



# SANTA MONICA CONSERVANCY NEWS

ENSURING THAT THE PAST HAS A FUTURE

JULY 2004

VOL 2 NO 3

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## FOUNDATION BRINGS HOPE TO STALLED BEACH CLUB

BY JORGE CASUSO, REPRINTED COURTESY OF SURFSANTAMONICA.COM

A flagging plan to resurrect the dilapidated City-run estate at 415 PCH as a public beach club has been given a significant boost. The Annenberg Foundation entered into discussions with the City several months ago when it learned City officials were contemplating partnering with private developers to fund the \$16.7 million renovation of the 5-acre parcel owned by the State.

The Foundation, which has expressed a commitment to the major goals of the Council-approved reuse plan, is "intrigued with the historical significance of the site and the role it has played in

breath-taking site beneath the bluffs of the Palisades at the northern edge of the city.

Five years ago, the City Council voted for a proposed design that would retain what is left of the estate that newspaper tycoon William Randolph Hearst built for actress Marion Davies in 1929, designed by the renowned California architect Julia Morgan. Battered by the 1994 Northridge earthquake, the vacant site had fallen into disrepair. The proposed project boasts a cavernous banquet center with a sweeping ocean view, community meeting rooms and plenty of beach access.



RECOMMENDED SITE USE PLAN SUBMITTED TO THE CITY IN 1998 BY MOULE AND POLYZOIDES, ARCHITECTS

the lives of many community members," according to a City statement. "The Foundation has focused on understanding the City and State policy framework as well as realistically evaluating site conditions and constraints in order to determine the level of Foundation funding that would make for a viable project," the statement said.

State budget woes dispelled the Council's dream of turning the earthquake battered structure into a public beach club, plaza and park on the

Last December, "faced with financial realities," the Council was presented with a staff recommendation to seek a private commercial partner to fund the rehabilitation of the site. That's when the Annenberg Foundation, which granted a total of \$200 million to 40 groups across the country last year, stepped in. "The Foundation contacted the City to determine if it could play a role in ensuring that commercial interests do not compromise broad public access," a City statement said.

## CONSERVANCY BUSINESS

### CHANGING OF THE GUARD: NEW BOARD MEMBERS & OFFICERS

Five new board members were elected at the Conservancy's Annual meeting in May: Joel Brand, Nina Fresco, Ruthann Lehrer, Jill Riseborough and Anne Troutman. Additionally, the Board elected new officers at the June meeting. The current board is:

Joel Brand - President  
 Ken Briesch - Vice-President  
 Bruce Cameron - Treasurer  
 Anne Troutman - Secretary  
 Tom Cleys  
 Nina Fresco  
 Arlene Hopkins  
 Ruthann Lehrer  
 Bea Nemlaha  
 Jill Riseborough  
 Doris Sosin

Congratulations to all those who are new to the organization. Thank you to those who are continuing to serve on our board and to those who have rotated off the board or out of officer positions. Special thanks go to our first president, Tom Cleys, for ushering us bravely through the nascent period of the organization.

### ERRATA

In our April newsletter, we provided historic background on The Georgian Hotel that we found, through subsequent research, to be erroneous. We stated that The Georgian Hotel was originally known as The Lady Windemere, was then sold, refurbished, and renamed. In fact, the Lady Windemere was a separate hotel that pre-dated The Georgian, which was built next door to the older structure.

### HOLIDAY HOUSE TOUR

The Events Committee is planning a tour of historic Santa Monica homes decorated for the holidays by local florists and landscapers and open to the public.

We are looking for homes that represent different eras and different architectural styles. If you know of any wonderful homes or can refer the names of vendors who would be willing to decorate, provide food, or sell merchandise in exchange for the publicity value, contact the Events Committee at 310-485-0399 or email us at [info@smconservancy.org](mailto:info@smconservancy.org).

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## DOWNTOWN GUIDELINES, PRESERVATION INCENTIVES TO BE CONSIDERED WITH LAND USE ELEMENT

As the City of Santa Monica Planning Department worked to develop and refine guidelines for new buildings in the Downtown area over the past year, the Santa Monica Conservancy paid close attention to ensure that new development would not undermine the integrity of the historic structures that remain downtown. Conservancy representatives appeared before City Council and the Planning Commission as the process evolved which resulted in several possibilities for how to respect historic properties while redeveloping downtown.

