

LA JOLLA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

MISSION

The La Jolla Historical Society inspires and empowers the community to make La Jolla's diverse past a relevant part of contemporary life.

VISION

The La Jolla Historical Society looks toward the future while celebrating the past. We preserve and share La Jolla's distinctive sense of place and encourage quality in the urban built environment. The Society serves as a thriving community resource and gathering place where residents and visitors explore history, art, ideas and culture.

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Cover: A graphic detail from the Unicorn Cinema program of December, 1979, celebrates 16 years of the landmark art house operation at 7456 La Jolla Blvd. Image from collection of Dave Hampton and Gayle Kauihou.



RECTOR'S MESSAG

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Heath Fox

hat a terrific experience we had with the Society's springtime events this year!

The 15th annual La Jolla Concourse D'Elégance & Motor Car Classic held in April was a wonderful success and we extend a very special thanks to Chairman Michael Dorvillier for his leadership of this highly energized event. We also enjoyed a beautiful

day for the very exciting 21st annual Secret Garden Tour of La Jolla in May. Our deepest gratitude goes to the many dedicated committee members and volunteers who so generously contributed their time and talents to make these events a success. Both are fundraisers for the Society, attract the participation of residents and cultural tourists, generate revenue for the village merchants, and explore history in unique ways for their constituent audiences.

Our upcoming summer exhibition is *History in Motion: Devices & Wizardry in Early Cinema*. This exhibition explores the era of silent films, magic lanterns, and stereoscopic novelties, as well as the melodrama films of the La Jolla Cinema League, early movie theaters of La Jolla, silent film secrets of San Diego County, and revelations from vintage home movies. Here is a project in which you will see historical material staged and animated to activate our galleries in ways surprising, informative, and exhilarating.

Concurrent with the exhibition, a curated silent film festival with live music will be presented in collaboration with Vanguard Culture at Idea 1 in downtown San Diego. Entitled the *Not-So-Silent Short Film Festival*, the three themed presentations will be held June 22, July 6, and August 3. I'd like to offer our sincere appreciation to Vanguard Culture

for participating in this collaborative series. On the Wisteria Cottage front lawn, a short film festival with live music entitled *Movies by Moonlight* will be held four consecutive nights August 15-18. We're thrilled to welcome Scott Paulson of UCSD Libraries as our exhibition curator and film impresario for this project, and extend to him our thanks and congratulations. We hope you'll join us for the engaging exhibition and entertaining silent film night presentations!

This summer we will once again host two one-week sessions of *Young Photographers Summer Camps* for middle school students presented by the Outside the Lens organization. These camps are scheduled the weeks starting July 8, with the theme of Take It to the Streets: Street Photography, and July 15, with Take It to the Beach: Beach Photography. *Our Young Architects Summer Program* for middle school students is scheduled the week starting July 22, and for high school students begins the week of July 29. Registration for summer sessions is available on our website.

Our *Spring Appeal 2019* fundraising campaign is underway and we hope you will consider a generous gift to support the programs and activities you read about in Timekeeper. It's quick and easy to contribute on our website at lajollahistory.org/support/donating. We are deeply thankful for your continued support!

We are also very excited to welcome Rick Wildman to the Society's Board of Directors, to congratulate our Board officers elected for the coming year (listed on page 2), and to express our esteem gratitude for the many contributions of talent and wisdom from all participants. I also want to offer my sincerest appreciation to the Wisteria Cottage gallery docents who present our programs to the public, and to the Society's Members – we look forward to seeing you soon at our exhibitions, events, programs, and activities!

Heath Fox Executive Director



NEW BOARD MEMBER

Dick Wildman was born in Marblehead, MA, founded in 1627 by his ancestor NIsaac Allerton. He grew up in Pacific Beach and Claremont. After college at Colorado University, Boulder (history, math, physics), he was a land surveyor in Utah before being assigned to Korea as a combat engineer officer in 1968. There he successfully defended, in a Korean court, an innocent African-American soldier wrongfully accused of capital murder. At Ft. Leonard Wood, MO, he initiated the Army's first child and spousal abuse programs. He earned his M.A. in Asian Studies at USD before finishing law school in 1976. A La Jollan since 1979, Rick has been president of the La Jolla Bar, Promote La Jolla, La Jolla Town Council, and Sunrise Rotary. A civil trial lawyer, he has reported appellate cases in banking, bankruptcy, real estate, land use and family law.

DANA STEPS IN!

Editor's Note: Dana Hicks joins the Society staff as new deputy director and collections manager after Michael Mishler's retirement. She shares some thoughts with the Timekeeper about La Jolla and her background:

he La Jolla of my childhood is blissfully imbedded in memories of long summer days at The Shores and The Cove with giggling girlfriends and feet buried in the warm sand, listening to the waves – the sunshine warming away the pent-up thought of days spent in a school room. I was born in San Diego. Growing up in Allied Gardens I remember Mission Valley as pastureland and the best way to get to Coronado was by ferry. I left for adventures in Los Angeles and greater San Diego County after graduating from high school at Patrick Henry. I'm thrilled to be back home, and working for the Society is a new superlative adventure.

I thoroughly enjoyed raising my family and when my children grew older I decided to attend university and expand my horizons. I've had exciting experiences fraternizing with people of many cultures and taking courses from professors who were the foremost experts in their field. I received two Bachelor's Degrees in History and Anthropology from UCLA. That was experience enough, but I decided to go back for a Master's Degree to learn skills to be able to secure employment. I had been working in museum settings and enjoyed the museum realm, so I decided to earn my Master's at UCR in Public History. There, I specialized in museum curation and also took coursework in archival management and historic preservation. At the end of my final oral exam, with a table full of my professors, my main professor turned to me and said, "Congratulations! You have your Master's Degree! Would you like to stay on and do your PhD?" My mouth must have dropped open and I must have gasped! I thought I was going to walk out of the room that day and be forever finished with school! I couldn't turn down the opportunity and so I spent the next six years with coursework and writing my dissertation. My PhD is in History and my specialties are in public, early modern world, and Native American histories (specifically the history of San Diego County). My dissertation title is, "Strategies for Survival: Indian Transitions in the Mountains of San Diego County, 1846 – 1907."

I was a working single mom while in school and by the time I graduated with my PhD, after 20 years of schooling, I had worked with five different museums, four historic homes, and completed three

