



# NEWS



May/June 2018 · Volume 40 Number 3



## LOS ANGELES CONSERVANCY 40TH ANNIVERSARY



On June 13, we'll screen *In the Heat of the Night* (1967) at the Theatre at Ace Hotel. A member of our volunteer Last Remaining Seats Committee, which selects the films, described this classic starring Sidney Poitier and Rod Steiger as "a story that is just as relevant today as it was when the movie was first made." *In the Heat of the Night* film still courtesy of Park Circus/MGM Studios.

### Last Remaining Seats Changes With the Times

by Sarah Lann

In 1987, the Los Angeles Conservancy launched the Last Remaining Seats film series to showcase the historic movie palaces of downtown's Broadway Historic Theatre District.

"Our summer series is designed to provide you with an enjoyable theatre-going experience, and to demonstrate that these stage and screen houses still offer a lavish alternative to home video and multiplex screening rooms," wrote the series' creators in the inaugural program. "This is a rare opportunity to explore the power of film in its intended setting, and to see classic American movies as they were meant to be seen!"

Last Remaining Seats still seeks to provide guests with an enjoyable theatre-going experience. Yet the specific types of experience have evolved over the years. The first Last Remaining Seats in 1987 featured films made between 1919 and 1934, along with a live vaudeville show. Films were specified as either silents or talkies, and they were accompanied by newsreels and cartoons appropriate to the year of the film. By so fully recreating a moment in history, the series fostered the idea that preserving the theatres went hand in hand with preserving the movie-going experience of Hollywood's Golden Era.

Over time, in addition to early classics, the series began introducing more recent classics from the 1950s, '60s, '70s, and '80s. This year, we're screening a film from the 1990s (*The Joy Luck Club*). When Last Remaining Seats started including films made for multiplexes,

Please see LAST REMAINING SEATS on page 6

### Last Remaining Seats 2018 Lineup

**Saturday, June 2, 8 p.m.**

*Mr. Smith Goes to Washington* (1939)  
State Theatre, downtown L.A.

**Saturday, June 9, 8 p.m.**

*Kiss of the Spider Woman* (1985)  
Million Dollar Theatre, downtown L.A.  
Co-Presented by the Latin American  
Cinemateca of Los Angeles

**Wednesday, June 13, 8 p.m.**

*In the Heat of the Night* (1967)  
The Theatre at Ace Hotel, downtown L.A.

**Saturday, June 16, 2 p.m.**

*Who Framed Roger Rabbit* (1988)  
Los Angeles Theatre, downtown L.A.

**Saturday, June 16, 8 p.m.**

*The Birds* (1963)  
Los Angeles Theatre, downtown L.A.

**Wednesday, June 20, 8 p.m.**

*Steamboat Bill, Jr.* (1928)  
Orpheum Theatre, downtown L.A.

**Saturday, June 23, 6 p.m.**

*The Joy Luck Club* (1993)  
San Gabriel Mission Playhouse, San Gabriel

Tickets are \$18 for members, \$22 for the general public, and \$16 for youth ages 17 and under. Purchase tickets online at [laconservancy.org/LRS](http://laconservancy.org/LRS).

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## Los Angeles Conservancy

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laconservancy.org

The Los Angeles Conservancy is a nonprofit membership organization that works through education and advocacy to recognize, preserve, and revitalize the historic architectural and cultural resources of Los Angeles County.

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Major funding for the Los Angeles Conservancy's programs is provided by the LaFetra Foundation and the Kenneth T. and Eileen L. Norris Foundation.

## Forty Years of Membership: An Interview with Two Conservancy Members

As part of our fortieth anniversary celebration, we spoke with **Marjorie Wong Mishkin**, a Los Angeles Conservancy member since our founding, and **Samantha La Rocco**, who joined the Conservancy this year. Read their full interviews on our blog at [laconservancy.tumblr.com](http://laconservancy.tumblr.com).

### Marjorie Wong Mishkin

**Q:** You've been a member of the Conservancy since our founding in 1978. Why did you join?

**A:** I grew up in L.A., and my children did, too. My parents took us to the Coliseum and LACMA when it was built, and downtown even before there was a Music Center. I love the buildings, but more than the buildings, I love the people.

**Q:** What is your favorite historic building in Los Angeles?

**A:** The First Congregational Church on Commonwealth Avenue and Sixth Street. I started going there when I was about four years old and was married there. Even though the [tower's pinnacles] were damaged by an earthquake, the church has done a good job at preservation.

