

LOS ANGELES CONSERVANCY



Annual Meeting May 28 – See Page 7

May/Jun 2015 • Volume 37 Number 3



Pacific Electric Railway Company Substation No. 8 in the unincorporated community of Altadena is listed in the National Register of Historic Places. The County of Los Angeles' forthcoming historic preservation ordinance will allow sites like this one to be locally designated and protected. Photo by Laura Dominguez/L.A. Conservancy.

Charting a Year of Preservation Progress

by Marcello Vavala

More than a year has passed since the Conservancy released our 2014 Preservation Report Card, which evaluates the preservation policies (or lack thereof) for each of Los Angeles County's eighty-nine jurisdictions. The 2014 Report Card revealed notable progress among some communities amid a general backslide in preservation countywide.

Since that time, a growing number of cities have sought to adopt or strengthen their preservation policies. Below, we report on the progress that several of these communities are making. We also update scores, grades, and other content in real time as communities make progress through our Digital Report Card at *laconservancy.org/report-card*.

Preservation Ordinances

A local historic preservation ordinance is one of the most important tools a community can use to protect historic resources. Several jurisdictions throughout the county are at various stages of pursuing this key element of a historic preservation program.

The County of Los Angeles is poised to adopt its first-ever historic preservation ordinance. This ordinance will enable the County government to designate and protect historic resources in unincorporated territory countywide, including County-owned structures. The Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors voted unanimously in January to adopt the ordinance, instructing the Office of County Counsel to prepare final ordinance language. Conservancy advocacy staff has assisted the Department of Regional Planning in this effort since 2012.

The ordinance will become the central fixture of the County's nascent historic preservation program, which includes the Mills Act property tax abatement program adopted in November 2013. Given the scope of geographic territory represented, including such diverse Please see REPORT CARD on page 6

Documenting the Chicano Moratorium

by Manuel A. Huerta

Among the most important events of the Chicano Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s and 1970s were the Chicano Moratorium marches against the Vietnam War. Held from December 1969 through January 1971, these events had a profound and lasting effect on the U.S. Latina/o population.

In our efforts to broaden the scope and diversity of preservation in Los Angeles, the Conservancy is laying the groundwork to recognize and protect historic sites related to the Chicano Moratorium. The first step is to create the context for nominating these sites to the National Register of Historic Places.

The Conservancy is documenting this historic context using the National Park Service's Multiple Property Documentation Form, while simultaneously facilitating the nomination of Moratorium sites. In April, we convened an advisory group of scholars and community members for input into the project. This initiative is supported by funding from former Los Angeles County Supervisor Gloria Molina.

In the late 1960s, moratorium marches against the Vietnam War were taking place across the country. The organizers of the Chicano Moratorium marches wanted to specifically address the disproportionate casualties experienced by Chicano soldiers, who were dying at a rate twice as high as the overall U.S. population.

In December 1969 and February 1970,

Please see CHICANO MORATORIUM on page 6

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CONSERVANCY NEWS

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Los Angeles Conservancy 523 W. Sixth Street, Suite 826 Los Angeles, California 90014 (213) 623-2489 Fax: (213) 623-3909 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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Los Angeles Conservancy Bylaw Revisions

Please vote by Friday, May 22

To keep pace with changes in nonprofit governance, the Conservancy is updating its bylaws. We last updated the bylaws in 1990, and most of the new changes simply bring them up to current standards and best practices for nonprofits.

These amendments must be approved by the Conservancy membership in a vote. Please see the summary of the amendments below. For more information, you can read the existing and proposed bylaws online at *laconservancy.org/bylaws*, or contact the office to request hard copies by emailing *info@laconservancy.org* or calling (213) 623-2489.

It is very important that you take a few minutes to cast your vote and return your ballot. Please return your completed ballot by mail (using the enclosed postage-paid envelope) or fax (213-623-3909) no later than Friday, May 22. Thank you!

Voting

As a young organization, the Conservancy relied on our membership for input on some of the tactical elements of running the nonprofit, such as revising the bylaws and choosing members of the Board of Directors.