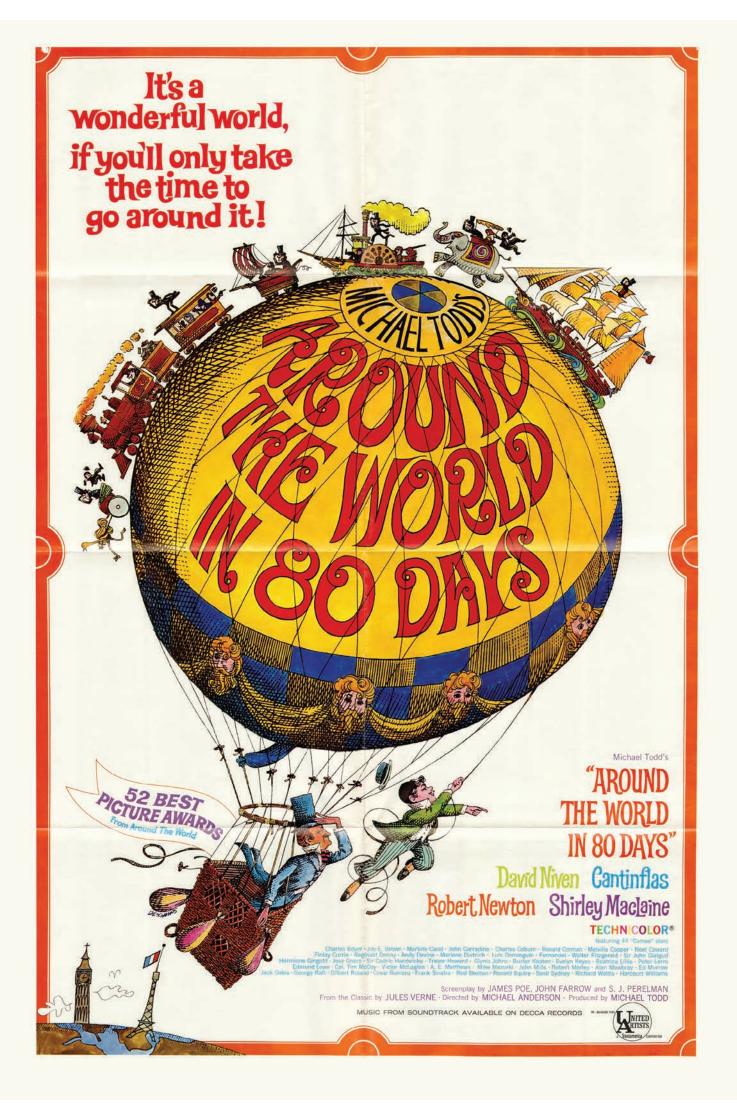


Dana Hicks

internships. One internship was on the Pechanga Reservation at Temecula where I earned an Archaeological Site Monitoring Certificate, learned the language with tribal members and made lifetime friendships. The internship also led to four years living on the La Jolla Reservation on Palomar Mountain. My museum experiences include 25 years working with archives and collections management, exhibit preparation, programming, administration and curating over 70 exhibits.

Now I'm home and working in the most beautiful place in San Diego. The people here have been friendly and welcoming and I'm thrilled to be working with Heath Fox as my Executive Director. I look forward to managing the collections, engaging with exhibits and preserving La Jolla's impressive history. Oh...and school is definitely out! The sands of La Jolla are calling once again!

Dana Hicks
 Deputy Director and Collections Manager





he late 19th and early 20th I centuries appear to have had a predilection for things in motion encouraging feats and happenings that were both fearful and fascinating. The newly invented automobile provided motion on land and derring-do sports of speed and racing. The airplane and any number of sky-bound craft such as air balloons, gliders and dirigibles launched everchanging battles with gravity. On the oceans larger and ever more poshly furnished liners ferried passengers across the Atlantic and Pacific - and never mind that one of them

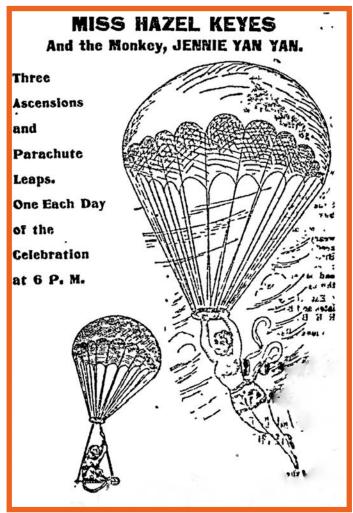
was the Titanic!

La Jolla in the late 19th and early 20th century had its share of motion enthusiasts. The legendary Horace Poole placed a springboard high above the caves on several Fourths of July and hurled himself into the ocean as a spectacle for the crowds. Lord Huberon arrived in 1903 with the first automobile, a scarey looking contraption to the townsfolk and even scarier when an accident caused a passenger to topple out onto Prospect after an abrupt turn. Anne and Charles Lindbergh amazed the populace with hang-gliding off Mt. Soledad. But more remarkable yet were the parachute leaps of Miss Hazel Keyes from a balloon high above the Cove. She floated earthward three times a day for a period in the 1890s, faithfully accompanied by Jennie Yan Yan, a pet monkey spiraling downward in its own parachute.

The fascination with motion seemed to reach its zenith with the invention of motion pictures, a phenomenon that removed action from real time and zoomed it into the stratosphere of illusions and imaginary images. But like most things that seem slightly connected to the world of spirits, the moving pictures to the 19th century mind could prove freakish and threatening. When the pioneer French filmmakers Auguste and Louis Lumiere presented their 1896 short, "Arrival of a Train at La Crotat Station," showing a locomotive barreling directly toward the camera (and the audience) observers fled the movie salon in panic.

The first motion pictures shown in La Jolla at the Cove's Bathhouse in 1912 were threatening not for subjects but for the device entrepreneur William Zader used to show them. His machine lacked a fire shutter and could have burned the building down.

With our summer exhibition, "History in Motion: Devices & Wizardry in Early Cinema," we take a look at some of the inventive



Collection of the La Jolla Historical Society

Newspaper graphic advertising Keyes ballooning with her monkey in La Jolla circa 1890s.

aspects that led to and nurtured the development of moving pictures ranging from magic lanterns to stereoscopic novelties preceding the silent film era. We also examine the history of some of La Jolla's favorite movie hangouts such as the Cove managed by the irascible Spencer Wilson and the old Granada, its predecessor. Also, the Unicorn Cinema, that small art house on La Jolla Blvd. where the magic of motion pictures truly reigned.

When the Unicorn opened in December of 1964 it promised its audience a "voyage through new worlds" of fantasy as well as the macabre and surrealistic. When the cinema closed in 1982 I felt I had been on many voyages to lands of otherness and back just watching the screen practically every night a few blocks down the street. I, too, became in love with motion (see related story page 14).

– Carol Olten Editor

Left: 1956 movie poster from the landmark Cove theatre on Girard Avenue advertising Michael Todd's film about a late 19th century Englishman who bets that he can navigate the globe in 80 days with the new holy commotion of steamships, railroads, and aerial balloons becoming known in the world.



Scott Paulson (above) prepares music and sound effects for silent movie nights. Right, a magic lantern device.

HISTORY IN MOTION

DEVICES & WIZARDRY IN EARLY CINEMA EXHIBITION THIS SUMMER IN WISTERIA COTTAGE

By Scott Paulson, curator

The projected charm of narrated magic lantern shows, the transporting depth of Victorian Era stereoscopes, and the immersive live sounds and music efforts added to a silent moving picture engage a viewer to the point of time-travel.

This exhibition explores these silent films, magic lanterns, and stereoscopic novelties. We'll feature a study of the silent melodrama films of La Jolla Cinema League (a well-equipped 1920's film club.)

Also on display: magic lantern-style slide presentations of La Jolla Historical Society archival holdings and stereoscopically-enhanced views of the past using vintage tools and current technology.

We'll celebrate early film presenters and their local movie places/palaces in this summer exhibit, courtesy of the research of Carol Olten and her historic respect of La Jolla's cinematic scene, whether taking her on the other side of a grand façade movie house or down a path of grainy sand for an impromptu beach cove screening.

Silent film secrets of San Diego County will be outlined and the La Jolla connections of beloved silent film superstars Baby Peggy (who was a bookstore manager at UC San Diego in the 1980's) and Carol Dempster (who retired in La Jolla at the height of her 1920's fame) will be examined.

Also on display are some surprising multi-media tools of the past, some with a surprising look to the virtual reality future.

Revelations from vintage La Jolla home movies will be rolling on screen: from underwater films to underground Warhol sightings!

