Hoffman, emerged as someone who seemed to want the 16,000 square foot property even more than they did. Hoffman, an investment banker and neighbor to the gas station, didn't make it clear what he planned to do with the property. There were murmurs that he would re-locate the landmark structure to the Petersen Automotive Museum so that he could expand his adjacent garden. With the future of the gas station in jeopardy, the Santa Monica Canyon Civic Association petitioned for the monument designation. They wanted to pay tribute to what many believe is the longest running gas station in Los Angeles and certainly a significant automotive structure in

4 EVENTS CONSERVANCY MEMBERS CAN ENJOY IN THE



1930s COCKTAIL SOIRÉE AT THE MAURETANIA APARTMENTS

Date: Sat., July 23

The Art Deco Society of Los Angeles
Call 310-659-DECO (3326)

A cocktail reception with hors d'oeuvres, silent auction and a tour of the penthouse of the Mauretania Apartments to benefit Frank Lloyd Wright's Ennis House. This is a private residence and not open to the public. Due to limited space, reservations are required. Call for tickets.

www.adsla.org



QUEEN MARY ART DECO FESTIVAL THE RMS QUEEN MARY

Dates: Sept. 2-5

Call: 562-435-3511 or 800-437-2934.

The inaugural Queen Mary Art Deco Festival, presented by the RMS Queen Mary Foundation in association with the Art Deco Society of Los Angeles kicks, off Labor Day Weekend aboard the Queen Mary in Long Beach. Proceeds will benefit conservation and restoration of the original art aboard. Fri. reception; Sat. fund-raising ball, Art Deco Bazaar, city and shipboard tours, lecture programs, a car show, bookstore, film festival, dancing and music from the era. Art Deco attire is encouraged.

www.adsla.org



HIGHLAND PARK TOUR LOS ANGELES CONSERVANCY

Date: Sat., August 27, 1:00 pm

The Sycamore Grove area of Highland Park is one of Los Angeles' oldest neighborhoods, with a rich and varied history. This docent-led tour features visits to the Southwest Museum's Casa de Adobe, a 1917 replica of an 1800s hacienda, and La Casita Verde, a Victorian home formerly known as the Ziegler Estate. Tour goes will also stroll through Sycamore Park and past the fabulous Craftsman homes of Sycamore Terrace.

www.laconservancy.org

NEW OWNER OF R.D. FARQUHAR HOUSE APPRECIATES ITS HISTORY

When Jennifer Nicholson first set eyes on the 1910 French Colonial style house that would eventually become her home, she knew it was love at first sight. "The instant I walked in the door, I had the chills and said, 'I have to have it!'" recalls the mother of two small children and fashion designer who grew up in Santa Monica. Nicholson knew very little about R.D. Farquhar, the architect who designed the house, nor about its history - it was moved from its original location on San Vicente Blvd. to Georgina Avenue in 1952. But she immediately connected with the elegant architecture and charming interiors and, of course, its prime location near Palisades Park and the Pacific Ocean.

Nicholson bought the house in 2003 and credits the fact the house was on a historic registry (though not yet landmarked) as why she managed to buy it despite several other interested parties. "I consider myself lucky," explains Nicholson, "because some people didn't bother to outbid me; they lost interest once they knew the house couldn't be torn down." Nicholson was happy to comply with the landmarking process that was initiated by

the city shortly after she became the owner. The house was officially landmarked in late 2003.

Two years later, Nicholson is still waiting to move in because the house required such ex-



Rear view of the Farquhar House now under renovation.

tensive renovation -- from new plumbing and electrical systems to some structural reinforcements -- as well as overall painting. Nicholson immediately enlisted the expertise of Santa Monica architect Brian Murphy to bring the house back to life. It had gone through several decades with the same owner who, over the years, neglected to maintain the house on a regular basis. But thankfully, the bones of the

house were very strong. "This house is built like a boat," says Murphy, referring not only to the superlative quality of lumber used but the quaint structure of the house. The rooms are delightfully small by today's standards, but well proportioned with little surprises like the telephone room adjacent to the front door ("Telephones were a big deal in 1910," Murphy reminds us) and the charming glass-enclosed "sleeping porch" that overlooks the back garden. The narrow staircase to the second floor feels more like a secret passageway with its small steps and simple though beautifully carved handrail.