When a final version of the proposed guidelines was published, Conservancy members and the public were surprised to find that public process (your chance to have input) on new projects was practically eliminated, parking requirements reduced, streets narrowed and so on. Strong negative

responses from the general population led Council to postpone the discussion to allow time for further study of the many areas of concern brought up by residents.

The City will also be rewriting the entire Land Use Element of the General Plan and the Zoning Ordinance



RENAISSANCE REVIVAL ON SANTA MONICA BLVD.

(last updated over twenty years ago). Incentives for historic preservation, originally scheduled for review this fall, and the Downtown Guidelines will most likely be addressed later as part of the zoning code revisions. This allows for more public input and a more consistent result overall. Many current code requirements hamper a property owner's ability to restore or rehabilitate an older structure while also retaining the integrity of the structure. The Conservancy has proposed many exemptions from these requirements to facilitate preservation while remaining in compliance with code.

## MIRROR NEWSPAPER TAKES SMC'S TOP AWARD

The Santa Monica Mirror has been awarded the Conservancy's first annual Preservation Award for the newspaper's ongoing series of articles entitled "Landmarks & Treasures," featuring both famous and little-known Santa Monica historic sites.

"The series is an exemplary effort to familiarize our community with its rich architectural heritage. Not only were we introduced to buildings, but it included unexpected, fairly unknown cultural landmarks," Tom Cleys, Conservancy president said. "Illustrated with photographs, it is a significant contribution to archiving Santa Monica history. We hope to someday see the whole series published in a book," Cleys continued.

The award was presented to Mirror Publisher Michael Rosenthal at SMC's annual membership gathering on Sunday, May 8, 2004.

# BUNGALOW COURTYARD LANDMARKED AS A RESULT OF RESIDENTS' ADVOCACY

BY RUTHANN LEHRER

On June 14, 2004, following several months of public hearings and discussion, the bungalow court at 125 Pacific Avenue, known as Christie Court, was unanimously approved by the Landmarks Commission for landmark designation. The designation underscores the fact that single family homes are not the only buildings of landmarkable distinction in our City and that renters have a stake in the preservation of our community. The property owner had applied for a demolition permit in order to construct a new condominium project.

The findings required for this action were in part based upon the information in the updated Ocean Park survey, reported at the same meeting, which recommended consideration of an Ocean Park Bungalow Court Historic District to which Christie Court would contribute. The Landmarks Commission found that this property met three of the six criteria for individual landmark status. It was distinguished from the other bungalow courts



CHRISTIE COURT'S GRASSY COURTYARD IS USED AS A COMMUNITY SPACE  
PHOTO: KATHLEEN MASSER

(multiple units centered around a common open space) because of its proximity to the ocean and the beach entertainment zone that provided the historical context for Ocean Park,

the large number of units in the structure (24), the units being in a single building rather than separate buildings and the courtyard which is a fully landscaped green space instead of the concrete or driveway character of many other courtyard bungalows.

Constructed in 1924 in the Mission Revival style, the building had suffered some negative architectural alterations over the years, such as replacement of the original windows with aluminum sliders; the use of bars over windows; the removal of original decorative ornaments and re-cladding; and the gating in of the courtyard. Nevertheless, tenants residing in the building did extensive historical and architectural research to demonstrate the historic value of the property. The designation was based upon the importance of the bungalow court property type to the character of Ocean Park, rather than on the architectural style.

## OCEAN PARK UPDATE: HISTORIC RESOURCES INVENTORY

BY RUTHANN LEHRER

The consulting firm Historic Resources Group completed an update of the Ocean Park section of the City's cultural resource survey, a citywide list of potential landmarks maintained for reference by the Planning Department. The survey update area was bounded by the Pacific Ocean, Lincoln Boulevard, Pico Boulevard and the southern City limits.

The survey found that some of the oldest and most significant historic resources in Santa Monica are found in Ocean Park. Currently, there are nine individual landmarks and two officially designated historic districts: the Bay Street Craftsman Cluster and the Third Street Neighborhood Historic District. Three properties are listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The update found that potentially 201 buildings out of more than 1,300 surveyed were potentially eligible for designation, either as individual properties or as contributors to historic districts. Eleven previously identified buildings remained eligible

for individual designation, and an additional 16 properties are now qualified. Of 12 previously identified potential historic districts, 10 remain eligible, while 2 are off the list due to remodeling and alterations resulting in loss of historic integrity.