Wisteria Cottage also will showcase a small pit orchestra of musical instruments set up for use in front of an active slapstick silent film screen. Curator Paulson will present a behind the scenes look at magical elements in the exhibition called Movie Mash-Ups.

Dates for the 12-2pm Mash-Ups are June 30, July 28, and August 25. (Yes, all the bells and whistles you can stand—but we'll all do our best to behave.)

Scott Paulson, guest curator for "History in Motion," is an exhibits and events co-ordinator at UC San Diego Library; much of the current exhibition is a re-visitation of several smaller shows mounted in the library over the years.

Funding for this project generously provided by Margie and John H. Warner Jr. and by Elizabeth Barkett. Institutional support provided by the UC San Diego Library, City of San Diego's Commission for Arts and Culture, and Members of the La Jolla Historical Society.



MAGIC LANTERNS: THE BIRTH OF CINEMA

The magic lantern dates to 1658, when Dutch scientist Christiaan Huygens developed what we now might call a slide projector. Pre-dating photography, his lantern's glass slides were hand-painted with imagery and the illuminating projector was gas-powered.

In the earliest years, traveling lantern projectionists could present a show in any tavern or barn. Scientists and teachers also used the lanterns to relay research in more formal settings.

With continued modifications, magic lantern shows could show some animated movement, by clever manipulation of the slides. It was later also possible to fade in and fade out to other slides, projecting sophisticated scene-changes, much like in modern cinema.

By the 1880's the magic lantern was a well-received tool for both lectures and story-telling. Magic Lantern shows became a respected art form welcomed in fine theaters, including La Jolla's Granada when it opened in 1925.

In the early 1900's the electrified magic lantern was eclipsed by true cinema, but it remained a popular pre-feature attraction at movie palaces, which presented colorful imagery and advertisements of interest (and the lanterns could be pressed into action for an alternative show if there were problems with the motion picture!)

Toy magic lanterns, for use in the home, and with various modifications over time, were wildly popular in many early 20th century households.

For this Wisteria Cottage exhibition we have borrowed some magic lantern materials from The Peabody Magic Lantern Collection at the SDSU Library.

An exhibition at the La Jolla Historical Society

HISTORY IN MOTION Devices & Wizardry in Early Cinema

June 8 - September 8, 2019





MOVIES BY MOONLIGHT

AUGUST 15-18

ON THE WISTERIA COTTAGE LAWN
SHOWINGS START AT 8 P.M.

FREE

BRING LOW BEACH CHAIRS AND PICNIC DINNER

AUGUST 15 | 1915 "CARMEN"

AUGUST 16 | 1925 "SALLY OF THE SAWDUST"
WITH W.C. FIELDS AND CAROL DEMPSTER

AUGUST 17 | 1914 "TILLIE'S PUNCTURED ROMANCE"
WITH CHARLIE CHAPLIN AND MARIE DRESSLER

AUGUST 18 | 1920 "GENUINE: A TALE OF A VAMPIRE"

LAJOLLAHISTORY.ORG

Musical
accompaniment
by awardwinning MultiMedia Curator &
Soundscape
Artist

SCOTT PAULSON

with his band, the Teeny-Tiny Pit Orchestra.

Guests can choose from a variety of sound makers to help bring the films to life! NOT-SO-SILENT SHORT FILM FESTIVAL ' IDEA1 | 899 PARK BLVD. | SAN DIEGO

PRESENTED BY: Vanguard Culture & The La Jolla Historical Society

TICKETS: \$10 - \$40

JUNE 22 | WOMEN FILM PIONEERS

JULY 6 | INNOVATIVE INVENTORS

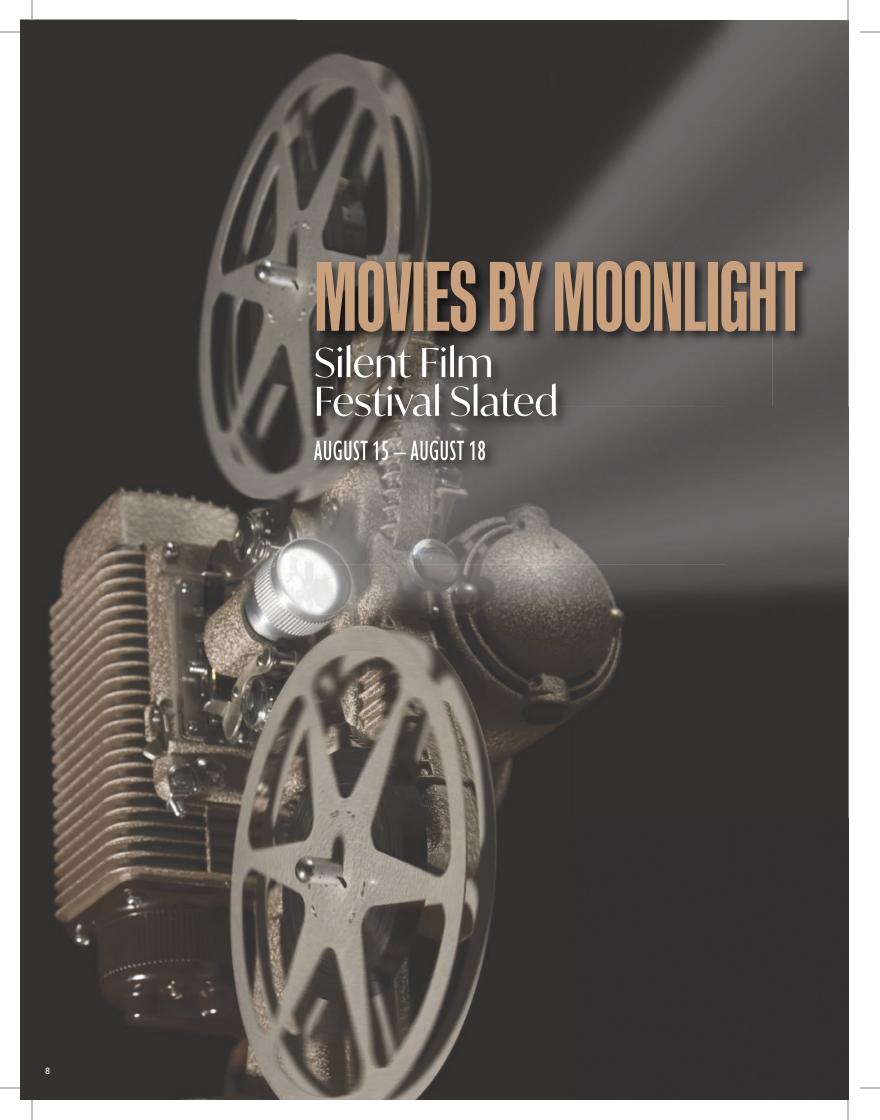
AUGUST 3 | STEAMPUNK CELLULOID SOIRÉE

Enjoy Delicious Craft Cocktails & Gourmet Popcorn Varieties by Vanguard Culture Culinary Director Chef Daniella de la Puente.

VIP Wine Tastings by Baja Wine & Food available as an upgrade to your evening.

VANGUARDCULTURE.COM





By Carol Olten

ilent films inspired by a popular 19th century opera and the classic vampire story of F.W. Murnau along with two comic melodramas will highlight the first "Movies by Moonlight" outdoor cinema festival to be presented in August by the la Jolla Historical Society. Each of the four evenings of silent films and shorts will have live music accompaniment and sound effects by Scott Paulson, special events co-ordinator at the UCSD Library. All screenings are open free to the public and begin at 8 p.m.

