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news

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LEFT: Millard Sheets at work in 1945. Photo courtesy CaliforniaWatercolor.com. RIGHT: The initials "H" and "S" weave together on the exterior of the former Home Savings Tower (1963) in Pomona. Photo by Alan Hess.

Beverly Hills' Road to Preservation

by *Adrian Scott Fine*

This is the kind of story we love to share: great news about a major preservation victory, especially for a city that has previously resisted putting preservation into practice.

The City of Beverly Hills made history in January, when the City Council voted unanimously to adopt a new historic preservation ordinance. The vote demonstrated a real commitment to the historic places that make Beverly Hills unique. Reflecting on the vote, Councilmember Lili Bosse stated, "For me, it was one of the most important nights in Beverly Hills history."

"Beverly Hills now has a comprehensive historic preservation program that provides us with the necessary resources and responsibility to protect our historic structures," added Noah Furie, founding chair of the city's newly formed Cultural Heritage Commission. "I am very proud to have participated in the development of this program, as it will help preserve our historic landmarks for future generations."

This huge step for the city comes on the heels of its October 2011 launch of a two-year pilot program for the Mills Act, currently the strongest incentive in California for owners to preserve historic properties.

Beverly Hills' road to preservation has been neither short nor always smooth. The Conservancy has worked for more than a decade to foster preservation protections in the city, which has had some significant losses

Please see BEVERLY HILLS on page 6

Pacific Standard Time Tour Spotlights Millard Sheets in Pomona Valley

by *Annie Laskey*

Most Angelenos are familiar with the sight of the former Home Savings (later Washington Mutual, now Chase) branches scattered throughout Southern California. The buildings' monumental stone walls and locally themed mosaics are famous; less well known is that the man responsible for these iconic structures was artist, designer, and educator Millard Sheets.

On **Sunday, March 18**, the Conservancy and our Modern Committee will present **Millard Sheets: A Legacy of Art and Architecture**. This special, one-time-only program in Claremont and Pomona includes a tour from 11:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. followed by a panel discussion at 5 p.m. We're proud to present the program as part of the vast Getty initiative, Pacific Standard Time: Art in L.A. 1945 – 1980.

Rich Yet Fragile Legacy

A native of the Pomona Valley, Millard Sheets (1907-1989) was a nationally renowned and highly influential artist with the California School of painting. He helped found the Otis Art Institute, led the Scripps College Art Department for nineteen years, and oversaw the L.A. County Fair's art exhibition program for many years. Never licensed as an architect,

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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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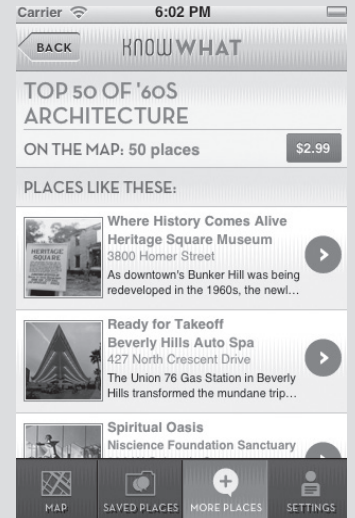
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Conservancy Goes Mobile

We're thrilled to announce our first guide developed for mobile apps! Our **Top 50 of '60s Architecture** guide includes fifty 1960s sites throughout Greater Los Angeles. It's available through **Know What**, a new iPhone app that offers highly curated guides to the city's best places. The basic app (\$2.99) includes 400 sites in Greater Los Angeles and the San Francisco Bay Area, including some from the Top 50 of the '60s guide. An additional \$2.99 buys the complete guide with all fifty sites. The Conservancy receives a portion of the proceeds. Currently only in iOS format (Android coming soon), the app and guide are available through iTunes (*itunes.com*), the Conservancy website (*laconservancy.org*), or the Know What website (*knowwhatapp.com*). We're working on two other mobile guides to help the public experience historic places firsthand.