**Q:** What would you like to see the Conservancy focus on in the next forty years?

**A:** I want it to keep Los Angeles livable—it doesn't have to be as it was before, but it should be livable and it should be historic.

### Samantha La Rocco

**Q:** You say that Los Angeles is the only place that's ever felt like home to you. Why?

**A:** I grew up in suburban south Florida, which I experienced as a punishingly humid, mosquito-ridden hellscape. It never felt like the place I was meant to be. I moved to L.A. to go to USC. For me, as it has for people for over a century, it represented opportunity, where I could find an artistic family and write my own narrative. I took a course about the history of this city, which included walking tours. It really sowed a seed of historical curiosity and passion that's grown since I graduated.

Los Angeles is diverse in every single way imaginable. You get mountains, beaches, old, new, weird, chic, delightfully garish...there's so many different cultural veins running through it, it's like a million cities in one. I love driving around and being able to identify when a building was built, the style it was built in, who might have lived there.

**Q:** Why do you think it's important to be a Conservancy member?

**A:** Conservation is incredibly important and beneficial. It has the power to create jobs, enhance the reputation and ultimately tourist revenue of a city, and promote historical curiosity and a sense of community.

**Q:** What do you think are the biggest challenges facing preservation in Los Angeles?

**A:** I'd love there to be more limits on demolition and development. And as with most things, relevancy lies in recruiting a younger generation. I'm so glad the Conservancy is offering youth and school programs, which I think are invaluable to both the students and the cause.



## Preservation Issues

by *Adrian Scott Fine, Rosalind Sagara, and Marcello Vavala*

For more information about these and other preservation issues, please visit [laconservancy.org/important-issues](http://laconservancy.org/important-issues).

### Roosevelt High School

In March, the Committee to Defend Roosevelt (the Committee) hosted a public meeting to discuss preservation alternatives to the Los Angeles Unified School District's (LAUSD) proposed Roosevelt High Comprehensive Modernization Project. Representatives from the Conservancy and LAUSD spoke at the meeting.

The Roosevelt High campus is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places as a historic district for its association with the 1968 East L.A. Chicano Student Walkouts. LAUSD's proposed project calls for the demolition of these historically and culturally significant buildings. Of these buildings, the Conservancy supports the Committee in advocating for the preservation of the 1922 Auditorium and Classroom Building. Also known as the R Building, this structure is the campus' centerpiece and primary contributor to the historic district.

At the meeting, LAUSD presented new details about a preservation alternative that would retain and rehabilitate the R Building. Despite that option, LAUSD's preferred project still calls for its demolition.

On March 23, the Committee delivered over 800 signed comment letters and petitions to LAUSD staff. These comments called for the preservation and rehabilitation of the R Building as part of the modernization project.

The Conservancy submitted comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) in support of the partial preservation alternative. We believe that this option offers meaningful mitigation for the loss of the campus' National Register-eligible historic district.

First District City Councilmember—and Roosevelt High alum—Gil Cedillo also supports this alternative. In his comments on the Draft EIR, the councilmember puts it best: "We all agree that students deserve safe and high-quality facilities. Preserving and reha-

bilitating the R Building does not stand in the way of providing a twenty-first-century educational facility." We absolutely agree.

We continue to work with the Committee to raise public awareness about the threat to Roosevelt High, and we look forward to finding a preservation solution.

### Rancho Los Amigos

The County of Los Angeles plans to redevelop the south portion of its Rancho Los Amigos campus in Downey. The proposal calls for the demolition of an entire historic district of over 100 structures, more than sixty of which have been identified as contributing structures to the district.

The campus was founded in 1888 as the County Poor Farm to provide work, housing, and medical care for the County's indigent population. It transitioned in the early twentieth century into a hospital for patients with chronic illnesses, and it was renamed Rancho Los Amigos in 1932.

Its mix of buildings, many in the Spanish Colonial Revival style, housed staff, patients, and support services. In the 1990s, the site was determined eligible for listing in the National Register and listed in the California Register. Yet the south campus has been abandoned for decades and has suffered greatly from vandalism, arson fires, and exposure to the elements.

The development proposal seeks to consolidate existing County facilities and build three new administrative buildings. The project requires only twenty-eight of the site's seventy-four acres, yet the County seeks to demolish nearly all of the historic campus.