Coinciding with the appearance of the August full moon, the festival will open Aug. 15 with the 1915 "Carmen," directed by the legendary Cecil B. DeMille based on the 19th century Georges Bizet opera and novella by the French Romantic writer Prosper Merimee. Geraldine Farrar appears in the starring role of the young gypsy girl who seduces the Spanish lawman, Don Jose, as he pursues a gang of illegal Spanish smugglers. Wallace Reid appears as Don Jose and Pedro de Cordoba plays the handsome toreador

who flirts with Carmen as she works in a cigarette factory by day and dances in a tavern by night. The film, an early work by DeMille who is best known for later biblical epics, was called a "triumph of superb acting and magnificent scenery" by Motion Picture Magazine when it debuted in 1915.

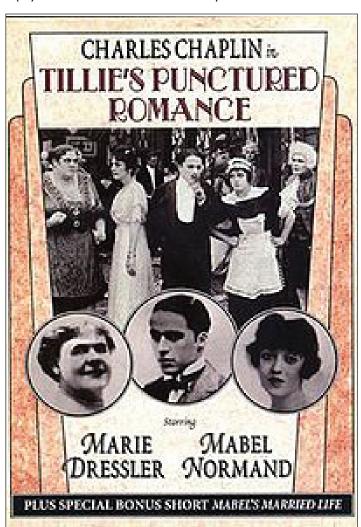
The Aug. 16 evening will feature the 1925 comedy "Sally of the Sawdust' starring W.C. Fields and Carol Dempster. It was produced and directed by silent film icon D.W. Griffith, known for classics such as "Intolerance," "Birth of a Nation" and "Way Down East." Fields plays a wily juggler and circus barker. Dempster is Sally, a peppy young damsel who joins him in the circus to dance among parading pachyderms, trapeze artists and bizarre side shows. Supporting roles in the film, based on a play by Dorothy Donnelly, are played by Alfred Lunt, Erville Alderson, Effie Shannon and Charles Hammond. Dempster was said to have been romantically involved with Griffith when he gave her the role; she retired from the film world shortly thereafter,

however, and married a wealthy banker. In 1966 she and her husband purchased a La Jolla home and accumulated a notable art collection, part of which was donated to the San Diego Museum of Art after her death here in 1991.

Another silent comedy, "Tillie's Punctured Romance," will screen the night of Aug. 17. Produced and directed by Mack Sennett and premiered in 1914, it was the first feature-length picture by Keystone Film Company and the only one in which Charlie Chaplin starred. He plays a womanizing con man who seduces a country girl, played by the ever-comic Marie Dressler who also appeared in the same role earlier in a stage play called "Tillie's Nightmare." Mabel Normand plays Chaplin's former girl friend. Other roles include Mack Swain as Tillie's father, Charles Bennett as her wealthy uncle and Grover Ligon, Wallace MacDonald and Hank Mann in their assigned roles of Keystone Cops. The action, including a phenomenal chase scene

toward the end of the film in which Dressler lands in a lake threatening to drown, takes place in a small burg comically monikered Yokeltown.

The "Movies by Moonlight" festival will conclude Aug. 18 with the 1920 "Tale of the Vampire," originally released in the German Reich a year after the wildly successful vampire thriller known as "The Cabinet of Dr. Calgari." Filmmaker Robert Weine initially titled his 1920 piece "Genuine: A Tale of a Vampire" using the name of the female bloodsucker in the title a high priestess who steps out of a painting, comes to life and goes for the jugular with a number of men who try to love her without much success. Part horror and part fantasy, the film has become somewhat of a cult classic admired for stage design and bizarre costuming in light of the German Expressionist cultural movement of the time as well as for the strange seductive allure of its female star, the seditious Fern Andra. Born in the American Midwest, Andra (whose real name was Vernal Edna Andersen) made her way into vaudeville and circus shows in this country and then went to Europe, soon travelling



Vintage movie poster advertised Tillie's Punctured Romance with a cast of Charlie Chaplin, Marie Dressler, and Mabel Normand.



A HISTORY OF MOVIE THEATERS IN LA JOLLA

By Carol Olten

William E. Zader, a self-proclaimed astrologist who believed in living mysteriously according to the light and dark of the moon, was the first person in La Jolla to experiment with the showing of motion pictures and setting up a theater. He made his debut with an Edison projector at the Cove Bathhouse in 1912. Since his machine lacked a fire shutter, Zader was shut down. But given the prolific number of silent films that were being turned out of pioneer Hollywood at the time, he continued to see the success movies might offer as a business. A few months after the Bathhouse fiasco he joined forces with the Hansbrough Brothers and opened an outdoor arena with wood folding chairs for seating near the corner of Drury Lane and Silverado Street. Appropriately, it was named the Airdome.

The Airdome drew capacity crowds for the summers of 1912 and 13. Meanwhile, a wealthy La Jollan transplanted here from Iowa named W.C. Sheppard, began to see the business possibilities of an indoor theater premiering the growing number of silent pictures fascinating the public as they were produced by the nearby film industry rapidly developing in Hollywood. In January of 1913 Sheppard opened a 500-seat theater at the corner of Girard Avenue and Wall Street called

the Orient, built at a cost of \$8,000. The Hansbroughs were hired as managers with Zader as the projectionist.

The opening of the Orient established the Girard and Wall site as La Jolla's "movie corner" for the next 39 years, although a number of different buildings and name changes occurred. The Orient became the Garden after a few years. It was torn down in 1924 to make room for the Granada, the first and only of La Jolla's movie theaters built in the tradition of themed palaces with grand décor. The Granada, seating 712, opened March 25, 1925, with considerable fanfare – the program offering a world premiere of 'The Boomerang,' three vaudeville acts direct from the Orpheum Theater in Los Angeles, Paris Fashion Revue in natural colors, a comedy riot called 'Crushed' and the first showing of "Cetalla's historic run to the North Pole in his race with death." Admission was 25 cents.

Inspired by its namesake and the Spanish city's Moorish history, the Granada was designed by architect William H. Wheeler and built at a cost of \$170,000. It was heralded in opening ceremonies as the "finest playhouse of any city of her size in the land." Seats were upholstered in Spanish leather. A sonorous Robert Morgan pipe organ accompanied the silent films, consisting mainly of popular first-run fare such as

••...AN OUTDOOR ARENA WITH WOOD FOLDING CHAIRS FOR SEATING NEAR THE CORNER OF DRURY LANE AND SILVERADO STREET. APPROPRIATELY, IT WAS NAMED THE AIRDOME.

Buster Keaton in "The Navigator," Will Rogers in "Hustling Hank" and "The Red Lily" with Wallace Beery and Ramon Navarro. Occasionally, an oddity made it onto the marquee, i.e., "The Galloping Fish: The Picture That's Different." The first talkie debuted at the Granada May 29,1929 – Mary Pickford as a flirtatious Southern belle in "Coquette." An observer wrote: "she talks as Mary Pickford ought to talk" (assumedly without a Southern accent).

In the tradition of old movie palaces, the Granada was remarkable for its interiors. Gold-framed antique mirrors lined the walls of the lobby. The theater ceiling was a baroque celebration of painted curlicues in blue and gold. A glass bead curtain opened when the movies started. Behind it a drop curtain entertained a Spanish horseman in full regalia.

Lantern slides were shown between major features during the Granada's early years, but gradually faded out as talkies entered the picture. Occasionally, the Granada's stage also was used for live community theater venues or light opera productions until the theater's final demise in 1952 when the Granada's glory faded and a new motion picture house – the Playhouse theater (soon to be renamed The Cove and become another La Jolla legend) opened across the street with better seats, more upscale programming and improved technology.

