

San Clemente Historical Society





## **Stewardship**

“ The responsibility for taking good care of resources entrusted to us ”

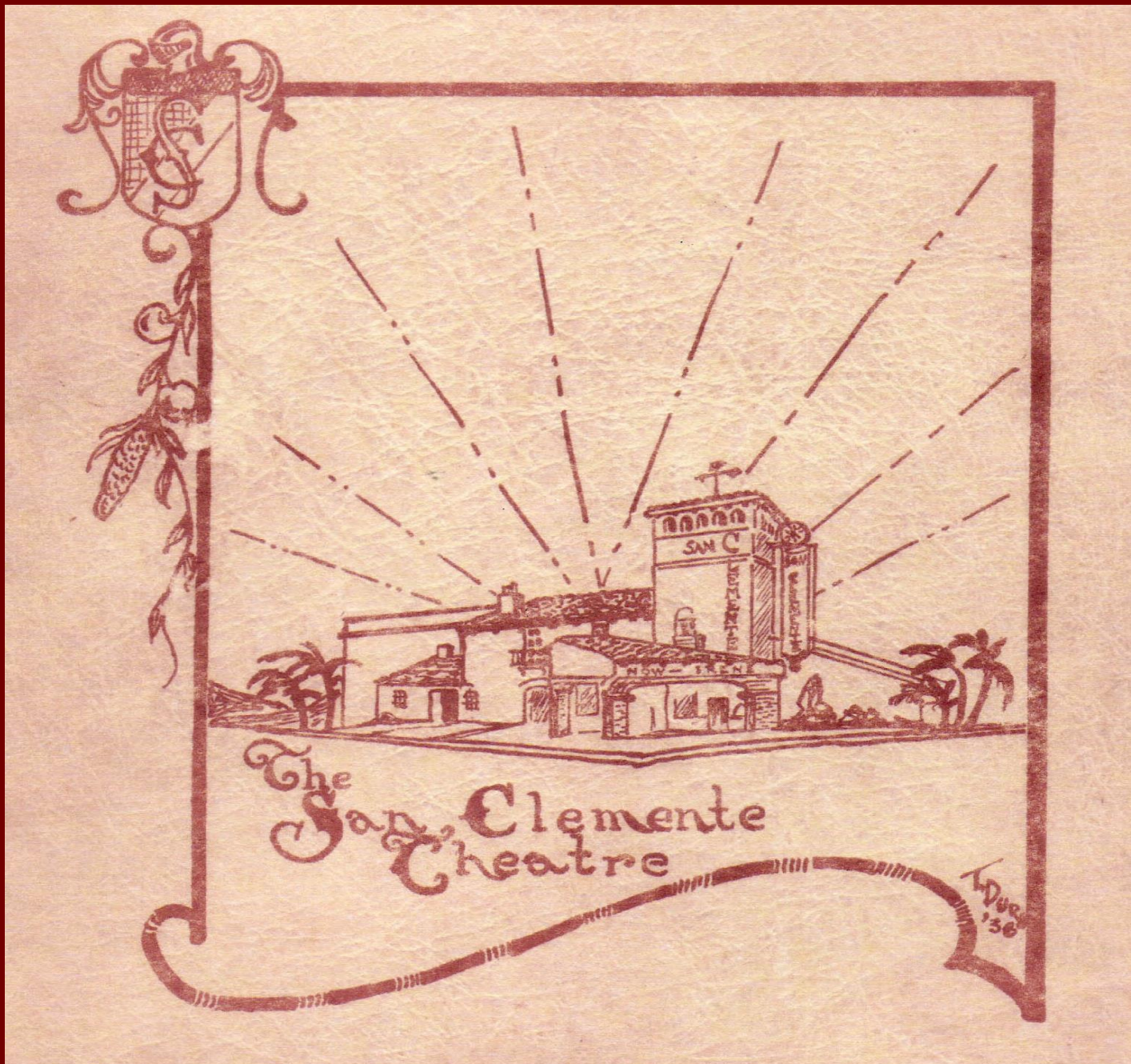
San Clemente Historical Society

# Celebrate the Miramar Theater

Sunday  
November 6,  
2005



(Poster for the 2005 San Clemente Historical Society Annual meeting)



(Original art work from the cover of the 1938 Dedication Ceremony program)

# DEDICATION



• Where once the lustrous California Moon threw her limpid beams down on the solitude of the great Creator there now stands man's mighty contribution to beauty. The New SAN CLEMENTE THEATRE, woven out of the warp and woof of character and charm into a mantle of hospitality, and entertainment, this gorgeous institution is and will ever be visible evidence of the operators of the San Clemente Theatre's profound faith in this city.