The Conservancy has since grown from a handful of volunteers to the largest local member-based preservation organization in the U.S. As we have professionalized, the Conservancy has established a thorough process for identifying, vetting, and nominating members of our Board of Directors. Plus, only a small fraction (about two percent) of Conservancy members vote on the annual slate of board nominees.

In the Conservancy's strategic planning process of 2013-2014, we identified the need to be more nimble in updating our bylaws, to keep pace with ongoing changes in state and federal laws regarding nonprofit governance.

As a result, we are proposing to revise the bylaws to eliminate the need for members to vote on corporate governance matters such as board members and future amendments. The new bylaws will be more relevant and appropriate for this stage in the Conservancy's growth.

Annual Meetings

Decades ago, the Conservancy's annual meeting served a vital function in gathering the membership (which was much smaller) to conduct official Conservancy business, such as announcing the results of the board member election.

Over the years, the annual meeting has evolved into a small gathering of around 100 members, with a focus on a presentation of general interest to our work, not specifically related to the business of the organization.

By eliminating the requirement for an annual meeting, the Conservancy can explore—with your input—new ways of engaging members, focusing our resources more effectively on the types of interaction that you consider most meaningful. Therefore, we are proposing that the Conservancy will no longer be required to hold an annual meeting for the general membership.

Governance

Most of the proposed amendments to our bylaws simply bring the Conservancy in line with current governance standards and make them more relevant to how we run the organization today.

Examples include allowing for member communication by email (which was not widely used in 1990) and the timing of board meetings (which now take place quarterly, not monthly).

For more information, you can read the full text of both the existing and proposed bylaws on our website at *laconservancy.org/bylaws*, or by emailing *info@laconservancy.org* or calling (213) 623-2489 to request hard copies.

Preservation Issues

by Laura Dominguez, Adrian Scott Fine, Manuel A. Huerta, and Marcello Vavala

For more information about these and other preservation issues, please visit *laconservancy.org/important-issues*.

Norms La Cienega

Norms La Cienega Coffee Shop is one step closer to becoming a Historic-Cultural Monument (HCM). On March 19, the Los Angeles Cultural Heritage Commission (CHC) voted unanimously to recommend designation of the 1957 Googie icon at 470 N. La Cienega Blvd. CHC President Richard Barron noted that he had received more feedback about Norms than any other building during his time on the Commission, referring to the beloved restaurant as Los Angeles' "dining room."



Norms La Cienega. Photo by Hunter Kerhart.

Councilmember Paul Koretz, whose district includes Norms La Cienega, attended the hearing to voice his support for the Conservancy's nomination. The business' former owners sold the restaurant chain and the La Cienega property to separate entities in late 2014. Mike Colonna, the new CEO of Norms Restaurants, also spoke out in favor of designation at the hearing. Representing the new property owner (separate from the business), an attorney told the CHC that the property owner would not oppose the designation and reiterated that there were no current plans to demolish the building, despite the active demolition permit. If you haven't already, please visit the Norms issue page at laconservancy. org and sign our petition urging the property owner to vacate the demolition permit.

The Conservancy and our Modern Committee submitted the HCM nomination in December 2014. We are now working to secure support for the nomination from the City Council, as well as working with the new property owner and their team to consider options for preservation.

Parker Center

On March 22, the Conservancy convened more than 100 people for an expert panel discussion on the past, present, and future of Parker Center. The building at 150 N. Los Angeles Street served as headquarters of the Los Angeles Police Department for more than fifty years. Titled "The Stories You Are About to Hear Are True: Preserving Parker Center," the event examined the history of one of Los Angeles' most storied and controversial buildings and outlined the case for its preservation.

Panelists shared distinct views of Parker Center's significance in the development of Los Angeles, from its innovative modern design and state-of-the-art policing facilities, to its associations with urban renewal in Little Tokyo and tensions between law enforcement and the local African-American, Asian, and Latino communities. A video of the panel discussion is available on the Parker Center issue page at *laconservancy.org*.