Murphy, who began his career as a carpenter, considers it a privilege to be involved with a project where every day he makes a new discovery revealing exquisite craftsmanship. "I have a keen appreciation for the level of craft in this house," says Murphy, who marvels at such design indulgences as the unusual sawn oak hardwood floors throughout and circular doorjamb, as well as the flared eaves on the outside roof and concealed gutters. "It's the smallest details that make the big-

THE MONTHS AHEAD



PASADENA HERITAGE COLORADO STREET BRIDGE

Date: Sat., July 16, 6:-11:30 pm

Call: 626-441-6333 for tickets

Continuous live music, dancing, antique cars, children's activities, no-host festive foods and drinks on the Colorado St. Bridge in Pasadena, completed in 1913 to connect Pasadena to Los Angeles. It's the first curvilinear bridge built and the tallest concrete bridge of its day. It's on the National Register of Historic Places.

www.pasadenaheritage.org

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

this car culture city. In January 2005, the city's Cultural Heritage Commission recommended preservation and five months later, the city granted it with a historic designation that prevents demolition or relocation. Even a construction proposal on the site will require a lengthy city review and approval process.

But while the gas station has been saved on paper, it's unlikely that it will ever function again as a gas station. Even council committee panel members were reportedly incredulous at the May hearing, quizzing Hoffman about buying property that would soon have restrictive landmark status. Hoffman assured them he knew what he was dealing with. His main motive for buying the property, he reportedly told them, was to prevent someone else acquiring it and building a "mega-mansion there."

The quaint little gas station doesn't look its best these days. The gas pumps have been removed and the area is enclosed with a chain link fence. Locals worry that it may stay in this state for the foreseeable future since it needs funds to re-open and operate as a full service gas station. As one resident pointedly said, "We have won the battle, but have lost the war." Watch this space.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

WILLIAM ANDERSON

NIHAN BOL

ELIZABETH KOERS

CAROL LEMLEIN & ERIC NATWIG

DIANE LOCKLEAR

DANIEL MUNOZ

ELIZABETH PURO

RUTH SHARI

SUZANNE SHELLABY

LORI SHOEMAKER & KENT SMITH

MIKE STRADER

JEFF STURGES

MARCELLO VAVALA

ANSWER TO PHOTO QUIZ ON PAGE 2
Pier Ave, looking east from the Ocean Park Pier, about 1915

HORIC CHARM

By Elizabeth Terry

gest impact," says Murphy, who pried open doors in the bedroom that had been painted shut and discovered original, beautifully intact cedar-lined closets. Recently, he uncovered milled wood in the house with the name Farquhar imprinted on it.

Nicholson plans to extend the house at the rear and it is Murphy who has had to present the proposals before the Landmarks Commission, which has been as diligent as ever in its efforts to ensure the extension relates to the original vernacular. Murphy understands the Commissioners' concerns and abides by their requests, and after much discussion, the extension has been approved. Thanks to the house being landmarked, Nicholson will benefit from considerable tax breaks, such as the Mills Act that Murphy calls a "substantial, sweet deal" that allows certain permit fees to be waived for new construction. In addition, an itemized breakdown of expenses of historic components will result in incremental write-offs over the next ten years. For Nicholson, it is a win-win situation. "I've seen the perks of renovating a landmarked house," she says. "I love Santa Monica and it's important to preserve its historic houses."

BECOME A MEMBER!

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Home Phone _____ Work Phone _____

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- \$25 Individual Membership Fee enclosed.
- \$35 Family Membership Fee enclosed.
- \$15 Senior/Student Membership Fee enclosed.
- I would like to volunteer for the Conservancy.
- I am enclosing an additional \$ _____ to further support SMC.

Total enclosed \$ _____

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NEWLY LANDMARKED SEARS BUILDING By Ruthann Lehrer

The iconic Sears Building at 4th and Colorado was recently designated as a City Landmark by the Landmarks Commission. It opened its doors in 1947 as a destination retail outlet for the Sears Roebuck Company, catering to both automobile and pedestrian traffic, and fashionably designed in Late Moderne style to be visible and attractive from all directions. For the post-war automobile drivers, it offered on-site parking and a gasoline service center, later modified into a garden center. The Auto Center on the east side of 4th Street opened in the 1960s and is not included in the designation.



The Santa Monica Sears Building (1947), an example of Late Moderne architecture. Photo courtesy of Dick Orton.