Ocean Park was last surveyed in 1990-93 and the South Beach area in 1982-83; in the interim, significant changes to surveyed properties had occurred. The findings of older surveys were re-evaluated. Newly surveyed properties were those built between 1940 and 1968, concluding in 1968 so that the list would remain current in light of the requirement that the Landmarks Commission look at demolition permits for buildings 40 years and older.

The Santa Monica Conservancy will continue to work with local residents to promote the protection of these identified historical and architectural assets. The updated survey report is available from the City by calling (310) 458-8341.

### SMC NEWS STAFF

SHERRILL KUSHNER  
NINA FRESCO

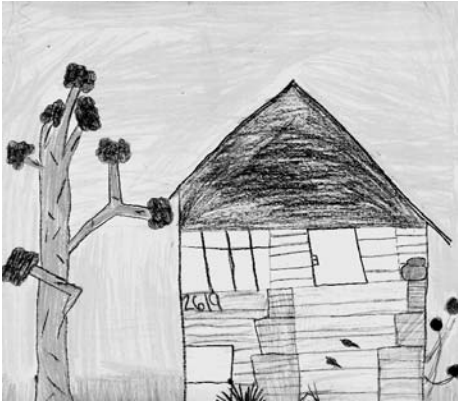
PHOTOS BY NINA FRESCO UNLESS NOTED.

PLEASE CONTACT US WITH NEWS IDEAS OR PRESERVATION ISSUES YOU WOULD LIKE TO SEE THE CONSERVANCY INVOLVED IN.

# FROM THE MOUTHS OF BABES: FOURTH GRADERS TOUR A HISTORIC DISTRICT

BY BEA NEMLAHA

"I like old houses because"... "they are happy; they have a big heart."... "they make me think about people who lived there before."... "I like really old things, like from the 80s or even the 50s."... "they make me feel like I'm back in time."... "I liked the house with the big trees. Trees are good because they are pretty. They give us shade. They give us oxygen."... "I liked the sage colored house because the pillars on the porch weren't perfect. That's more interesting."... "I liked the house with the big blue pot on the porch. It made me feel welcome."... "I liked the house with the two doors. It made me wonder."... "I liked the house with the gargoyle because gargoyles are old and we don't have them anymore. Gargoyles are like saying 'no one can trespass me.'"



CHRISTINE PADILLA:  
MARVEL ABOUT 2619

"...ROCKS AND STAIRS ARE SMOOTH AS SOMEONE'S CHEEKS, FIERY LEAVES LAZING AROUND A PLANT..."

...AS I WALK BACK TO CLASS  
THE HOUSE REMINDS ME  
OF SO MANY THINGS I  
CAN'T FORGET."

These are some of the comments made by 4th graders at John Muir Elementary School after a visit to Ocean Park's Third Street Neighborhood Historic District.

The kids were there with "Mr. B" or "B", as the kids call him. Luis Brizuela, their teacher, brings classes to the Historic District, his "outdoor classroom," to learn some of Santa Monica's history. Mr. B thinks it's important for children to walk their neighborhoods and learn about them and

from them. Mr. B did this when he grew up in the Pico Neighborhood where his parents still live. One student didn't like the idea of visiting old houses, believing the class should visit "mansions" instead. But when he saw Third Street's welcoming old houses and ancient trees, he changed his mind.

After their visit the kids wrote poems to go with their drawings.

The 4th graders wanted to know whether any of the old houses in the neighborhood had ever been torn down. They were glad to learn that since the Historic District was formed, families had moved in who took care of the old houses and protected them. They were amazed to learn that, in order to be preserved, some houses were lifted up off the ground while new foundations were built underneath.

Mr. B's 4th graders are future ambassadors for the importance of preservation. We applaud Mr. B for his creative teaching of preservation values.