• To you who seek the most of life, who naturally yearn for fitting intellectual stimulation, will come an ever increasing warmth of appreciation, as you respond to the moments of joy, hours of delight, nights of glorious romance and adventure in these inspiring surroundings.

• Let the world move as it may . . . let crowns fall and governments totter . . . let the mountains rock and the very ocean overflow its restraining banks . . . the new San Clemente Theatre will remain an appealing shrine of comfort and luxury, a haven of relaxation.

PACIFIC STATES THEATRES, Inc.

ADOLPH RAMISH, President

MIKE GORE, Vice-President

A. L. GORE, Secretary

Original  
Dedication  
by the  
Initial  
chain  
for the  
theater  
from the  
1938  
Dedication  
Ceremony  
program

# GREETINGS



• The San Clemente Chamber of Commerce extends hearty greetings to the officers and executives of the San Clemente Theatre upon its opening in San Clemente.

• The building is a fitting tribute to the progress of San Clemente. Its modern architecture, beauty of design, utility, and spaciousness indicate a faith in the future growth and development of this community which we know will be justified.

• We are happy to have the influence and inspiration of this theatre, which has been erected through the insight and faith of the Capital Company to serve a public purpose with the satisfaction that it will contribute to the cultural values of San Clemente and the entire community.

• We greet the management of the San Clemente Theatre and wish them every success and we pledge our support to the goal which we all have in common, our City and Community's betterment.

## SAN CLEMENTE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE.

ROY R. DIVEL.

President.

JUDGE FRED S. WARNER.

Vice-President.

HENRIETTE B. STOWELL.

Secretary.

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

G. I. HAMILTON

LEO SMITH

GEORGE RETTKE

BERTRAM H. LATHAM

DONALD W. TODD

Original  
Greeting  
by the  
City's  
Chamber  
of  
Commerce  
from the  
1938  
Dedication  
Ceremony  
program

# WELCOME



• We greet you, our patrons, with hearty welcome and eager hopes that this evening be one of the happiest you have ever known. And from the bottom of our hearts we pledge that EVERY evening you spend at the SAN CLEMENTE THEATRE shall be an enjoyable one — sweeping you away with the magical romance of its picture-tales, delighting you with its stage offerings, thrilling you with its music, making the hours spent here pleasant ones indeed.

• As the builders and owners feel a just pride in having given this modern theatre to your community, so we shall take pride in operating it with the highest ideals and aspirations always in mind to make of it a truly community Theatre, and securing always the highest class of entertainment in photoplays that the motion picture industry has to offer.

• We visualize the photoplay as a tremendously powerful three-fold instrument for good. It can do three things that are important beyond words, and do them as no other instrument can.

• In the first place, it can and does fill a necessity . . . the necessity for entertainment. And as we serve the leisure hours of the great mass of people with right diversion, so do we rivet the girders of society.

• In the second place, it can and does instruct . . . a most precious power, indeed.

• In the third place, the motion picture can do more than any other existing agency to unite the peoples of the world by bringing about better understanding between races and nations, and surely no greater thing than this can be done.

• Entertainment and amusement is the ground on which everyone meets in common fraternity. Your success is our success — our success is your success — We are partners — and again we pledge you our every effort — proud of our association with you — proud of our affiliation — and zealously indeed do we prize that priceless possession — your good will.

**PACIFIC STATES THEATRES, Inc.**

EDOLPH RAMISH, President  
MIKE GORE, Vice-President  
R. L. GORE, Secretary

Original  
Welcome  
by the  
Initial  
Chain  
for the  
theater  
from the  
1938  
Dedication  
Ceremony  
program

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SAN » »  
CLEMENTE  
THEATRE

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**S**AN CLEMENTE, the city of old world atmosphere! How refreshing, how appealing, in this day of modernism is this "show place" of Southern California, where community effort has perpetuated the glamorous and romantic past. Here is recalled the spirit of California of nearly a hundred years ago. Where along the El Camino Real could be found a spot more suitable to found a "Spanish City" than here? Nestled among the gently rising slopes from the Pacific's shores, San Clemente presents a scene of rare beauty unequalled in all California.