Architect Roland Crawford, who also designed the Times-Mirror Building and the Brentwood Country Mart, used a concrete exterior with grids of incised squares that meld with show windows and doorways, and several stylized bas-relief sculptures. There is a pronounced horizontality recalling Streamline Moderne of the late 1930s, expressed by horizontal striations, bands of windows, and the curving canopies above openings. A tall vertical sign pylon carrying the vintage neon Sears sign serves as the architectural anchor, as well as a landmark beacon for the

store's location. Late Moderne architecture is a relatively short-lived phase in the City's architectural history, and the Sears Building is its most outstanding example.

Its nomination by the Landmarks Commission furthers the Commission's goal of designating the most significant historic buildings downtown, whether or not they are endangered. The Sears Building met all six criteria for designation which is a rare occurrence.

The Landmarks Commission, City staff and the owner's legal representatives carefully crafted the manner of the designation to distinguish the main Sears building from the less significant accessory garden center to guide future development or alterations to the site. Once designated as a Landmark, a building is strongly protected from demolition. Alterations and remodeling must be approved by the Landmarks Commission according to codified historic preservation standards.

WHO USED TO LIVE IN YOUR HOUSE? By Dick Orton



Booklet I prepared about the old neighborhood

I have fond memories of the old neighborhood and the snug little house we lived in. I wanted to share some of those memories with the people who lived there now. So, using the computer, I put together a little booklet full of stories and pictures and sent copies to the old address, my old grade school, and the local high school.

I wanted feedback. I wanted to hear from someone that the story of that post war neighborhood, indeed, their own neighborhood, was of interest to them.

Who used to live in your house?.

As a house gets older it acquires a rich history which unfortunately is lost every time one family moves out and another moves in. Wouldn't it be fun to know what life was like in your house, your neighborhood, 30 or more years ago, to know what it looked like, and who lived there!

Remarkably all of us have such a history... of places where we used to live. Old family photos, movies and video tell the visual story of where our lives unfolded. Why not send a copy to the people who live there now?

In fact, starting with this article, I propose that Congress declare a "National Share Your Memories Day" when everybody around the country sends copies of their old pictures to their old house.

I put it all in a little blurb below:

NATIONAL SHARE YOUR MEMORIES DAY DECEMBER 1ST

Would you like to see old pictures of your house taken long before you lived there? Of course you would. And so would the family who now lives in your old house.

LET'S ALL SEND COPIES OF OUR OLD PICTURES TO OUR OLD ADDRESS

This will fill in the history of old houses across the country. Collect items when the family gathers at Thanksgiving and send things out about Dec. 1st.

WANT TO HELP GET THIS STARTED
Call Dick Orton: 310 396-1883

So did I ever get any feedback?

Family and friends warned me that I would never hear from anyone I sent this to, and I never have. But that's OK. I still think it's a good idea and I'm not discouraged.

When I was 4 years old my family moved into a newly built tract house on the northwest side of Detroit. It was a great place to grow up because the new neighborhood was full of kids, baby boomers all about the same age.

EVERYTHING YOU WANTED TO KNOW ABOUT LANDMARKING

The local preservation movement in Santa Monica began in earnest when residents responded to increased development pressures affecting Southern California cities during the 1960s and 1970s. One of the early catalysts here was the threatened demolition of the Santa Monica Pier in 1973 that was to be replaced by extensive development. Residents strongly opposed such a move and stopped the demolition. The Santa Monica Landmarks and Historic District Ordinance was adopted in 1976 and amended in 1991.

Since the first building was landmarked (the Rapp Saloon on 2nd Street), only a little more than 60 houses, apartments, signs, trees, offices, stores, hotels, even an airport beacon tower, have been landmarked in thirty years. The city offers a free booklet describing each of the landmarks with an accompanying map for use as a self-guided tour. In 1990, the first historic district (on Third Street in Ocean Park) was designated.

NOMINATING PROSPECTIVE LANDMARKS

Properties come to the Commission's attention in three ways:

1. When a demolition permit is submitted for a structure that is 40 years or older, it is automatically reviewed by the Landmarks Commission to determine if a nomination for designation is appropriate. Ninety-nine percent of demolition permits are approved.
2. An owner, tenant, neighbor or any member of the public may file an application for nominating a property for designation and pay a \$500 application fee. Members of the public who have good reason to believe a property might qualify as a landmark may convince the Commission to nominate the property, thereby avoiding the fee payment.
3. The Landmarks Commission may choose to nominate a property when they become aware-through the media, firsthand observation, or notification from the public or advocacy groups-that a property's historical significance may be severely compromised by plans to remodel or refurbish. In this case the application fee is waived.