Sarah Weber Joins Conservancy Staff as Director of Education



We are excited to welcome **Sarah Weber** as the Conservancy's new director of education. A native of Utah, Sarah comes to us from the Musical Instrument Museum (MIM) in Phoenix, Arizona, whose education department she created from the ground up. She holds a master's degree in public history and has extensive experience in education and public programming for museums and cultural institutions. With a keen grasp of the critical role education plays in advocacy and engagement, Sarah

says, "[At MIM,] it's not just about the instruments: it's about the people and the stories behind them." Sarah looks forward to applying her knowledge to historic preservation, raising awareness of the vital legacy that the built environment provides for the people of Los Angeles. As director of education, Sarah will oversee and evaluate the Conservancy's educational outreach and volunteer programs, including our regular walking tours, the Last Remaining Seats film series, our fall and spring special tours, and other initiatives. Please join us in welcoming Sarah to the Conservancy.

Jessica Burns Leaves Conservancy Staff

We're sad to report that **Jessica Burns** left her position as communications coordinator in February. After a year and a half on staff, she moved back to her home state of Colorado. Jessica made a wide range of contributions to the Conservancy, from working with the media and updating our website to producing our print and e-mail newsletters, maintaining our press and image archives, preparing us for the wild world of mobile apps, and much more. She also expanded our social media presence by engaging supporters on various preservation topics to deepen their connection to the Conservancy. We miss Jessica greatly but know she'll always be part of the Conservancy family.

Shannon Ryan Moves into Communications

On the bright side, current staffer **Shannon Ryan** will transition from membership assistant to communications coordinator. In addition to her experience in member outreach, Shannon holds a master's degree in urban planning, has interned for the Los Angeles Office of Historic Resources, and has valuable knowledge of the advocacy process. She'll use her range of skills and passion for preservation to help engage the public in our mission.

Preservation Issues in the News

by Flora Chou, Adrian Scott Fine, and Marcello Vavala

For more information about these and other issues, please visit our website at laconservancy.org.

UCLA Hannah Carter Japanese Garden

The University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) is in the process of listing for sale its Hannah Carter Japanese Garden in Bel-Air, constructed between 1959 and 1961. Spanning one and a half acres, the hillside garden is among the largest and most significant private residential Japanese-style gardens built in the United States following World War II.

The family of Hannah Carter donated the garden to UCLA in 1964 for use and maintenance in perpetuity. A 2010 court decision allowed the university to remove the “in perpetuity” requirement in the garden’s original donation agreement. UCLA attributes the need to sell the garden to rising maintenance costs, deferred maintenance, and the lack of attendance due to limited parking.

In mid-January, UCLA began removing some objects and artifacts from the garden in anticipation of placing the site on the market in February. The Conservancy is part of a coalition of organizations that is urging UCLA to halt the sale and ensure the preservation of and continued public access to the garden, as intended and envisioned by the Carter family.



The UCLA Hannah Carter Japanese Garden. Photo by Judy M. Horton.

Terminal Island, Port of Los Angeles

The Conservancy has long advocated for preservation priorities at Terminal Island, a highly significant site in San Pedro’s World War II shipbuilding and cannery history.

In December 2010, the Harbor Commission rejected a plan to reuse historic buildings at Southwest Marine (formerly Bethlehem Steel) as a shipyard. The Conservancy has since participated in a working group to advise on future uses for historic resources and overall development on Terminal Island. A draft Terminal Island Master Land Use Plan and an inventory of historic resources were presented in December 2011, and in January 2012 the Harbor Commission voted in support of this effort. The plan for Terminal Island will be used as a framework for an overall master plan update at the Port.

The Conservancy has strong concerns regarding the plan and inventory. As currently envisioned, some land use classifications will not support the adaptive reuse of historic buildings, including Southwest Marine. Roadway realignments indicated in the plan will call for the demolition of historic buildings at Southwest Marine as well as the historic cannery buildings in Fish Harbor. We will continue our efforts to make sure that future planning does not preclude preservation.

Mills Act Program

On February 15, the Los Angeles City Council unanimously approved Councilmember José Huizar’s motion to raise the cap for the Mills Act Historical Properties Contract Program in Los Angeles. Established by the state legislature in 1974, the program allows participating local jurisdictions, including the City of Los Angeles, to enter into contracts with owners of qualified historic properties for the preservation, maintenance, and rehabilitation of the buildings.