The Cove, designed solely as a motion picture house, opened in 1948 after being built and financed by La Jolla resident Major John H. Haring as a memorial to his parents. It was purchased by the Granada's owner shortly after being built; he brought the Granada's former manager, Spencer Wilson, to the new venue. As the Granada was ripped of its ornament as an example of old-fashioned goopiness and turned into a department store during the post-World War II years, the Cove began to build its own legend as La Jolla's prime and only first-run movie theater. Notable for its Saturday matinees, often seating a full-house of children in its 650 seats, the Cove built a reputation for family fare, particularly during the baby boomer years of the 1950s. During the 1960s and after a remodel of the façade designed by architect William Lumpkins which changed its Colonial Revival exterior to a more streamlined contemporary look, the Cove's programming transitioned gradually to first-run independent and foreign movies, restored

classics and documentaries. For many years and, up until its closing in 2003 due in the main to the spread of myriads of multiplexes around nearby malls, it remained one of the few successfully run single-screen theaters in Southern California with the legendary "Spence" Wilson as the longtime manager. (see related story page 16).

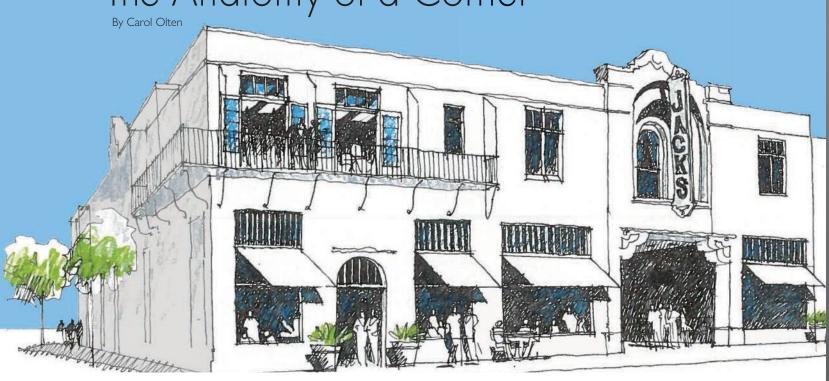
The Unicorn Cinema came into being in 1964 behind a non-descript façade in a building near the corner of La Jolla Blvd. and Pearl Street and quickly built a reputation as one of the finest art houses in the country. It closed about 20 years later, its reputation intact along with the special magic it brought to La Jolla's motion picture history — some of the same magic, it would seem, Mr. Zader had arrived with 72 years prior (see related story page 14).



Collection of the La Jolla Historical Society

The outdoor Airdome (upper left) was one of La Jolla's first movie venues playing to capacity crowds during the summer of 1912 and 1913. The Granada theater (above) opened in 1925 at Girard Avenue and Wall Street and operated as La Jolla's main movie house until closing in 1952.

GIRARD & WALL: The Anatomy of a Corner



Architect James Alcorn's drawing for a re-imagined corner with the Granada Building restored.

s the 20th century dawned you could stand on this corner and enjoy an ocean view of blue sky meeting blue ocean over a barren landscape for the most part devoid of buildings except for a small Victorian cottage called the Reading Room filled with volumes of Huxley and other progressive thinkers. By 1925 on this same corner you could watch silent films to organ accompaniment in an ornate movie palace inspired by Moorish motifs, admission 25 cents. By Mid-Century, the movies were gone and the corner offered, successively through the mid-1980s, clothing and accessories from three department stores: Illers, Stevensons and Walker Scott. Then, in 1986 a giant wrecking ball came along and knocked everything down. A new building went up called Wall Street Plaza. Soon you could party all night at a restaurant and club known as Jack's. Building foreclosures and an embezzlement fracas eventually ended that. New investors finally came along, spent millions of dollars, and repurposed the corner with a toney name - La Plaza - and fancy tile and landscape. Rents went up. But lease spaces gradually filled. The corner is now a place where you can buy Teuscher chocolates from Switzerland, get an "organic spray tan," drink charcoal lemonade and load up on cbd oil, virgin and pressed, direct from Colorado hemp fields. As leasing agent Mike Slattery puts it, the corner has morphed into "lifestyle retail" - a place about beauty, health, fitness and food.

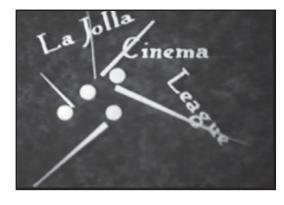
This corner of Girard Avenue and Wall Street is not so much a story of rapid change in retail, however, as it is about appearances – the appearance and disappearance of the various buildings that have occupied the site, the broad range of architectural styles reflected in both renovations and new structures and the

displacement of what is old and worn with what seems tres vogue and sophisticated at yet another particular time in history. (The only constant on this corner appears to be the dirt under the buildings, owned for decades and still in the name of one of La Jolla's oldest families and businesses – the Meanleys of Meanley & Son ACE Hardware.)

The first building to go up on the corner was built by W.C. Sheppard, a La Jolla investor transplanted from Iowa, in 1913. It housed a 500-seat movie theater called the Orient, later renamed the Garden. The Garden met the wrecking ball in 1924 when another investor decided to build a bigger and better theater with William H. Wheeler as the architect. Acknowledging the popular Spanish Revival architecture of the time, Wheeler designed a structure featuring Moorish motifs aptly named the Granada Building. The main tenant was the Granada, itself, a movie/vaudeville house seating over 700 with a grand entrance on Girard beneath a minaret-infused marquee. The U.S. National Bank occupied the Wall Street side of the building when it was first constructed but after a remodel from a design by architect Carleton Winslow in 1934, this space was leased to Iller's department store which remained a major tenant for over a decade with an entrance on the Wall Street side.

Late during Iller's tenancy and before the Granada theater finally shuttered forever in 1952, architects Robert Mosher and Roy Drew were hired to design more modern facades for the exterior facades on both Girard and Wall sides as well as upgrades for the interiors of both the theater and department store. At that time the Granada Building was owned by Gordon Gray, also

...continued on page 23









1920s images from La Jolla Cinema League show the film club's talent and diversity. Top, left to right: The league's logo and director R.G.S. Berger on location. Bottom left to right: scene from a 16mm feature and early "kitty" video.

LA JOLLA CINEMA LEAGUE, A SILENT FILM CLUB ACTIVE IN LA JOLLA IN THE 1920'S, WAS AN AMATEUR GROUP WITH PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS THAT PRODUCED ENTERTAINING MELODRAMATIC SILENT FILMS...

League members wrote their own screenplays, ran the cameras, and experimented adeptly with shooting angles, lighting techniques, film tinting and other artful filmmaking secrets. They developed the films themselves with their own lab equipment and utilized some sophisticated editing techniques.

I first became involved with La Jolla Cinema League in 2002, when the San Diego History Center invited me to perform live music for flapper-era silent films at a major exhibition about San Diego-based cinema.

I revisited La Jolla Cinema League with an exhibit at the UC San Diego Library which included a formal screening of many of their movies. My love for these silent films was rewarded with an invitation from La Jolla Historical Society to screen

yet more of the films on Valentine's Day, 2014.

This summer, working closely with "the Adams girls" (Alison Royle and Beverley Hijermstad, who are daughters of the League's lady director and gentleman camera operator) we're pleased to salute La Jolla Cinema League's films in exhibition at Wisteria Cottage.