Although the Los Angeles Cultural Heritage Commission voted to recommend designation of Parker Center as a Historic-Cultural Monument in late January, City Council has yet to act on the nomination. The City's Bureau of Engineering is pressing for a redevelopment project that would demolish and replace the 1955 building designed by Welton Becket & Associates.

During an interview with the Conservancy in February, Councilmember José Huizar, whose district includes Parker Center, said, "I'm quite concerned that [some] City departments were pushing through [the idea of] having to do a new use on that site without considering preservation or more comprehensive planning of the Civic Center and how they all fit into one another."

If you haven't already, please visit the Parker Center issue page at *laconservancy*. *org* and sign our petition urging Mayor Eric Garcetti and Councilmember Huizar to support the preservation and reuse of Parker Center.

AMPAS/May Co. Building

The Los Angeles City Planning Commission will soon hold a hearing on the proposed museum project for the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences (AMPAS). This project would rehabilitate and adapt the former May Company Wilshire Building as a museum and event facility. Designed by Albert C. Martin and Samuel Marx, the 1939 May Company Building at 6065 Wilshire Blvd. (at Fairfax Avenue) is an iconic example of Streamline Moderne architecture on the Miracle Mile.

As proposed, the museum project calls for the renovation of the original portion of the May Company Building, while the rear addition (designed by Martin in 1946) would be demolished to accommodate a 140-footdiameter spherical addition of glass and steel. The project would also remove the historic Tearoom, one of the few intact and significant interior features remaining.

The Conservancy has had numerous conversations with the project team about maintaining the eligibility of the May Company Building for the National Register of Historic Places and the California Register of Historical Resources. We are encouraged by the progress to date and continue to raise questions about key project elements, including the loss of the Tearoom and the proposed signage program, which we believe overwhelms the building's iconic sculptural form and architecture. We will continue to work with the applicant as the project moves forward.



Former May Company Building on Wilshire Boulevard. Photo courtesy *you-are-here.com*.

2015 Preservation Awards

For project team lists, visit laconservancy.org/awards

Congratulations to the recipients of the Conservancy's 34th Annual Preservation Awards! They reflect a range of outstanding efforts to preserve and revitalize the historic places that make Greater Los Angeles unique.

We will present the awards at a luncheon on **Thursday, May 7**, at the Millennium Biltmore Hotel in downtown Los Angeles. Our deepest thanks to **City National Bank**, the luncheon's presenting sponsor for the fifteenth consecutive year.

The luncheon is a great opportunity to network with preservation, community, and business leaders while supporting the work of the Conservancy. Individual tickets are \$150. Table sponsorships begin at \$1,500.

For details, visit *laconservancy.org/awards*.

2015 Jury

Many thanks to the members of our independent jury, who had the difficult task of selecting this year's recipients from a very strong pool of applicants.

Jonathan Veitch (Chair) President, Occidental College

Kaitlin Drisko, Architect, Principal, Drisko Studio Architects

Susan Healy Keene, AICP Director of Community Development, City of Beverly Hills

Edward Kelsey President, Historic Building Services Inc.

Michelle G. Magalong Chair, Asian & Pacific Islander Americans in Historic Preservation

Hafley House

5561 East La Pasada Street, Long Beach, CA 90815

Designed by Richard Neutra, this 1953 home features a pitched roof—rare for Neutra but required by neighborhood design guidelines. The home suffered over the years from deferred maintenance and incompatible alterations. New



Photo courtesy johnellisphoto.com.

owners commissioned a painstaking restoration that prioritized authenticity. Using original construction documents, correspondence, and Neutra's field notes, the project team restored the home to its original design intent while allowing it to show its age. Their efforts yielded a beautifully restored home as well as valuable lessons and best practices for conserving Mid-Century Modern buildings.

President's Award

CITY NATIONAL BANK

Alan Hess

Long before the renaissance of Mid-Century Modernism, Alan Hess was at the vanguard of preserving Southern California's Modern legacy. An architect, architecture critic, historian, author, educator, and preservationist, Hess is the preeminent authority on Modern architecture in Southern California. He has demonstrated why Googie coffee shops, suburban ranch houses, and other architectural underdogs are "as much a part of American culture as the Gothic



The way up.