The Mills Act is the most important incentive the City of Los Angeles offers to private property owners to help preserve historic buildings. Since the program was



The Department of Water and Power (DWP) Building was recently nominated for Historic-Cultural Monument status. Photo by Adrian Scott Fine/L.A. Conservancy.

established in Los Angeles in 1996, owners of 601 historic buildings and other sites have benefited from property tax relief. The current program will soon reach the City Council-imposed cap of \$1,000,000, established in 1999. Without additional funding, the ability of this program to assist property owners of historic buildings in the future would be severely limited. The City Council voted to raise the Mills Act cap to \$2,000,000 to allow the program to continue for many more years. The Conservancy testified in support of this effort, and we appreciate Councilmember Huizar’s leadership.

Department of Water and Power (DWP) Building

In November 2011, the Conservancy’s Modern Committee completed a Historic-Cultural Monument (HCM) nomination for the Department of Water and Power (DWP) Building on Bunker Hill. Modern Committee Vice Chair Charlie Fisher volunteered his time to prepare the nomination with Conservancy staff.

Completed in 1965, the DWP Building was designed by Albert C. Martin & Associates with landscaping by Cornell, Bridgers, and Troller. It showcased state-of-the-art innovations in its heating, cooling, and lighting systems, well ahead of its time in terms of sustainability practices. The building is one of the most notable examples of Corporate

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Volunteer Profile: RANDY HENDERSON

by Bruce Scottow

Randy believes he was born with the “city gene”—not surprising, as his father grew up in Boyle Heights, his mother hailed from Lincoln Heights, and some of his earliest childhood memories include visits to downtown Los Angeles.



Photo by Ben Miller.

Following graduation from California State University Fullerton, Randy began working at the Los Angeles Superior Court, eventually moving into an administrative role. Work often brought him downtown, but it wasn't until attending Last Remaining Seats in the late 1980s that Randy rediscovered his “city gene.” He joined the Conservancy and in 2003 became a walking tour docent. To date, he's mastered four tours—Broadway, Art Deco, Downtown Renaissance, and Historic Downtown.

Beyond walking tours, Randy's name appears on the volunteer roster for almost every Conservancy event, from Last Remaining Seats and special tours to fundraising benefits. Special tours hold particular interest for him because they often open the doors to sites rarely seen.

In March 2011, Randy retired from his post as an administrator in the Children's Court of Los Angeles. Besides the generous time he devotes to the Conservancy, retirement has given him more time to travel. Current plans include a trip to Munich in the spring followed by a late-summer transatlantic cruise from Istanbul to New York.

Thank you, Randy!

Volunteers Make Everything Happen!



The Conservancy's annual volunteer appreciation party took place on January 29 at The Deco Building, a 1929 former bank designed by Morgan, Walls, and Clements. This gem of the Art Deco style is clad in dazzling black and gold terra cotta, and is listed in the National Register of Historic Places. The Conservancy thanks our gracious hosts, as well as all our volunteers for their hard work throughout the year. Photo by Larry Underhill.

Thanks to Interns Heather Goers and Meghan Toner

The Conservancy was fortunate to have **Heather Goers** and **Meghan Toner** in the office recently as interns.

A student in the master of historic preservation program at USC, Heather interned for the Conservancy for nearly a year. She worked on a variety of projects, from researching and compiling content for our web pages on conservation easements to researching the life and work of Millard Sheets (see cover story), specifically the Home Savings branches he designed. Heather also volunteered for several Conservancy events, including Last Remaining Seats, our fall HPOZ tour, and the holiday film matinee.



Meghan is a student at Savannah College of Art and Design, pursuing master's degrees in both architecture and historic preservation. At the Conservancy, she helped develop profiles and graphic illustrations for the L.A. Garden Apartment Network initiative, which will formally launch later this year. This initiative will help bring resources and assistance to all of the historic garden apartments of Los Angeles.