The League's work ethic and wit was best summed up with this well-reported feat: At a 1928 screening in La Jolla's American Legion Hall, the League filmed the audience as they entered for seating – and while that audience watched a 75-minute feature, the Cinema League scurried to develop the filmed arrival in a make-shift lab on-site, resulting in a startling encore starring... the surprised audience!

- Scott Paulson

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One of the many graphically detailed program brochures from the Unicorn Cinema features a menagerie of birds and animals from old prints.

unique for its showing of exquisite still photographs before each show and the fact that you entered the small, 200-seat theater through a bookstore stocked with anything from Lewis Carroll to Rilke (there was usually a local poet or two of the time lingering among the shelves eager to discuss the latter).

The cinema and bookstore crowd held its own interest, invariably a pod of socially conscious individuals from the newly established UCSD campus mixing with young counter culture groups in long hair and velvets looking bound for either a Renaissance festival or a posing session for Rousseau. The Unicorn attracted the edgy and that, too, was a part of its charisma. Ken Kesey and the Merry Pranksters made a stop as part of their revolutionary trip cross-country in the bus called Further. Andy Warhol visited to screen his rushes for the surf

film he filmed in La Jolla in the late 1960s.

By the time the Unicorn closed its doors in 1982, it had built a reputation as the finest art house in the country. It shuttered with the same bill it had opened with: Adolfas Mekas' comedy "Hallelujah the Hills" and Francois Truffaut's tragic "Shoot the Piano Player." By that time I had become the film critic for The San Diego Union newspaper – inspired to the fullest by all those nights I'd spent at what I considered my own neighborhood movie theater. My Unicorn. My Camelot.

KNOWING "SPENCE"

drove the entire coastline of California and when I reached La Jolla Cove I thought I had arrived at that place I had dreamed of. It was and is of course beautiful but I wasn't at all sure if anyone that either lived or visited there would be interested in photographs of polar or grizzly bears, landscapes of the Grand Tetons or Yellowstone near where I live or exotic places like Africa or India and its wildlife.

A few months later we were in the middle of a major remodel in the gallery space on Girard at Prospect. Through the dust and mayhem in walked Spencer Wilson. He asked who was in charge. I said "I am sir." He looked around at the demolition and said "over there was where the phone operators sat with their head phones and plug in panels during the war. " You see that hole in the floor, that's where the soda jerk machine was and the Coca Cola ate a hole in the floor." This used to be old man Peck's drug store, you ever heard of Eldred Peck? "Nope." "You ever here of Gregory Peck?" 'Yep, I know who Gregory Peck is, To Kill a Mocking Bird,

> to school together. When he went to Hollywood he changed his name to Gregory. Whenever I see him I still call him Eldred, he hates it! Spencer laughs and then continues, "over there were the apothecary jars filled with candy and Eldred would

help himself and give me some."

I was immediately drawn to this man of great stories and history. Spencer was sort of a hybrid between my father who had died a few years earlier and my grandfather. He then asked, "what are you going to do here boy?" I paused for a few seconds and said "I'm going to open a wildlife photography gallery." He

said "well boy, I've seen a lot of things come and go in La Jolla, but

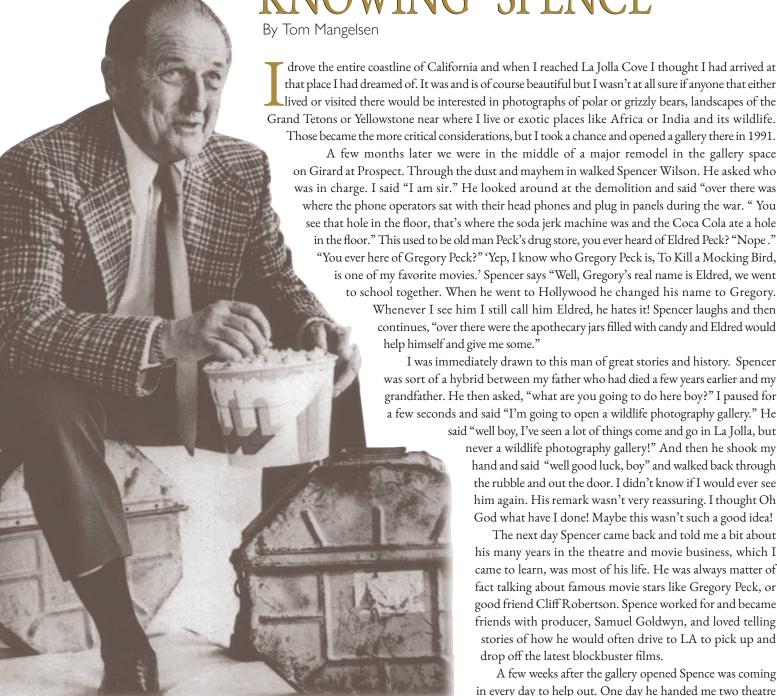
never a wildlife photography gallery!" And then he shook my hand and said "well good luck, boy" and walked back through the rubble and out the door. I didn't know if I would ever see him again. His remark wasn't very reassuring. I thought Oh God what have I done! Maybe this wasn't such a good idea!

The next day Spencer came back and told me a bit about his many years in the theatre and movie business, which I came to learn, was most of his life. He was always matter of fact talking about famous movie stars like Gregory Peck, or good friend Cliff Robertson. Spence worked for and became friends with producer, Samuel Goldwyn, and loved telling stories of how he would often drive to LA to pick up and drop off the latest blockbuster films.

A few weeks after the gallery opened Spence was coming in every day to help out. One day he handed me two theatre tickets and said "get yourself a date and go see this movie,

Cinema Paradiso, it's pretty much my story." I saw a woman in the gallery that I knew and we went to see the movie that night. It's a film classic made by a famous Italian filmmaker. It's a story of a man returning to his community after being gone for 30 years and reflecting on the highlights and tragedies that shaped his life as a boy growing up working in the small town theatre.

When I walked up the aisle after the film was over, Spencer was standing at the top waiting for me. He asked how I liked it. I immediately got all teary eyed and had a difficult time answering him. It's a deep and complex film and I wondered what parts, besides the obvious, reminded him of his own life growing up in the theatre. I knew then



Collection of the La Jolla Historical Society

Editor's Note:

All celebrities and cinema stars aside, no one ever had an identity with movies in La Jolla as the beloved Spencer Wilson. He began work at the old Granada in 1929 as a young man, moved to the Cove shortly after it opened in 1948 and remained manager there until his retirement in 1989 – a span that covered 60 years. During that time "Spence" – as he was known to everyone – became one of the most beloved characters in the community and, most probably, the closest anyone La Jolla has ever had to a mayor. He knew everyone, loved to greet them at the Cove with a smile, was partial to keeping children behaved during matinees and, if anyone was going through bad times, always lent an ear. Wilson was born in a little California gold mining town called Randsburg. When Will Rogers came to make a silent film there he was eight years old and joined the cast as an extra. His love for movies was born right there. After his uncle Harry Wilson came to La Jolla in 1915 to open the Western Union Telegraph office, Spence and his father soon joined him. "Spence," who lived most of his life during the 60 years he managed movie theaters, in a modest old house on Eads Avenue, never left. Until. . .until a short time after his retirement and before his death, he met Tom Mangelsen, the well-known nature photographer and owner of Mangelsen Gallery. Mangelsen invited him on photo shoots to the north country of snow and ice, polar bears and caribou. He spent some of the last days of his life enjoying these trips. Today, Mangelsen remembers "Spence.