The Conservancy commented on the Notice of Preparation (NOP) for the project in 2017. We recently met with County and project representatives to learn more about the proposal and tour the campus. We raised several concerns about the project's purpose, the County's problematic approach, and the need to evaluate adaptive reuse and preservation alternatives in the forthcoming Draft Environmental Impact Report.



A redevelopment plan for the Rancho Los Amigos campus in Downey calls for the demolition of an entire historic district of over 100 structures. Photo by Adrian Scott Fine/L.A. Conservancy.

### Senate Bill 827

In mid-April, the Senate Transportation and Housing Committee voted to kill Senate Bill (SB) 827. The controversial bill sought to address California's affordable housing crisis by easing local land-use controls and directing new, high-density housing development along transit lines.

While the intent of the bill was good, it was highly problematic due to its blunt, one-size-fits-all approach.

If passed, the bill would have automatically increased zoning densities and building heights for residential developments within a specific distance from certain types of major transit. It posed a significant and immediate threat to older and historic neighborhoods by circumventing local planning laws, and by exempting parts of development projects from discretionary review.

The Conservancy came out in opposition to the bill as written. We expect a version of this bill to return in the 2019 legislative session, and we will continue to monitor this issue.

## VOLUNTEER PROFILE: BRITTANY SALAZAR



In her own words: "I first heard about the Conservancy during my graduate studies in Washington, D.C. I took a historic preservation class, where I met a student who had worked for the Conservancy and spoke very highly about his experience.

Funny enough, I'd soon be living in California! After moving to Orange County, I knew I wanted to volunteer in some way. In 2016, I looked at the Conservancy's website and noticed an upcoming Last Remaining Seats meeting—so I drove to downtown L.A. to check it out. The idea of bringing people into historic theatres and raising money for a great cause really appealed to me!

Since then, I've participated in multiple screenings. I've been Chair of the committee twice, and it's been an honor to serve!

I am now in my third season participating in Last Remaining Seats, and I've loved every minute of it! This committee has people of different backgrounds coming together, and the collaboration is incredible. I still love the look of awe on people's faces upon entering the beautiful theatres; it never gets old.

In addition to the Conservancy, I volunteer for my business fraternity, Delta Sigma Pi. I work in office property management with the Irvine Company. I love to travel and go to concerts, and I live in Irvine with my husband Kevin and our cats Cali and Hiro."

## Thank You, Conservancy Volunteers!



At the Conservancy's volunteer recognition party on the rooftop of the Freehand Los Angeles, we presented awards to volunteers who have done exceptional work and those who have reached a milestone in volunteer service. Photo by Larry Underhill.

In March, we held our annual volunteer recognition party on the rooftop of the Freehand Los Angeles. Volunteers and staff enjoyed the incredible views from this downtown hotel, one of our 2018 Preservation Award recipients.

The event is a small way for us to thank our 275 volunteers for donating their time and expertise over the past year.

We also present awards to our most dedicated volunteers: those who have done exceptional work and/or have reached a milestone in their volunteer service. Thank you to all of our amazing volunteers! We couldn't do what we do without your hard work and support.

### 2018 Volunteer Awards

#### 35 Years of Service

Marcia Hanford

#### 30 Years of Service

John English; Steve Markham;  
Chris Nichols; Betty Pettitt;  
Robert Simonton

#### 20 Years of Service

Gregory Figueroa; Regina O'Brien;  
Jerome Robinson

#### Special Recognition Awards

Paul Sheargold; Chris Spry;  
Matt Stewart



Board Chair Wesley Phoa thanks Betty Pettitt for her longtime service. Photo by Larry Underhill.

## Limited-Edition 40th Anniversary T-Shirt



Our 40th anniversary t-shirts are available in unisex sizes XXS-XXL. In the photos above, Bruce (left) is wearing size XL, Jenelle (center) is wearing size S, and Sana (right) is wearing size XXS. Photos by Tiffany Narváez/L.A. Conservancy.

In honor of the Conservancy's fortieth anniversary, we're offering exclusive t-shirts featuring our brand-new icon of the Los Angeles Central Library, whose proposed demolition led to the Conservancy's formation in 1978.

These white v-neck t-shirts are made of 100% ringspun combed cotton fine jersey by American Apparel in California.

Available in unisex sizes XXS-XXL, they cost just \$25 online, including tax, shipping, and handling. All proceeds support our efforts to save historic places (like the Central Library!). Purchase yours at [laconservancy.org/shop](http://laconservancy.org/shop).