LANDMARKING PROCEDURES

1. An application is obtained from and filed with the Planning Department. The 5-page application elicits an explanation of why

the property might qualify. Applications are also online at www.santa-monica.org. Click "Planning Department," "Historic Preservation" and then "Applications."

2. A historic preservation consultant is hired by the city to assess the property's historic value and significance in a written report.
3. The Landmarks Commissioners discuss the application and consultant's report at a hearing that takes place within 60 days of the nomination. The Commissioners take

land mark. *n* : a building or site having historical significance and marked for preservation by a municipal or national government.



Bring a house in focus by landmark protection

additional testimony and documentation from the public in favor of or opposition to the designation. All this is weighed in determining if the property meets the designation criteria. The Commission's decision can be appealed to City Council within 10 days. In an appeal, the Council's decision is final. The whole process, from filing the application to decision, usually takes about two months

CRITERIA FOR LANDMARK DESIGNATION

In Santa Monica, there are three possible landmark designations.

Landmark:

A structure must meet one or more of the following:

- reflects elements of the city's cultural, social, economic, or political history
- has aesthetic, artistic or other noteworthy interest or value
- is identified with historic people or events
- has value for architectural study
- is the work of a notable builder, designer or architect
- is a familiar visual feature of the neighborhood

Historic District

(a geographic area or non-contiguous grouping of thematically related properties) An area (but not necessarily each property in it) must meet any of the criteria for a Landmark, or one of the following:

- has a concentration of historic, scenic, or thematic sites which contribute to each other and are unified by plan, development, or architectural quality
- reflects geographical patterns created by settlement, growth, modes of transportation, parks or community planning
- must be a familiar visual feature of the neighborhood

Structure of Merit

(appropriate for official recognition but not long-term preservation) A structure must be on the City's Historic Resources Inventory, or 50 years of age and one of the following:

- a unique or rare example of an architectural design detail or historic type
- representative of a style that is no longer prevalent in the city
- contributes to a potential historic district

IN OUR NEXT ISSUE:

Benefits of landmark designation.

PAULA SCOTT DISCUSSES HER NEW BOOK



Author/historian and Conservancy member Paula Scott, on the left, ready to sign another copy of her new book, *Santa Monica, A History on the Edge*, at her illustrated lecture, co-sponsored by the Conservancy and the Santa Monica Historical Society Museum this past April. Books are still available at the Museum. Call (310) 395-2290. Let them know you're a Conservancy member and half the proceeds will benefit the Conservancy.



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**BUY YOUR TICKET NOW FOR JULY 13TH SCREENING
AT THE AERO**

**THEY
SHOOT
HORSES,
DON'T
THEY?**

In person,
Director Sydney Pollack
& Film Critic, Joe Morgenstern
introduce and answer questions
about this Santa Monica-based film!

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

ALL ABOUT MARATHON DANCING



The La Monica Ballroom on the Santa Monica Pier, site of many Dance Marathons in the 1930s.

Marathon dancing seems to have originated in Britain, but in the U.S. in 1923, Alma Cummings danced non-stop for 27 hours and wore out six different partners, breaking the British record at the time. This encouraged others to enter local contests, often held at dance studios throughout the country. Participants entered either alone or with a specific partner, spurred by the competition and potential brief fame.

Realizing there was money to be made in these contests, promoters changed the nature of the marathons. They became a venue for entertaining audiences. The contests became endless and grueling and were often staged and structured by the promoters with rigid rules. "The business employed an esti-

mated 20,000 people as promoters, masters of ceremonies, floor judges, trainers, nurses and contestants," notes author Carol Martin in her book, [Dance Marathons: Performing American Culture in the 1920s and 1930s](#). Each major promoter had a stable of dancers (known as "horses," since they could go the distance) that he counted on to carry his event. Amateurs could enter too. Contestants had to remain in motion 45 minutes of every hour with 15 minutes to eat, sleep, change clothes, have a massage, or get medical assistance. Knees could never touch the floor or participants were immediately disqualified.

During the Depression in the 1930s, out of work contestants were drawn to the marathons as a way to secure shelter, food, and possible

extra money when cash prizes of \$1,000 to \$5,000 were awarded to the winners. The marathons lasted for days or weeks at a time. In Santa Monica, the La Monica Ballroom at the end of the Santa Monica Pier, played host to such marathons. By the late 1930s dance marathons began to fade with the institution of laws forbidding them and America's entry into World War II.

Sources: www.historylink.org and "Dance Marathons" by Renee Camus, U.S.A. Twenties Encyclopedia, Grolier Publishing.



Picture courtesy of the Library of Congress