Photograph courtesy of Tom Mangelsen

one hell of a human being, no less than Will Rogers. Fortunately for me, I was one of many who were blessed to have been his friend.

we would become good friends. He loved the movie business – it was his life. Every evening after the gallery closed often times quite late, and after escorting the female associates to their cars he would return to his upstairs office near the projection room even long after the Cove theatre closed. His office was "grandfathered" for many years to Spence until the building was sold which was

a sad day indeed. Spence and I walked up to the Cove in it's final hours before closing. It was like watching the loss of a family member.

For the next 20 years Spence and I went on numerous adventures across North America from Alaska to Anza Borrego and Nebraska to Canada. On the shores of Hudson Bay while a National Geographic film crew was filming me photographing a mother polar bear with two cubs, Spence was standing watch as he had done when he was in the Navy at Point Loma during WWII looking out for potential Japanese submarines. Now he was watching for potential polar bears. A white out blizzard came up quickly and the family of bears were disappearing, I looked back to Spence on top of our Tundra Buggy waving his arms madly and yelling something. I then saw a giant old polar bear who I had seen before, with an ear and tooth missing and

Spencer Wilson enjoys movie popcorn (extreme left), dresses for the Arctic (immediate left) and takes in the great outdoors (bottom right).

a scarred up face. He was a hungry bear who I could tell was stalking us on the far side of the Tundra Buggy. I immediately ran to the Buggy and up the 20-ft ladder to the deck where Spence was. It was a harrowing experience! Thanks to Spencer's keen and diligent watch he likely saved one or more lives.

Every journey was special with Spence from the first one flying to Nebraska. Spence said it was his first flight since the war 50 years ago. He never flinched at any opportunity to go with me on any adventure. That year we went to my cabin in Nebraska to see the great sandhill crane migration. Spence would sometimes go out early on his own, bundled up for very cold temperatures to see the cranes. He wasn't the average 80-plus year old man. He had the never ending curiosity like a child wanting to see and do everything.

We had many adventures. One of the most memorable was driving from La Jolla to Randsburg, 200 hundred miles north, in the Mojave desert where Spence was born and spent his early childhood. He often talked about it and one day I asked him if he would like to take a road trip to his old home town. He said "sure but I haven't been there in

over 40 years. I wonder what it's like now?"

As we drove into Randsberg, it looked like a ghost town, with a few old hippies and desert rats as Spence called them. He pointed to the small historical site adobe-looking jail at the edge of town and said "I helped build that jail slopping mud." We carried on down the tumble weed covered main street as if out of a John Wayne western. There was the boardedup general store where Spence got his first job sweeping floors. The only place that was still open was the bar. We went in and a hundred year old looking woman served me a beer and



Photograph courtesy of Tom Mangelsen

Spence a cup of "mud." I asked her how long she had been in the town and she straightened up and with a certain pride said 35 years! Spence couldn't help himself and proudly said back to her, "well hell that's nothin I was born here!" Then he asked about the four sisters that lived down the road and she said they have been gone for a while.

After we walked out of the bar Spence said "lets go see the old place, it's up that dirt road." The place was a classic old mining town small wooden shack with a porch. It obviously had been abandoned for many years. Spence pointed to a little sign that had number on it and said "well look at that, they put an address on the old place!" The door was padlocked but through the windows we could see it was filled with

LA JOLLA HISTORICAL SOCIETY SPRING – FALL CALENDAR OF EVENTS



History in Motion:
Devices & Wizardry in Early Cinema
Exhibition

June 8 – September 8 Wisteria Cottage Galleries



Not-So-Silent Short Film Fest June 22, July 6, August 3 (see page 7)

Movies by Moonlight
August 15-18 (see page 7)





Ellen Browning Scripps Luncheon November 2 La Jolla Country Club



Julius Shulman: La Jolla Exhibition September 28 – January 19 Wisteria Cottage Galleries

Snaps





A record of more than 300 persons attended the Feb. 8 openng reception for the "Tangible Memories: Recollections of La Jolla Pioneer Women" exhibition in the Wisteria Cottage galleries. The show, which closed last month featured 10 contemporary artists, each interpreting a pioneer woman who added extensively to La Jolla's cultural, educational and economic past through mediums of sculpture, painting and installation. Subjects included Ellen Browning Scripps, Louise Balmer, Mary Ritter and Anna Held. Participating artists — many attending the opening and part of a later Sunday afternoon program on the art work — were Tara Centybear, Anna Stump, Rebecca Webb, Bridget Rountree, Cheryl Tall, Kelly Telebrico, Lee Puffer, Bhavna Mehta, Becky Guttin and Taylor Chapin. Danielle Deery was guest curator:







A still from Genuine: A Tale of a Vampire, the closing night feature starring Fern Andra and Hans Heinrich von Twardowski.

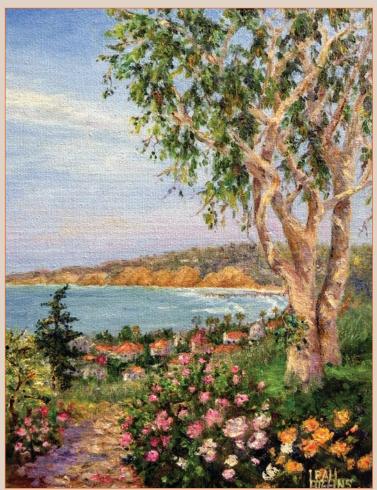
Movies by Moonlight...continued from page 9

to Berlin where she became one of the leading personas in the world of German cinema. Her personal life, including marriage to a German baron and ventures into spying and espionage as well as a later alleged affair with one of Hitler's henchmen, added to her celebrity consciousness. Her appearance in Weine's vampire film

includes a nude scene.

Each of the festival film nights will feature a selection of shorts. Among the selections are a pastiche showing child actress Baby Peggy and a single screening on the closing night of Georges Melies 1902 classic "A Trip to the Moon."





SECRET GARDEN TOUR

The La Jolla Society's Secret Garden Tour celebrated its 21st anniversary this spring with about a thousand visitors to six featured gardens. As the Society's significant fundraising event, the tour included musicians and artists performing and painting in each garden. Among the paintings completed were Leah Higgins' "Backyard Passages" (right) and a garden scene (left) by Dorothy Stanley.





2019 La Folla Concours d'Elegance

A 1935 Duesenberg belonging to William Lyon and originally owned by an Indian maharajah was picked best in show by judges at the 15th annual La Jolla Concours d'Elegance held in April. The weekend concluded with a crowd of more than 4,000 viewing the cars and enjoying various festivities at La Jolla Cove. Automobile owners competed for awards in 24 classes as well as for 15 specialty awards. Displays included American classics, antique racers as well as a show of vintage Bentleys celebrating the company's 100th anniversary this year. Michael Dorvillier served as Concours chairman.



People's Choice L. Philip Lutfy, M.D. 1963 Mercedes-Benz 300SL Roadster



La Jolla Historical Society Preservation
Nelly & Rigoberto Castaneda 1955 Cadillac Fleetwood

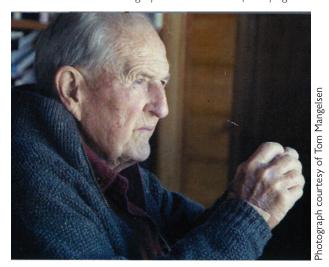


Most Outstanding Pre-War Aaron & Valerie Weiss 1931 Cadillac V16



Most Outstanding Post-War Henrik Jorst 1951 Maserati A6G

Knowing Spence...continued from page 18



old bed springs, mattresses and junk. I could tell that it was disturbing of course to Spence as it was to me. But as always Spence had accepted having lived a long life the challenges that went with it. He pretended that was just how things were. He turned around on the porch and looked to the west and pointed and said "right there by that greasewood tree I remember Will Rogers on his white horse" as if it were yesterday. And then "I was in the movie chasing after Will and his horse." I asked, "what was the name of the movie?" He said looking over the desert hillside as if Will was still riding and said "hell I don't know I was just a kid, he made lots of movies!"