In such surrounding has been erected the San Clemente Theatre, another unit in this fast growing community of fine homes and smart shops. Carrying out the style of Spanish California architecture adopted for the city, the theatre building is a fitting addition to the group of commercial structures fronting the main thoroughfare. The exterior treatment is an attempt to embody the informal lines and mass of early California buildings in a modern structure whose shape is generally set. The use of the typical tile roofs, hewn wood beams and textured plaster, has created an effect in keeping with the natural setting.

The interior treatment likewise has been kept as nearly as possible true to style, insolar as possible within the necessary requirements of a theatre structure. A modern note has been touched in the color decorations of the interior where the color scheme has been kept in a lighter character than is usual in a structure of this design. Seats, draperies and furniture have been carefully chosen for comfort and beauty, each element serving to create an intimate, restful atmosphere in keeping with the purpose of the building.

The architects are proud to offer the results of their efforts to the community of San Clemente and it is with no small amount of pride that they see this building project reach its finale on the opening of this building to the public. The architects wish to share the honor on its completion with the builders, the firm of Strang Brothers, whose cheerful cooperation has gone far toward the happy conclusion of this work.

C. A. BALCH, Architect



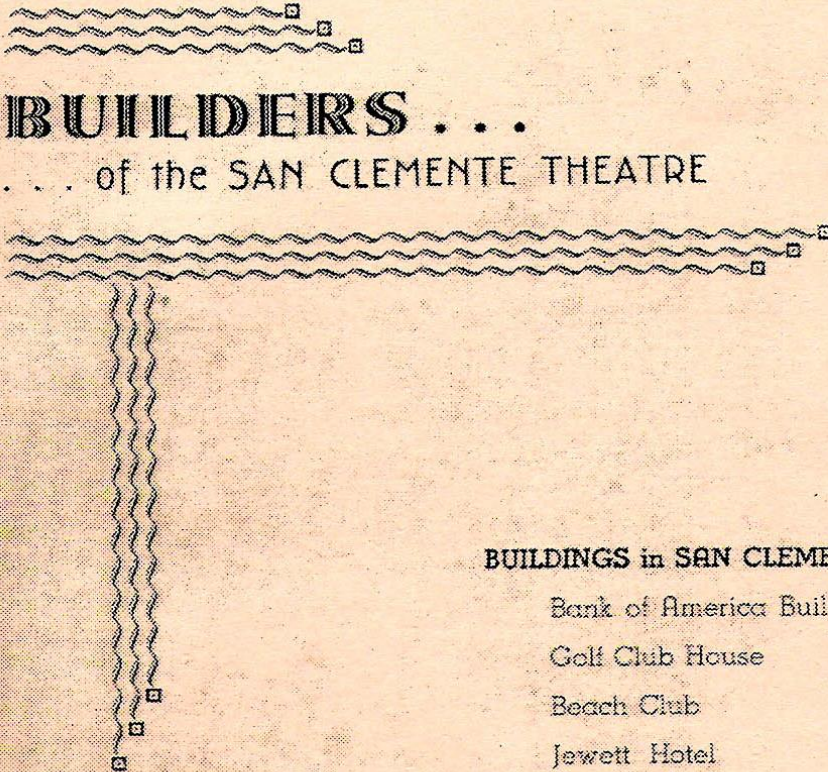
# Miramar Facts

- ❖ Built in **1938** by Strang Bros.
  - General contractors for most of Ole Hanson's "**Spanish Village by the Sea**" Vision!
  - Was built at a cost of **\$75,000** !!
  - Had an opening day count of **682 seats**
- ❖ Designed by Architect **Clifford .A. Balch**
  - Designed with stressing excellent sound, comfortable seats, and air conditioning/heating system!
  - Seats were placed in rows further apart "than any other theater in southern California" for comfort.
  - Featured Loge seating! A luxury at the time for an additional 5cent charge!
  - Designed to have the very best possible film Projection.
  - The Auditorium featured sound absorbent plaster.