These shirts will also be available for purchase at several Conservancy events throughout the year, including select

screenings of Last Remaining Seats in June.

This limited-edition design t-shirt will be available only in 2018 while supplies last, so be sure to purchase yours in person or online while you can!

If you have questions, please contact Tiffany Narváez at (213) 623-2489 or [tnarvaez@laconservancy.org](mailto:tnarvaez@laconservancy.org).

Thanks for your support!

## Do We Have Your Current Email Address?

If you haven't updated your email address lately, please make sure we have your current address so we can reach you with important information. You can contact us at [member@laconservancy.org](mailto:member@laconservancy.org) or (213) 623-2489, or log into your account at [laconservancy.org](http://laconservancy.org) and change it in your profile.

Recently, we emailed Conservancy members when the members-only presale for Last Remaining Seats began. These members were the first to know that we're offering backstage theatre tours again this year, which have very limited availability.

### Email Subscriptions

Members and non-members alike can also subscribe to our email lists to receive

information tailored to your specific interests. Email subscribers are often the first to know about our programs and issues. Email lists include:

**E-News:** general updates on our advocacy work, events, and more; sent monthly

**Action Alerts:** appeals for your help with letter-writing, attendance at hearings, etc.; sent as needed

**Events:** Conservancy event announcements (including fundraisers); sent as needed

**Last Remaining Seats:** announcements about our annual series of classic films in historic theatres; sent as needed throughout the spring months

**Modern Committee (ModCom):** news from our volunteer Modern Committee; sent infrequently

**Garden Apartment Network:** updates specific to preserving historic garden apartments; sent infrequently

**Neighborhoods:** updates specific to preserving older and historic neighborhoods; sent infrequently

To subscribe to any of these lists, visit [laconservancy.org](http://laconservancy.org), click "Subscribe" in the top menu bar, and select the relevant list(s). Or, log into your account at [laconservancy.org](http://laconservancy.org) and edit your profile.

Thank you!

## LAST REMAINING SEATS continued from page 1

it broadened the scope of the series to help guests experience historic theatres in new ways.

By no means is Last Remaining Seats straying too far from its roots. This year's lineup includes the legendary Buster Keaton in 1928's *Steamboat Bill, Jr.*, with live organ accompaniment (June 20 at the Orpheum); Alfred Hitchcock's 1963 horror classic *The Birds* (June 16 at the Los Angeles Theatre), and a family-friendly matinee of *Who Framed Roger Rabbit* (1988; also June 16 at the Los Angeles).

Last Remaining Seats has always spanned a range of genres, from silent gems and musical comedies to hard-boiled noir and Latin American classics. Yet most of the actors on screen (and filmmakers off-screen), as well as the themes they explore, haven't reflected Greater L.A.'s vast diversity and breadth of experiences.

With this in mind, staff and volunteers carefully curated this year's lineup to include a range of themes and perspectives, including racial injustice and the immigrant experience in the United States. In addition to being particularly timely and relevant, the 2018 lineup echoes the Conservancy's renewed commitment to diversity and inclusion.

The 2018 season of Last Remaining Seats kicks off June 2 with a return to the historic State Theatre, which has been closed to the public for decades. The series opens with *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington*, a 1939 classic starring James Stewart as an idealistic senator who stands up to political greed and corruption. "We must start off this series with a bang and show people that... [Last



Raúl Juliá (left) and William Hurt (right) star in *Kiss of the Spider Woman*. Hurt's performance as a transgender person imprisoned for immoral behavior earned him an Academy Award. ©1985 CBS, Inc.



Members of our volunteer Last Remaining Seats Committee select the films we screen each season and help plan each of the events. This year, committee members carefully curated the 2018 lineup to include a range of themes and perspectives. Photo by Bruce Scottow/L.A. Conservancy.

Remaining Seats] is a cultural cornerstone of Los Angeles," said one member of our volunteer Last Remaining Seats Committee, which selects the films.

At the Million Dollar Theatre, we'll co-present 1985's *Kiss of the Spider Woman* with the Latin American Cinemateca of Los Angeles (LACLA), with whom we've partnered for decades. William Hurt won an Academy Award for his portrayal of a transgender person imprisoned for immoral behavior. We'll screen this unforgettable film on June 9, during L.A. Pride Week.

On June 13, we'll screen *In the Heat of the Night* at the Theatre at Ace Hotel. This 1967 classic starring Sidney Poitier and Rod Steiger depicts "a story that is just as relevant today as it was when the movie was first made," said another committee member.