We are extremely grateful to Heather and Meghan for their exceptional contributions to the Conservancy.

ISSUES continued from page 3

International architecture in the city and retains a high level of integrity. It has been determined eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

Over the past year, Conservancy staff met with DWP representatives to gather input and support for the nomination. Los Angeles

City Councilmember Jan Perry, in whose district the building is located, demonstrated her strong support by introducing the nomination through a motion before the City Council. The nomination is being processed by the Office of Historic Resources and will be heard before the Cultural Heritage Commission shortly.

Last Remaining Seats Goes West

We are thrilled to announce the lineup for the 2012 Last Remaining Seats (LRS) series, presenting classic films and live entertainment in the historic theatres of Los Angeles. The series takes place **Wednesday evenings from May 30 through June 27**, plus two screenings on **Saturday, June 30**.

This season offers some exciting twists: recent classics, two Saturday screenings (matinee and evening) of *The Wizard of Oz* (the Fan Favorite chosen by our members), and our first-ever visit to the Saban Theatre in Beverly Hills! Designed by S. Charles Lee, the theatre opened in 1930 as the Fox Wilshire and has been beautifully renovated.

As always, Conservancy members enjoy discounts and advance purchase of Last Remaining Seats tickets. **Tickets go on sale to Conservancy members at 10 a.m. on March 28** and to the general public on April 11.

Advance tickets cost \$16 for members (\$20 for general public) and will be available at laconservancy.org. Don't forget to take part in our membership drive for your **chance to win VIP tickets** (see column at right).

We offer special thanks to our 2012 Last Remaining Seats sponsors (as of press time): Series Star Sponsor: Hollywood Foreign Press Association. Series Supporting Sponsor: Steve Bing. Series Sponsor: NBC Universal. Evening Sponsors: Cathy and Steve Needleman; Clifton's/The Edison; Linda and Jerry Bruckheimer; Paramount Pictures; Warner Bros. Media Sponsor: Los Angeles Downtown News.



This year's Fan Favorite film is *The Wizard of Oz* (1939), which will screen at the Saban Theatre on Saturday, June 30. Photo courtesy Jerry Murbach.



Premiere at the Fox Wilshire Theatre (now the Saban Theatre) in 1930. Photo from the Tom Owen Collection/L.A. Conservancy archives.

2012 LRS Lineup

Wednesday, May 30
Los Angeles Theatre
Paper Moon (1973)

Wednesday, June 6
Orpheum Theatre
Tootsie (1982)

Wednesday, June 13
Los Angeles Theatre
The Big Sleep (1946)

Wednesday, June 20
Million Dollar Theatre
Los tres mosqueteros (1942)
co-presented with the Latin American
Cinemateca of Los Angeles

Wednesday, June 27
Orpheum Theatre
Robin Hood (1922)

Saturday, June 30
Saban Theatre
The Wizard of Oz (1939)
matinee and evening screenings of this
special Fan Favorite film

Recruit a Friend for a Chance to Win VIP Last Remaining Seats Tickets!

Deadline: April 30
Special Web Page: <http://lac.laconservancy.org/drive>

As a Conservancy member, you are committed to the cause of preserving Los Angeles' historic and cultural resources. Thank you! As we always say, our membership is our strength—and we need you to help us increase our membership base.

Between now and **April 30**, each time you recruit a new Conservancy member or purchase a gift membership, we will enter you into a drawing for **two VIP reserved seats at a 2012 Last Remaining Seats screening!** We will draw five lucky winners for these sure-to-sell-out tickets.

To guarantee your entry into the Last Remaining Seats drawing, you and your friends must **use this special web page to purchase memberships: <http://lac.laconservancy.org/drive>** (note that this site is not accessible through www.laconservancy.org). You may also purchase by calling Lainna Fader at (213) 430-4201.

Each member is eligible to win one pair of tickets, but the more members you recruit the more chances you have to win! Don't miss this chance to help strengthen the Conservancy's foundation—and enjoy the best seats in the house at our signature event.

If you have any questions about the Recruit-a-Friend membership drive, please contact Lainna at lfader@laconservancy.org or (213) 430-4201. Thank you!