# Miramar Facts (cont.)

- Auditorium was designed with excellent acoustical qualities.
- Featured 2 Simplex projectors with peerless arcs & the latest RCA sound apparatus.
- ❖ Originally Operated by **Pacific States Theaters Inc.**
  - the project was spearheaded by the partnership that had previously built up and later sold what became known as the Fox West Coast Theater chain
- ❖ Originally named "**The San Clemente Theater**"
- ❖ Double Features at 35cents! for Gala Opening day Thursday May 12<sup>th</sup>
  - Deanna Durbin in "**Mad about music**"  
& Alice Brady in "**Good-bye Broadway**"
  - Many prominent celebrities in the motion picture and business circles were rumored in attendance.
- ❖ Operated as a movie theater till **1984**
- ❖ Listed on the **City of San Clemente's Designated Historical Structures List** in **1996**
- ❖ Was used to Premier Surf movies and showcase bands in the late 80's
  - Was sold out over two days in 1989 when it featured Jeff Neu's "San Clemente Locals" surf movie.

# Strang Bros.



**BUILDERS . . .**  
. . . of the SAN CLEMENTE THEATRE

**BUILDINGS in SAN CLEMENTE Erected by Us . . . .**

- Bank of America Building
- Golf Club House
- Beach Club
- Jewett Hotel
- El Rey Hotel
- City Hall Building
- Ella Hawkins Home . . . and many others.

(Original advertising from the  
1938 Dedication Ceremony program)

# Strang Bros. (cont.)

RECENTLY COMPLETED . . . .

San Clemente Theatre

The New Casino

Fleming Home

Ten New Homes

Two Model Houses

STRANG BROS.

GENERAL CONTRACTORS

212 CALLE MARINO  
SAN CLEMENTE :: CALIFORNIA

(Original advertising from the  
1938 Dedication Ceremony program)

San Clemente  Historical Society

# C.A. Balch (and the firm of Balch&Stanberry)

- ❖ He worked in the offices of L.A. Smith ( L.A. Smith had been mentored by Architect S. Charles Lee the most renowned Architect for Movie palaces and Theaters).
- ❖ In the early 1920s, when Smith died Balch forming his own firm with engineer Floyd Stanberry completed many of the theatres on which Smith had been working and many more of his own after that.
- ❖ Balch specialized in theatres, most designed under his own firm's credentials. (There is only one record to a non-theater project ever designed by him.)

# C.A. Balch (cont.)

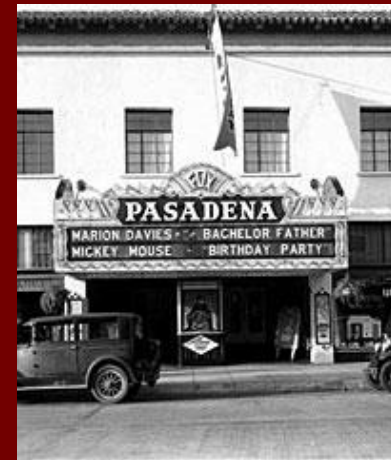
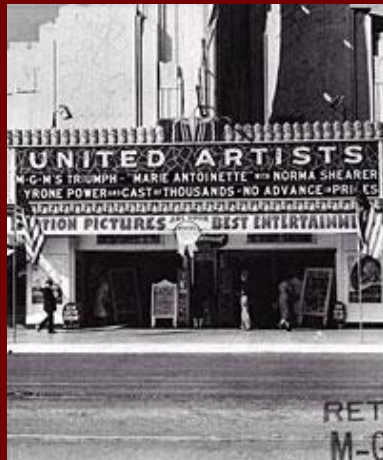
## Other Classic movie theaters designed by architect Clifford A. Balch