Photo by Dale Furman.

campus, the Federal-style house, or the Beaux Arts civic center." He has worked actively to preserve important examples of postwar architecture, including the world's oldest remaining McDonald's in Downey (1953).

Hollyhock House

4800 Hollywood Boulevard, Los Angeles, CA 90027

Completed in 1921, Hollyhock House was legendary architect Frank Lloyd Wright's first Los Angeles commission. Wealthy owner Aline Barnsdall donated the property to the City of Los Angeles for use as an art park



Photo courtesy jwpictures.com.

in 1927. The building was renovated several times and had long suffered from water and earthquake damage. After four years of restoration work and seismic strengthening, Hollyhock House reopened to the public in February 2015. This project was a major achievement for the City of Los Angeles, illustrating the value of civic investment in historic places.

Kun House

7960 Fareholm Drive, Los Angeles, CA 90046

Modernist master Richard Neutra designed this 1936 International Style home in the hills near Laurel Canyon. A new owner purchased the property in 2007 and formed a project team to fully restore the home to Neutra's as-built vision. The



Photo by Jacek Laskus, ASC.

team spent three years on research alone, documenting and removing non-historic alterations. When missing or no longer available, fixtures and materials were reproduced or replaced as closely as possible. The Kun House stands as a testament to private stewardship and an inspiration to the preservation community.

Lincoln Place

1077 Elkgrove Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90291

Completed in 1951, this garden apartment complex prioritized nature and community, offering high-quality apartment living. Decades later, its vast open spaces and prime Venice location put the community at risk for redevelopment. After



Photo by Luke Gibson.

an epic, decade-long preservation battle, including the demolition of ten buildings, the rest of the site was preserved. The owner rehabbed the historic buildings and sensitively constructed new ones to replace the demolished structures. The project demonstrates that if done correctly, old and new construction can co-exist harmoniously in garden apartment communities.

Rosslyn Hotel Apartments

112 West Fifth Street, Los Angeles, CA 90013

This 1923 luxury hotel had fallen into decline by the mid-twentieth century as demand for hotel rooms in downtown L.A. decreased. The building served as singleroom occupancy (SRO) apartment housing and suffered many years of benign neglect. The nonprofit SRO Housing Corporation bought the building and transformed it into affordable housing and support services for chronically homeless veterans and lowincome individuals. Located in the middle of a booming downtown, this project beautifully



Photo by Justin Micheli, M2A Architects.

illustrates how historic buildings can meet vital community needs, as well as how low-income and market-rate housing can co-exist.

LAUSD Historic Context Statement

Since 1872, the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) has commissioned, designed, and acquired a remarkable collection of buildings. Its nearly 800 campuses range from nineteenth-century schoolhouses to sprawling,



Jordan High School. Photo by Adrian Scott Fine/L.A. Conservancy.

modern facilities. LAUSD has lacked a consistent framework for understanding, evaluating, and caring for these properties until now. The new Historic Context Statement describes the evolution of school design in the district in the context of historic themes, geographic areas, and chronological periods. This resource will help guide LAUSD's stewardship of its buildings for years to come.

Pacific Electric Railway – El Prado Bridge

Torrance Boulevard and Bow Avenue, Torrance, CA 90501

One of the oldest structures in the City of Torrance, this 1913 bridge designed by Irving Gill served freight trains passing over tracks used by interurban Red Cars. No longer in active use, the bridge was covered in dense, dead vines and decades' worth of dull gray paint used to cover graffiti. Wood guardrails had deteriorated, and water infiltration had caused major damage. The City commissioned a project to repair, stabilize, and preserve



Photo by Shane Swerdlow.

the bridge, exemplifying strong civic stewardship of a type of historic structure that is often under-appreciated.

Wallis Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts

9390 North Santa Monica Boulevard, Beverly Hills, CA 90210

Originally the main post office branch for the fledgling City of Beverly Hills, this 1934 building was closed when the Postal Service's needs outgrew the space. The nonprofit Beverly Hills



Photo by John Linden.