BEVERLY HILLS continued from page 1

along the way. Most recently, the Shusett Residence (John Lautner, 1951) was demolished in September 2010, and the Friars Club Building (Sidney Eisenshtat, 1961) was razed in early 2011.

In July 2011, the Kronish House (Richard Neutra, 1955) seemed the next to go. Its owner had started the demolition process after placing it on the market in April, initially as a teardown. Yet the thought of losing the last remaining intact design by Neutra in Beverly Hills prompted an extraordinary public outcry. Nearly 600 people from Beverly Hills, throughout Los Angeles, and across the country and the world contacted the City, asking leaders to do something to help stave off demolition.

Beverly Hills leaders took note and, in a rare move, intervened to negotiate a delay in the planned demolition, ultimately allowing a preservation-minded buyer to step forward. In October 2011, new owners purchased the Kronish House and announced plans to restore the modernist residence.

A threatened building often leads to bigger things, which is exactly what happened with the Kronish House. In August, the Mayor and City Council directed the Planning Commission to review its preservation ordinance and procedures to help ensure that landmarks like the Kronish House cannot be so easily lost in the future. The City moved very quickly. The Conservancy worked closely with staff to offer guidance, and the new ordinance emerged in only five months.

Beverly Hills now joins the ranks of cities in Los Angeles County with a meaningful preservation ordinance—which, unfortunately, is only about a third of them. We look forward to working with other cities that still lack protections for their historic resources.

A huge thanks and accolades to the Mayor, City Council, Planning Commission, City staff, and many others who helped make preservation finally happen in Beverly Hills. Well done!

SHEETS continued from page 1

Sheets nonetheless completed a number of architectural designs that have beautifully stood the test of time. Art was integral to his architecture, and Sheets collaborated with many artists, including Jean and Arthur Ames, Renzo Fenci, Betty Davenport Ford, Susan Hertel, Denis O'Connor, Albert Stewart, and John Svenson.

In recent years, Sheets' work has grown increasingly vulnerable to demolition and excessive alteration. The Conservancy and our Modern Committee are working to raise awareness of, and preserve, Sheets' rich legacy of Southern California art and architecture.

Millard Sheets: A Legacy of Art and Architecture offers a curated look at important examples of his work and collaborations. Tour sites include:

- **Former Millard Sheets Studio** (1956-9): Sheets designed this complex in Claremont as his own design and mosaic studio. Now a medical office, it remains remarkably intact, with fanciful mosaics on the exterior and works by a variety of artists inside.

- **Garrison Theatre at Scripps College** (1963): Imposing and elegant, this theatre exemplifies New Formalism, which blends classical forms with modernist aesthetics. The three-story, polished granite façade features monumental mosaics depicting scenes from Shakespeare.

- **Former Pomona First Federal, Pomona branch** (1956): This bank complex reopened in 2011 as the American Museum of Ceramic Art (AMOCA). The former banking lobby, now gallery space, features a nearly eighty-foot-long painted mural by Sheets depicting the history of the Pomona Valley.

- **Former Pomona First Federal, Claremont branch** (1969): Nearly unchanged since it opened, this building (now a branch of US Bank) is sited at a major intersection. It combines the modernism, neo-classicism, mosaics, and mural art associated with the best of Sheets' famous Home Savings designs, plus other details of its own.

- **Pomona Mall** (1962): Sheets designed the first pedestrian mall in California, closing



The tour features the complex Millard Sheets built for use as his own design and mosaic studio. Photo by Larry Underhill.

nine blocks to traffic and unifying the whole with features including decorative fountains. Five blocks have since been reopened to cars, yet many historic features of this important cultural landscape remain intact.

- **Former Home Savings Tower** (1963): This six-story tower is one of the tallest buildings in the area. Its distinctive window grillwork is formed by weaving the initials "H" and "S" together (for "Home Savings"). Now owned by Chase, the building is threatened with demolition, and its upper floors are covered. Yet the tower remains a strong presence, and one of Sheets' trademark mosaics is visible on the façade.