<b>Name</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Screens</b>
<a href="#"><u>5th Avenue Theatre</u></a>	Inglewood, CA	Closed	1
<a href="#"><u>Adams Theatre</u></a>	San Diego, CA	Closed	1
<a href="#"><u>Alameda Theatre</u></a>	East Los Angeles, CA	Closed	1
<a href="#"><u>Aztec Theatre</u></a>	San Diego, CA	Closed	1
<a href="#"><u>Edwards Century Theater</u></a>	San Gabriel, CA	Closed/Demolished	1
<a href="#"><u>El Rey Theatre</u></a>	Los Angeles, CA	Open	1
<a href="#"><u>Esquire Theatre</u></a>	Hollywood, CA	Closed	1
<a href="#"><u>Four Star Theatre</u></a>	Los Angeles, CA	Closed	1
<a href="#"><u>Fox Dome Theatre</u></a>	Santa Monica, CA	Closed/Demolished	1
<a href="#"><u>Fox Pasadena Theatre</u></a>	Pasadena, CA	Closed	1
<a href="#"><u>Fox Riverside Theater</u></a>	Riverside, CA	Closed	1
<a href="#"><u>Fox Studio City Theatre</u></a>	Studio City, CA	Closed	1
<a href="#"><u>Glendale Theatre</u></a>	Glendale, CA	Closed/Demolished	1
<a href="#"><u>Golden Gate Theatre</u></a>	East Los Angeles, CA	Closed/Demolished	1
<a href="#"><u>Hollywood Theatre</u></a>	Hollywood, CA	Open	1
<a href="#"><u>Lido Cinema</u></a>	Newport Beach, CA	Open	1
<a href="#"><u>Lido Theatre</u></a>	Los Angeles, CA	Closed/Demolished	1
<a href="#"><u>Lido Theatre</u></a>	Riverside, CA	Closed	1
<a href="#"><u>Ritz Theater</u></a>	Escondido, CA	Closed	1
<a href="#"><u>San Val Drive-In</u></a>	Burbank, CA	Closed/Demolished	1
<a href="#"><u>Starlite Drive-In</u></a>	South El Monte, CA	Closed/Demolished	1
<a href="#"><u>State Theatre</u></a>	Pomona, CA	Closed/Demolished	1
<a href="#"><u>United Artists Inglewood Theatre</u></a>	Inglewood, CA	Closed/Demolished	1
<a href="#"><u>United Artists Long Beach Theatre</u></a>	Long Beach, CA	Closed/Demolished	1
<a href="#"><u>United Artists Pasadena Theatre</u></a>	Pasadena, CA	Closed	1

# Images of other Theaters by Balch&Stanberry



# Images of other Theaters by Balch&Stanberry (cont.)





# Boom of Theaters in the 1930's



- Families Flocked to the neighborhood movie theaters every time the features changed, usually three times a week, was a way of life, even though our economy was beset by the Great Depression.

- Era's theaters were designed to transport audiences to fanciful, faraway places with their Art Deco, Egyptian & Chinese motifs, bringing a unique dimension to the movie going experience.



- Theater operators scheduled "Bank Night" prizes drawings to attract more customers. There were "Dish Nights," too, at which a piece of china was given to the viewers the same night each week, eventually making up an entire dinnerware set.

# Boom of Theaters in the 1930's (cont.)

- It was a time of dashed dreams and lost fortunes and movies and their show houses provided Depression America with much needed Escapism.