JAKE SUTTER: OLD HOUSE

"OLD HOUSE, BLASTED TO THE GROUND,  
OLD HOUSE MAKES NO SOUND.  
OLD HOUSE, TWELVE STEPS,  
SUSPICIOUS COLOR.  
OLD HOUSE WATCHING THE WORLD  
LIKE AN EVIL SCIENTIST.  
OLD HOUSE HESITATING TO STAY ALIVE.  
OLD HOUSES ANCIENT FRIENDS AWAY BUT  
EVERYDAY OLD HOUSE STAYS THE SAME.  
OLD HOUSE I SEEK YOUR MYSTERY."



AUTUMN MOORE:  
THE MYSTERY OF THIS OLD HOUSE

"...HUGE MONEY OWNERS ASKING  
'CAN WE KNOCK YOU DOWN  
AN GIVE YOU A MILLION?'  
'NO' SAYS THE CAR 'NOT  
EVEN FOR A ZILLION'

WELL,  
THE DAY ENDS ON THIS OLD HOUSE,  
AS TOUGH AS A LION,  
AS COY AS A MOUSE."



NIKO SYPOSS: GREEN HOUSE

"THE GREEN HOUSE STAYING THERE LIKE IF IT  
WAS A STATUE.  
THE HOUSE HAS A SECRET PASSAGEWAY TO  
ANOTHER PLACE.  
THE HOUSE AS GREEN AS GRASS.  
THE HOUSE AS BIG AS TWO STORIES.  
THE WATER FAUCET SLEEPING AND DROOLING  
ALL OVER THE CEMENT.  
THE BALCONY ASKING FOR COMPANY.  
I LIKE THIS HOUSE."

# MUSCLE BEACH PHOTO EXHIBIT

The Santa Monica Historical Society has mounted an exhibit of vintage photos from the 1930s-1950s taken on Santa Monica's "Muscle Beach." The exhibit will be on display until October 31, 2004 at the Santa Monica Historical Society Museum at 1539 Euclid St. (between Broadway and Colorado). Tuesday-Fridays, 10-4:30, and on 2nd & 4th Sundays 1-4. For more information call 310-395-2290 or visit [www.santamonicahistory.org](http://www.santamonicahistory.org)

The exhibition goes back to the beginning of the fitness revolution, shows how Muscle Beach found international fame, and became revitalized today.

Located next to the Santa Monica Pier, Muscle Beach began in the early 1930s. Years later thousands of spectators were entertained by the extraordinary feats performed there. Exhibitions of daring, creative, and original acrobatic performances and body-building took place. People gathered to see the remarkable stunts performed by Harold Zinkin (the first Mr. California), Jack LaLanne, Vic Tanny, Russ Saunders, Baron Michel Leone, Puggy and Les Stockton, Glenn Sunby, Paula Unger Boelsens, and Joe Gold of Golds Gym.

It began with a few athletes looking for a soft place to land while working out. Choosing the Santa Monica Beach Playground, soon circus and vaudeville performers joined them. Tricks were shared, routines created and equipment acquired.



MUSCLE BEACH, COURTESY SANTA MONICA PUBLIC LIBRARY IMAGE ARCHIVES

By the late thirties, the beach was drawing weekend crowds in the thousands. High school kids were flexing and toning at Muscle Beach and the City of Santa Monica hired UCLA coach Cecil Hollingsworth to teach gymnastics there.

During World War II, many body builders were called into the service. Housed in local hotels, other servicemen found Muscle Beach. Regulars made periodic visits during furloughs.

After the war and into the 1950s, Muscle Beach continued to entertain spectators with free acrobatic performances.



MUSCLE BEACH: THREE OR MORE ACTS WERE PERFORMED SIMULTANEOUSLY ON A PLATFORM, GYMNASTS SHOWED THEIR SKILLS ON THE BARS OR RINGS AND BALANCED IN HUMAN PYRAMIDS. FROM COLLECTION OF PAULA UNGER BOESENS. COURTESY SANTA MONICA PUBLIC LIBRARY IMAGE ARCHIVES