Cultural Center Foundation was formed to develop a cultural use for the building, and the City of Beverly Hills bought it in 1999. The meticulously restored building now enjoys new life as the centerpiece of a performing arts center. This beloved landmark now has a different purpose yet continues to serve the community.

ISSUES

CHICANO MORATORIUM

continued from page 1

two moratorium marches took place in unincorporated East Los Angeles, setting the stage for the larger National Chicano Moratorium march on August 29, 1970, (marking its forty-fifth anniversary this year). Thirty thousand protesters from across the U.S., including many families and children, marched down Whittier and Atlantic Boulevards in East Los Angeles and held a mass rally at Laguna Park.

During the family-oriented rally, Los Angeles Police Department and County Sheriff's officers rushed into the park and forcibly removed thousands of people. While most people fled, some resisted. Mere blocks from the park, Brown Beret Lyn Ward and activist José Diaz were killed by law enforcement officers.

Nearby, Ruben Salazar, a *Los Angeles Times* reporter and KMEX-LA news director who had been covering the event before the civil disturbance, stopped by the Silver Dollar Café before heading back to the studio. An East Los Angeles Sheriff's deputy shot a tear gas missile into the Silver Dollar, which reportedly hit Salazar in the head, instantly killing him. Laguna Park has since been renamed Ruben F. Salazar Park.

The circumstances and incidents of the Chicano Moratorium were a major turning point in the Chicano Movement, its direction, and its politics. Although many local sites associated with Latina/o history have yet to be designated and protected, documenting the stories and places important to the Moratorium is a step in the right direction for preservation.



This couple timed their wedding so that they would walk out of St. Alphonsus Church and into the march. Photo by Sal Castro, Security Pacific National Bank Collection/Los Angeles Public Library.

REPORT CARD continued from page 1

unincorporated communities as Altadena, East Los Angeles, and Marina del Rey, the impact of the County's new ordinance will be particularly broad.

Residents in unincorporated County territory have long desired such a preservation tool to protect community character. "In a four-block radius, at least ten single family homes dating from the 1940s and '50s have been sold, torn down, and replaced with twostory McMansions," recounts Marla Felber, a design professional and member who lives in unincorporated East San Gabriel. "A historic preservation ordinance could provide homeowners alternative solutions and guidelines that would not be so destructive to these diminishing neighborhoods."

Similar sentiments have led active community preservation organizations to advocate for long-overdue preservation ordinances. The San Marino Historical Society is on an exploratory committee tasked with advising the City in drafting a preservation ordinance, while Alhambra Preservation Group has prioritized discussion of a preservation ordinance among elected officials.

For some communities, the prospect of improving their grade on our Preservation Report Card prompted City staff to reach out directly to the Conservancy for technical assistance on ways to enact or strengthen preservation policies. The City of Hawthorne, which currently has no preservation policies in place, and the City of San Gabriel, whose pioneering 1965 preservation ordinance was last updated in 1995, have both sought information on best practices.

Fighting for Community Character

The loss of community character through the accelerating teardown and mansionization trend has been a concern in neighborhoods across the county. The City of Arcadia is just one example of a community that is embracing preservation tools to better inform decisions regarding demolition.

"The pace of development and the level of applications for certificates of demolition have raised the interest of our City Council to really explore in more detail what resources we have in Arcadia and the potential to preserve them," says Jason Kruckeberg, Assistant City Manager and Development Services Director for the City of Arcadia. As a result, the City is looking to prepare its first-ever survey of historic resources.

Across the county in Manhattan Beach, a citywide survey is just one of the tools currently being considered to safeguard the community's historic structures. Members of the Manhattan Beach Cultural Heritage Conservancy have worked with residents and elected officials to foster dialogue on the need for preservation policies that can protect the city's increasingly threatened built heritage. Their efforts have led to the City's commitment to draft a new historic preservation ordinance, as well as adopt the popular Mills Act property tax abatement program as an incentive.

"We've had the pleasure of living here in this town, but we haven't been that careful about our legacy," reflects Jan Dennis, past Manhattan Beach mayor and chair of the Manhattan Beach Cultural Heritage Conservancy, which has spearheaded the city's preservation advocacy movement. "It's very important to leave that legacy to future generations so they can remember what their city was like."