The tour is self-paced, with docent-led tours at each site. You'll check in at one of the tour sites, then visit the other sites in any order, at your own pace. Each site is just a short drive from the other, and parking is plentiful.

After the tour, we'll hold a panel discussion at **Claremont United Church of Christ** with guests including Millard Sheets' daughter, Carolyn Owen Sheets-Towle. Guests will have access to the Sheets-designed sanctuary after the discussion.

Tour tickets are \$25 for Conservancy members, \$30 for non-members, \$15 for students with ID, and \$10 for children 12 and under. Tour tickets include admission to the panel discussion. For tickets, visit laconservancy.org.

Pacific Standard Time

Millard Sheets: A Legacy of Art and Architecture is part of Pacific Standard Time. This unprecedented collaboration, initiated by the Getty, brings together more than sixty cultural institutions from across Southern California for six months beginning October

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NOVEMBER 29 / JANUARY 26 MEMBERSHIP REPORT

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

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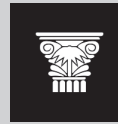
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Los Angeles, CA 90014
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SHEETS continued from page 6

2011 to tell the story of the birth of the L.A. art scene. The presenting sponsor is Bank of America. For more information about Pacific Standard Time, visit pacificstandardtime.org.

The March 18 tour includes special access to two other Pacific Standard Time exhibits, at Scripps College and AMOCA. For details, visit laconservancy.org.

CONSERVANCY WALKING TOURS

Walking tours begin at 10 a.m. except where noted. Tours are \$5 for Conservancy members and children twelve and under; \$10 for the general public. Walk-ins are accepted on most tours. Pre-payment is required on Angelino Heights, Biltmore Hotel, and Broadway.

For details and reservations, visit laconservancy.org. Questions? Call the Conservancy office at (213) 623-2489.

WEEKLY TOURS

Art Deco

Every Saturday

Biltmore Hotel

Every Sunday, 2 p.m.

Broadway: Historic Theatre & Commercial District

Every Saturday

Historic Downtown

Every Saturday

BI-WEEKLY AND MONTHLY TOURS

Angelino Heights

First Saturday

Downtown Renaissance: Spring & Main

Second and Fourth Saturdays

Downtown's Modern Skyline

First and Third Saturdays, 2 p.m.

Union Station

Third Saturday

Youth, family, and group tours by arrangement; call the number above for information.



Los Angeles Conservancy

523 West Sixth Street, Suite 826

Los Angeles, California 90014

laconservancy.org

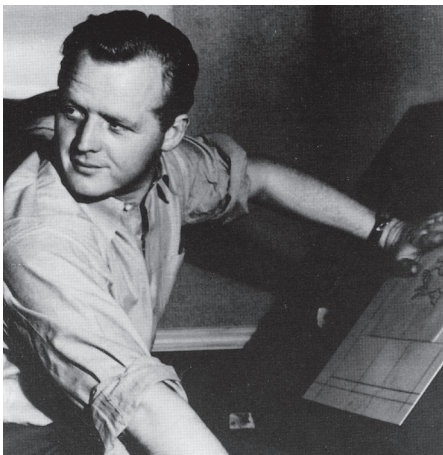
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UPCOMING EVENTS



Courtesy CaliforniaWatercolor.com

MILLARD SHEETS: A LEGACY OF ART AND ARCHITECTURE

Sunday, March 18

As part of Pacific Standard Time, this special tour and panel discussion will explore the art and architecture of Millard Sheets in the Claremont and Pomona area! See page 1 for details.



Tom Owen Collection / Conservancy Archives

MEMBER TICKET SALES FOR LAST REMAINING SEATS

Wednesday, March 28, 10 a.m.

Tickets for our Last Remaining Seats film series will go on sale exclusively to Conservancy members on Wednesday, March 28 at 10 a.m. PST. See page 5 for details.



Tom Davies

MEMBER DRIVE DEADLINE

Monday, April 30

Recruit a new member or purchase a new gift membership, and you'll be entered into a drawing for two VIP reserved seats at a 2012 Last Remaining Seats screening! See page 5 for details.