Spencer Wilson was one hell of a human being, no less than Will Rogers. Fortunately for me, I was one of many who were blessed to have made his acquaintance.

LA JOLLA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

lajolla history.org | 858-459-5335 www.facebook.com/lajollahistory



The LA JOLLA HISTORICAL SOCIETY hosts week-long summer programs to introduce Middle and High School students to the principles of archicture and its role in the building of the community. This program, designed by architects and educators, combines guided tours with hands-on drawing, modeling, and computer workshops to explore the breadth of architectural styles represented in La Jolla.

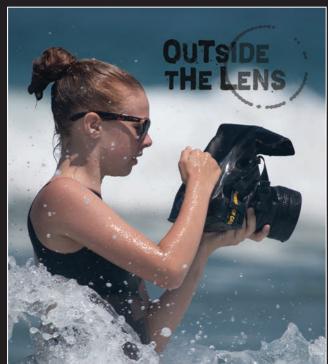
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Take it to the Streets: Street Photography

Street photography is about showing people your world, through your eyes. You'll learn tips and tricks and techniques street photographers use to capture the moments, objects, and people that they see.

Dates: July 8-12, 2019

Pricing: \$329 (9:30am-3:30pm) Grades: 6th-8th graders

Take it to the Beach: Beach Photography

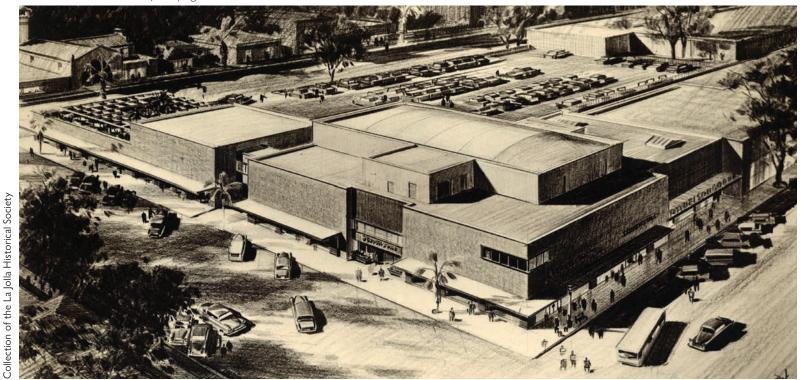
Capture summer through the lens in this weeklong photography and film workshop! Dive into landscape, portraiture, action, surf & underwater photography, and even short films as you become an experienced beach life photographer.

Dates: July 15-19, 2019

Pricing: \$329 (9:30am-3:30pm)

Grades: 6th-8th graders

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A Mid Century rendering from the architectural firm of Mosher & Drew shows a streamlined design for the Girard & Wall corner with Stevensons department store as the major tenant.

the investor and impetus behind the creation of the old Ellen Browning Scripps home on Prospect Street as the contemporary art museum that became the present-day MCASD). (Gray, an attorney, was a principle in the San Diego law firm of Gray, Cary, Ames & Frye; he built and owned a large La Jolla estate at 1900 Spindrift Dr., site of numerous social soirees through the 1950s.) After the Granada theater closed and Iller's changed to Stevenson's Department Store, Gray continued to keep a close eye on what was going on in his Granada Building. In a letter to owner Paul Stevenson in 1955, he noted that the ladies' "toilet room is very shoddy" and that if Mrs. Gray had to look in the "ghastly and most unbecoming" mirror in the ladies' dressing room very often she would commit suicide."

Needless to say, Stevenson's days were numbered and a new department store tenant branching out from its main location in downtown San Diego moved in. This was Walker-Scott, becoming a landmark on the corner and occupying former spaces of the old theater and previous department stores, until the entire building

was demolished in the mid-1980s. The Postmodern bug had bit La Jolla by this time with a new design for the museum by Robert Venturi and Robert Stern's office and retail building at the entrance to Prospect Street's commercial core so the corner of Girard and Wall turned Postmodern, too. The Sorrento Valley architectural firm of Austin, Hansen, Feldman fitted a large pink and aqua two-story (with below street level access) building to the corner complete with arches (the Irving Gill reference) and a clock tower (saluting horology and the squares of old Europe).

Despite the Postmodern toneyness, retail never loved this building or, maybe, the building with its somewhat hidden nooks and up-and-downstairs augmented by an elevator never suited retail. The Jack's restaurant became the only memorable tenant, a memory that ended badly with shady business. Now, once again resurrected — this time as La Plaza — the corner of Girard and Wall today looks new and all cleaned up, open and airy, and, hopefully, ready for yet another future.

SPECIAL THANKS!

to the City of San Diego Commission for Arts and Culture for their support.



Visit:

https://www.sandiego.gov/arts-culture

LANDMARKS PHOTO CONTEST NAMES WINNERS

An image taken at the La Jolla Beach and Tennis Club, digitally processed in a light room, received best in show at the first photography competition this spring presented by the La Jolla Historical Society's Landsmarks Group. Entitled Symmetry Since 1917, the black and white image shows the back of a tennis court with two perfectly aligned benches against a wall. The photo was taken by Malia Barnes.

The contest attracted nearly a hundred entries in categories for elementary, middle and high school students as well as adults. William Decker's picture of Mary Star-of- the-Sea Catholic Church, photo-shopped with a surreal sky background, received first place in the adult division. Other first place winners were Sydney Whitman (a still life with lemons in elementary), Keith Bainter (a north shore ocean view in middle), Robin Gong (an under view of Scripps Pier in high school) and William Decker (adult). Runner-ups in the various divisions were Kim Kay, Ned Tetlow, Cali Liu, Michael Mishler, Harrson Maronde and E. Gisin. The best in show received a \$500 cash prize.



Photograph by Malia Barnes







Photograph by William Decker

...Landmarks Contest Winners continued



Photograph by Keith Bainter



Photograph by Sydney Whitman

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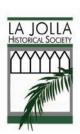






Silent film actress Mary Pickford, "America's Sweetheart," became known for her generous support of the Liberty Bond cutting off one of her famous curls to support the cause. She also visited La Jolla's Camp Kearny to build soldier moral during wartimes and was photographed there, circa 1915, with these unidentified men in uniform. Originally from Canada where she grew up as Gladys Smith, Pickford became famous as one of D.W. Griffith's major silent stars and, later, as a co-founder of United Artists, paving the way for women working in the film industry. After starring in classic silents such as Little Lord Fauntleroy, Pollyanna and Tess of the Storm Country, Pickford won an Academy Award for her first talkie playing a Southern belle in "Coquette" (which became the first talkie to be shown at La Jolla's Granada theater in 1929). She also made one film in La Jolla shot at the Cove beach in 1914. Unfortunately, like much old silent footage, it is lost to history.

Thousands of archival pieces have accumulated through the years in the La Jolla Historical Society archives. Many, such as the photographic portraits of the Scripps half-sisters and iconic Irving Gill buildings, have been repeatedly reproduced over the years, thus developing an easy familiarity. This last page of The Timekeeper is devoted to those archival pieces in the collection that have remained largely outside the public eye.



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LA JOLLA HISTORICAL SOCIETY