## NEW MEMBERS

GEORGE APPLIGATE  
 KITTY BARTHOLOMEW  
 JOAN AND ROBERT BENEDETTI  
 MARJORIE CAMPBELL  
 STELLA & LUANNA  
 CASTELLUCCI  
 POLLY OSBORNE & TIM  
 CURNEN  
 RANDY DAVIDSON  
 NANCY ELWOOD  
 ANN GREENSPUN  
 SUSAN HENDERSON  
 ELLEN HOFFS  
 KATHERINE KING  
 STEVEN KOEPPE  
 DEBORAH LEVIN  
 COLIN MADUZIA  
 KENNETH STRINGER & CAROL  
 MARLOWE  
 VIRGIL W. MCDOWELL  
 KEVIN MCKEOWN  
 CYNNI MURPHY  
 CALIFORNIA HERITAGE  
 MUSEUM  
 AUDREY PARKER  
 GAY PHINNY  
 ELIZABETH PURO  
 MELISSA PRICE & ROB RADER  
 JANET ROBERTSON  
 BARONESS EBBA ROSENBLAD  
 DEBBIE SAENZ  
 PAULA SCOTT  
 MARK SHICKLER  
 SHARON SILBERT  
 GREG JACKSON & JOYCE  
 SMITH  
 BARBARA WHITNEY  
 NANCY WILLIAMS



SANTA MONICA CONSERVANCY

# PICO PLACE: GOAT'S GULCH

BY BRURIA FINKEL

I moved to Pico Place in 1960 and found a rich enclave of extended family, culture, music and art hidden in a cul de sac, located just south of Santa Monica High School off of 6th Street. Originally called Goat's Gulch because goats grazed there, it was developed by Pat Sejudo, a SAMOHI, Spanish language teacher. She invested every penny she had in Pico Place.

visited the West coast, Odetta, who, it is said, debuted at Pico Place, Lightning Hopkins, Peggy Seeger, Frank Hamilton and Ronnie Gilbert of The Weavers, Dave Zeitlin, and Bess Hawes, archivist of folk music for the Smithsonian, to name a few.

Pico Place was the site of fabulous weddings, one attended by a thousand

McCabe (founder of McCabe's Guitar Shop on Pico Blvd); Jane Williams Ruml (writer); Everett Jones (professor of English and author); Boots Jones (early feminist and physical therapist); Pam Tigar (teacher); Mike Tigar (law professor); Phyllis Fleishman (founder of Play Mountain School); Dan Bessie (film maker); Ike Jones (UCLA football player); Inger Stevens (actress); Mallory Pearce (naturalist, calligrapher, ornith-ologist); Bruria Finkel (artist); David Finkel (judge); Ray Keller (crafts-man); Stephania Smith (SMC Registrar). Their many children added to the luster of the street and turned out to be just as eclectic.

The best time of the year on Pico Place was Christmas day. Everyone on the street gathered at the bottom of the street to sing Christmas carols in the morning. We stopped at every house on the street, and sang the carol requested by each family. Then, we retired to the McGlaze's house for brunch, music, stories and fun. Pico Place alumni returned each Christmas to add to the richness of the day. I can still hear the children singing "ra ta ta tum," bringing joy and happiness to all of us. I wished, on those days, that all Santa Monica could have had an opportunity to live on Pico Place-Goat's Gulch.



PICO PLACE TODAY, LOOKING EAST FROM SIXTH STREET

Pat and her husband Arthur, a concert pianist turned developer, designed and built all the original houses on the street, moved in and raised a daughter. She married and had two sons, one of whom, Greg, still lives on Pico Place. Long-term resident Stephania Smith, a former Registrar at Santa Monica College, still lives there too. Most of the others have grown, scattered or died. But Pico Place's cultural history is indelible.

The once paved cul de sac has a 35-degree slope from west to east perfect for kids on skates, bikes and sleds (with wheels, of course). Parents sat in front of their houses drinking coffee and watching the kids or joined them in group games and activities.

But Pico Place was far more than just a wonderful enclave for a few families. It was the site of a rich folk art tradition. The street was cordoned off for extraordinary hootenannies, featuring visiting and local folk music greats such as Pete Seeger when he

people. No one had money, so guests brought homemade ethnic foods filling enormous Breughel-like food tables. The street was decorated with beautiful silk screened, Yugoslavian wedding flags. Live entertainment could be heard from houses, including jazz, folk and classical music. Lines of children followed a bagpipe player and piñatas hung from the trees.