This concern for protecting community character is shaping preservation-related discussions and policy implementation throughout the county. The Conservancy continues to serve as a resource for all communities looking to adopt or strengthen preservation policies. We have met with and provided technical assistance to each of the jurisdictions highlighted here.

To be most effective, efforts to foster local preservation should begin at the community level. To learn more about the status of historic preservation in your community and how it can be improved, visit the Conservancy's Preservation Report Card and Community Pages at *laconservancy.org/ report-card*.

JANUARY 29 / MARCH 25 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.

CORPORATE MARBLE CORNERSTONE (\$5,000 - \$9,999) Edward F. Limato Foundation

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CD 4 CANDIDATE INTERVIEWS ONLINE

On May 19, 2015, Angelenos will head to the polls to vote. We interviewed candidates Carolyn Ramsay and David Ryu, who are vying for the Los Angeles City Council District 4 seat to replace termed-out Councilmember Tom LaBonge, to learn their views on preservation. CD 4 is a large district that includes Sherman Oaks, the Hollywood Hills, and Miracle Mile.

While the Conservancy cannot endorse political candidates, we do provide information to help voters make an informed decision.

To read a transcript of our interview with the candidates, visit *laconservancy.org*. To find out if you reside in CD 4, visit *neighborhoodinfo.lacity.org/index.cfm*.



2015 ANNUAL MEETING

Thursday, May 28, 7 p.m. Crestwood Hills Park Community Room 1000 Hanley Avenue Los Angeles, CA 90049

Please join Conservancy board, staff, and fellow members for our annual meeting on **Thursday, May 28**, at 7 p.m. at Crestwood Hills Park. We will introduce the newly elected members of the Board of Directors and hold a special program covering the history and design of the Crestwood Hills neighborhood.

Architect, author, and Crestwood Hills resident Cory Buckner will discuss her latest book, *Crestwood Hills: The Chronicle of a Modern Utopia*, which is the story of people and Mid-Century Modern architecture merging and prevailing to create a neighborhood in Los Angeles.

After the discussion, a limited number of guests will be welcome to tour Buckner's nearby home, designed by architects A. Quincy Jones and Whitney R. Smith, and structural engineer Edgardo Contini. Guests who RSVP in advance will have priority for the tour.

Copies of *Crestwood Hills:The Chronicle of a Modern Utopia* will be available for sale at the event, with time for book signings after the program.

This event is free and open to the public. RSVP by emailing *info@ laconservancy.org* or calling (213) 623-2489 by 12 p.m. on **Wednesday**, **May 27**.

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.

CONSERVANCY WALKING TOURS Angelino Heights

First Saturday of every month Art Deco Every Saturday **Biltmore Hotel** Every Sunday, 2 p.m. Broadway: Historic Theatre & **Commercial District Every Saturday** Downtown Renaissance: Spring & Main Additional offerings: Every Saturday, May 2 - September 26 **Historic Downtown Every Saturday** Modern Skyline Additional offerings: Every Saturday, 2 p.m., May 2 - September 26 Union Station Every Saturday

Youth, family, and group tours by arrangement; call (213) 623-2489 for information.



Los Angeles Conservancy

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ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



IMPORTANT: Ballot enclosed. Please return by May 22.

UPCOMING EVENTS



PRESERVATION AWARDS LUNCHEON Millennium Biltmore Hotel Thursday, May 7

Join us at our 34th Annual Preservation Awards Luncheon and help us honor outstanding historic preservation projects across L.A. County. See pages 4-5 to learn more about the 2015 recipients.





ANNUAL MEETING Crestwood Hills Park Thursday, May 28 7 pm - 9 pm

We hope you will join us for our annual meeting on May 28. This event is free, but RSVP is recommended. See page 7 for details. LAST REMAINING SEATS Wednesdays & Saturdays June 10 - 27

Join us for our 2015 season of classic films in historic theatres! Find the full lineup and purchase tickets at *laconservancy.org/last-remainingseats.*