The series wraps up June 23 with *The Joy Luck Club*, celebrating its twenty-fifth anniversary. Based on the novel by Amy Tan and featuring a nearly all-female cast, the film explores intergenerational relationships among mothers and daughters, as well as the identity of homeland. For this screening, we are thrilled to visit the historic San Gabriel

Mission Playhouse for the first time in Last Remaining Seats history.

Just like the theatres in which they'll be seen, the films in the 2018 Last Remaining Seats lineup have all stood the test of time. They offer guests a chance to explore issues that people have been grappling with since before Buster Keaton donned his porkpie hat. They speak to us from the screen with as much urgency as the call to preserve the theatres themselves.

Last Remaining Seats reminds us that we honor what's classic—films as well as places—because their relevance is never confined to one or two decades. They transcend cultural fads and current events to become the stuff of universal value. By evolving with the times, Last Remaining Seats can continue to foster the preservation of Greater L.A.'s historic theatres to serve generations still to come.

JANUARY 27 / APRIL 1

## MEMBERSHIP REPORT

The Los Angeles Conservancy would like to acknowledge the generous contributions of our new or upgrading Supporting members, and the new and renewing members of our Sustaining, Benefactor, and Cornerstone groups.

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## MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

## NEW MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS

Last Remaining Seats isn't just a summer film series—it's the Conservancy's best source of new membership. In 2017, we welcomed 460 new members through the program. That's around eight percent of our total membership!

As a thank you, we're offering members a new benefit this year: first access to theatres at all Last Remaining Seats screenings. This gives you fifteen minutes to find seats before the general public!

We hope you enjoy this added perk. Thank you for your membership!

## JOIN THE LAC40 CLUB

We're proud of the Conservancy's accomplishments over the past forty years, but none of it was possible without the support of our members. As new threats arise every day, there is much work left to do to protect L.A.'s historic places.

Join the Conservancy's 40th Anniversary (LAC40) Club with a tax-deductible gift of \$40 or more. We'll recognize you on our website and at select Conservancy events.

Your donation supports our mission of recognizing, preserving, and revitalizing historic places throughout L.A. County. You can give on the Donate page of our website at [laconservancy.org](http://laconservancy.org), or add a donation to any other purchase during checkout.

Thank you for helping preserve historic Los Angeles for the next forty years and beyond!

## CONSERVANCY WALKING TOURS

Tours cost \$10 for Conservancy members and youth 17 or younger, and \$15 for the general public.

Most tours require reservations. We accept walk-ins on some tours, subject to availability.

For details and reservations, visit [laconservancy.org/tours](http://laconservancy.org/tours). Questions? Contact us at [info@laconservancy.org](mailto:info@laconservancy.org) or (213) 623-2489.

### WALKING TOURS

#### Angelino Heights

First Saturday of each month

#### Art Deco

Every Saturday

#### Broadway Historic Theatre & Commercial District

Every Saturday

#### Historic Downtown

Every Saturday

#### Millennium Biltmore Hotel

Every Sunday

#### Union Station

Every Saturday

Customized group tours available by special arrangement. For details, visit [laconservancy.org/tours](http://laconservancy.org/tours) or contact us at [info@laconservancy.org](mailto:info@laconservancy.org) or (213) 623-2489.



### Los Angeles Conservancy

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For the latest updates and hundreds of historic places to explore, visit [laconservancy.org](http://laconservancy.org)



Photo by Larry Underhill.

### PAST MEETS PRESENT WALKING TOURS Saturdays in May

Offered only in the month of May! Join us on our Past Meets Present walking tour, which explores the history and recent evolution of downtown L.A.'s Spring Street! Details at [laconservancy.org/tours](http://laconservancy.org/tours).



Photo by Tiffany Narváez/L.A. Conservancy.

### 40TH ANNIVERSARY T-SHIRTS Available online and at special events throughout 2018

In honor of our fortieth anniversary, the Conservancy's newest t-shirts feature the Central Library, our earliest preservation issue. Purchase one online or at a special event in 2018. Details on page 5.



Photo by Stephen Russo.

### LAST REMAINING SEATS Wednesdays & Saturdays June 2 – 23

Tickets are on sale now for our series of classic films in historic theatres! See this year's lineup and learn more about why our volunteer Last Remaining Seats Committee selected this year's films on page 1.