The people who lived on Pico Place made it a fabulous place to live: Marcie and Ralph McGlaze, Marcia Berman (children's song writer and singer); Jerry



SITTING ON THE STOOP IN FRONT OF THE MCGLAZE HOUSE  
L-R RALPH MCGLAZE, DAVID FINKEL, WENDIE COLTER,  
SUSIE RUMMEL, BRURIA FINKEL

# SMC ANNUAL MEETING WAS THE BEE'S KNEES

BY BEA NEMLAHA

The Santa Monica Conservancy's first annual meeting on May 8th was, by all accounts, "the bee's knee's." (Jazz Age slang for a superb person or thing.) Conservancy members whispered "Rosebud" to the burley, stogie-smoking bouncer at the Georgian Hotel Speak-Easy alley door to enter for a bit of hooch and Hollywood in Santa Monica Prohibition-style. Jazz Age Glossaries were provided.

The afternoon was highlighted by a presentation of the Jazz Age in Santa Monica and beyond. Bea Nemlaha introduced the Prohibition years, often described as an "Era of Wonderful Nonsense," observing that the 1920s ushered us into the modern era. Radios and cars became widespread and easily available. Items were bought on credit, people ate in fast food franchises, enjoyed commercial air travel, talking movies and jazz music. The young Sheiks and Shebas of the day experienced a revolution in morals and sexual attitudes.

Peter Altschuler whirled us through a collage of people and events from the 1920s, illustrated with photographs, and other images



BOARD MEMBER BEA NEMLAHA (CENTER) WITH MEMBERS SHARON SILBERT AND PAUL SMALL

based upon the research of many Conservancy members. We saw Santa Monica's Pleasure Piers, our own Douglas Aircraft factory, and the Revival architecture then newly built in Santa Monica, some of

which still stands. Dick Orton spun music of the times in the background.

President Tom Cleys reviewed SMC accomplishments since its founding in fall 2002. Tom noted that SMC has a solid financial base, a growing and active membership, and a quarterly newsletter.

The Conservancy sponsored three very successful events: 1) a bus tour of Santa Monica Landmarks, 2) a meeting in the Anna and Roy George House (Ocean Park) about how to research the history of your home, and 3) a sold-out tour of the Eli Broad art collection.

In addition to electing new Board members, several bylaw amendments were approved. The assembled members also proposed and approved forming a new "Plaque Committee" to identify places in Santa Monica which merit notice with a plaque or other memorable marker.

At the close of the meeting, four lucky members received prints of local artist Steve Koepp's wonderful watercolors of Santa Monica as door prizes. The meeting concluded with a no-host bar cocktail hour with alcoholic drinks served in teacups Prohibition style.

Special thanks to the Georgian Hotel, our wonderful host, and to Trader Joe's for food and soft drinks.

## BECOME A MEMBER!

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Work Phone \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

- \$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 \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Please make checks payable to:  
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 PO Box 653 Santa Monica, CA 90406  
 310-485-0399 info@smconservancy.org



# UNDER THE BOULANGERIE



On May 8, 2004, while the demolition of the building known as the Boulangerie on Main Street in Ocean Park was under way, a preservation minded passer-by observed that an incredibly intact storefront from the 1920s had been hidden away beneath the large mansard roof structure for decades. She phoned a Landmarks Commissioner who phoned a City Council member who phoned planning staffers who were finally

able to halt the demolition temporarily. The Landmarks Commission, who was to meet in two days, had a chance to discuss the discovery of urban archeology. While there was no possible official action to be taken, the Commission decided to contact the owners to see if the antique store front could be photographed if not salvaged before it was leveled. The owner agreed to both, but insurance considerations made salvaging

prohibitive. The City contracted a photographer to take high quality archival photographs of the old storefront before it was lost.

Through the '20s and '30s, this portion of Main Street was the business center for the Ocean Park neighborhood which had made the transition from a tourist-occupied vacation town to a year-round community. Thrifty's Paint and Salvage was a combination hardware and second hand store.



## SANTA MONICA CONSERVANCY

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### BOARD MEETINGS:

- JULY 28 SMC Board Meeting 6:30 pm  
Location: Montana Branch Library
- AUGUST 25 SMC Annual Meeting 6:30 pm  
Location: Montana Branch Library
- SEPTEMBER 22 SMC Board Meeting 6:30 pm  
Location: Montana Branch Library
- OCTOBER 20 SMC Board Meeting 6:30 pm  
Location: TBA