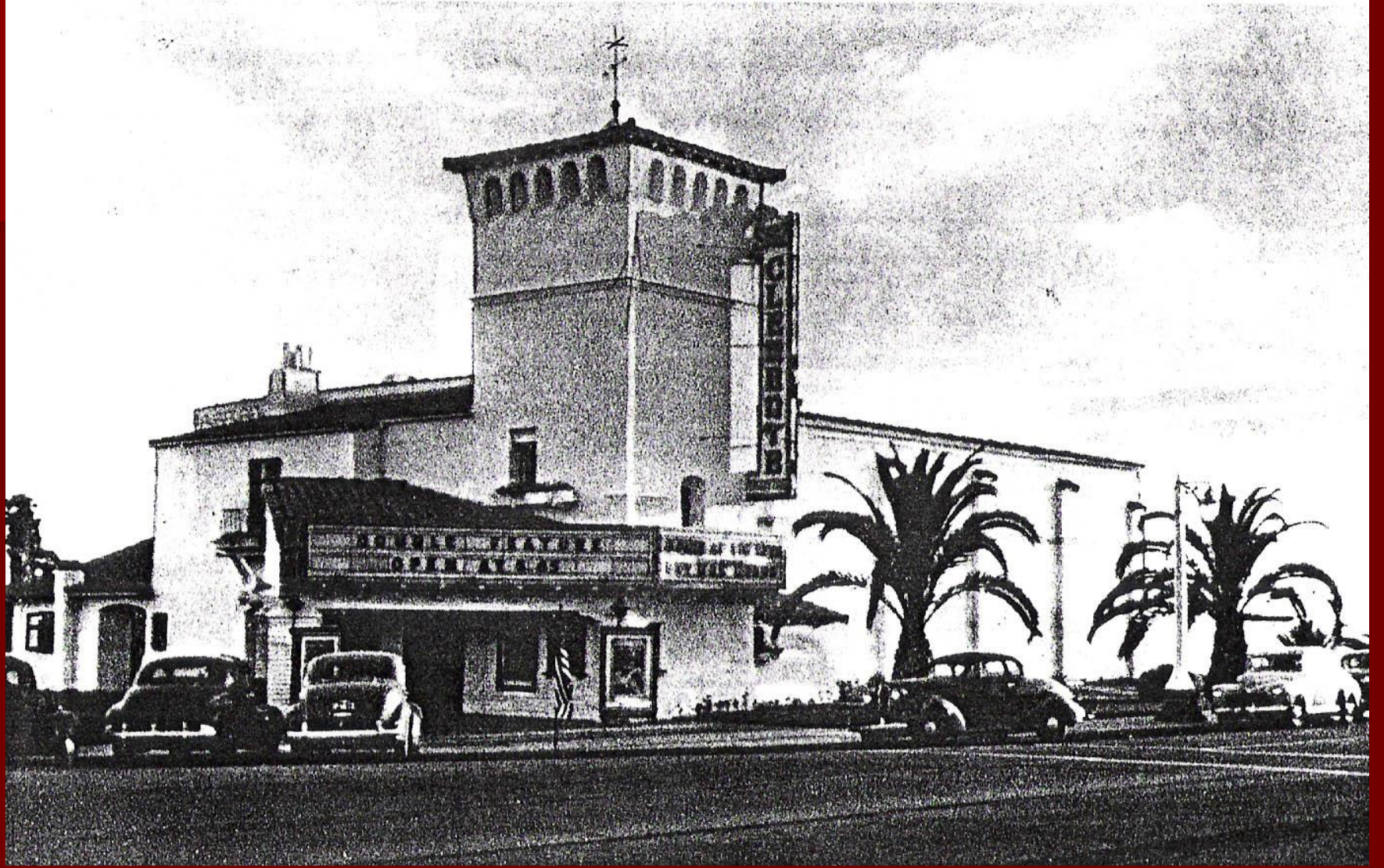
- Americans united in the face of despair-escaping their troubles with dance marathons, helping each other on the hard road from the Dust Bowl to California's "Promised Land", and rallying behind the revolutionary policies of FDR's New Deal.

- Yet movies were more than mere escapism. Most films of the depression years were grounded in the social realities of the time.

- It also proved America's resilience & hardship as it was met by hope, and tragedy was answered with daring plans.



1



# A Community's Theater!

BEST WISHES . . . . .  
 PACIFIC STATES THEATRES and  
 STRANG CONSTRUCTION CO.

ROOFING by . . . . .  
**BERT... THE ROOFER**  
 ALL KINDS of ROOFING WORK



P. O. Box 757  
 LAGUNA BEACH  
 CALIFORNIA

Laguna . . . . . 5921

BEST WISHES . . . . . PACIFIC STATES THEATRES  
 . . . . . AND STRANG CONSTRUCTION CO . . . . .

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\*  
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\*

EXCAVATING ON SAN CLEMENTE THEATRE  
 . . . . . BY . . . . .

**SMITH CONSTRUCTION CO.**

EXCAVATING  
 SHOVELS . . . TRUCKS

\*  
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\*  
\*

OFFICE AND YARD . . . 1199 Coast Boulevard South  
 PHONE 92 LAGUNA BEACH, CALIFORNIA

ROCK . . . SAND . . . GRAVEL  
 Supplied to San Clemente Theatre  
 By . . . . .

\*  
\*  
\*

**LAGUNA  
 TRUCK  
 SERVICE**

W. B. HERSEY, Prop.

\*  
\*  
\*

ROAD SURFACING  
 EXCAVATING  
 GENERAL HAULING

Headquarters:  
 BUSINESS MART  
 911 Coast Blvd. South  
 at Thalia Street  
 Laguna Beach, Calif.

Phones:  
 Office, Laguna 455  
 Res., Laguna 2758

**IFLOORS and  
 ILINOILEUMIS**

CUSTOM DESIGNED



RUBBER TILE  
 ASPHALT TILE  
 •  
 RUBBER  
 DRAINBOARDS  
 •

**HAMMOND BROS. CORP.**  
 1246 SOUTH MAIN STREET :: SANTA ANA  
 SANTA ANA 6080

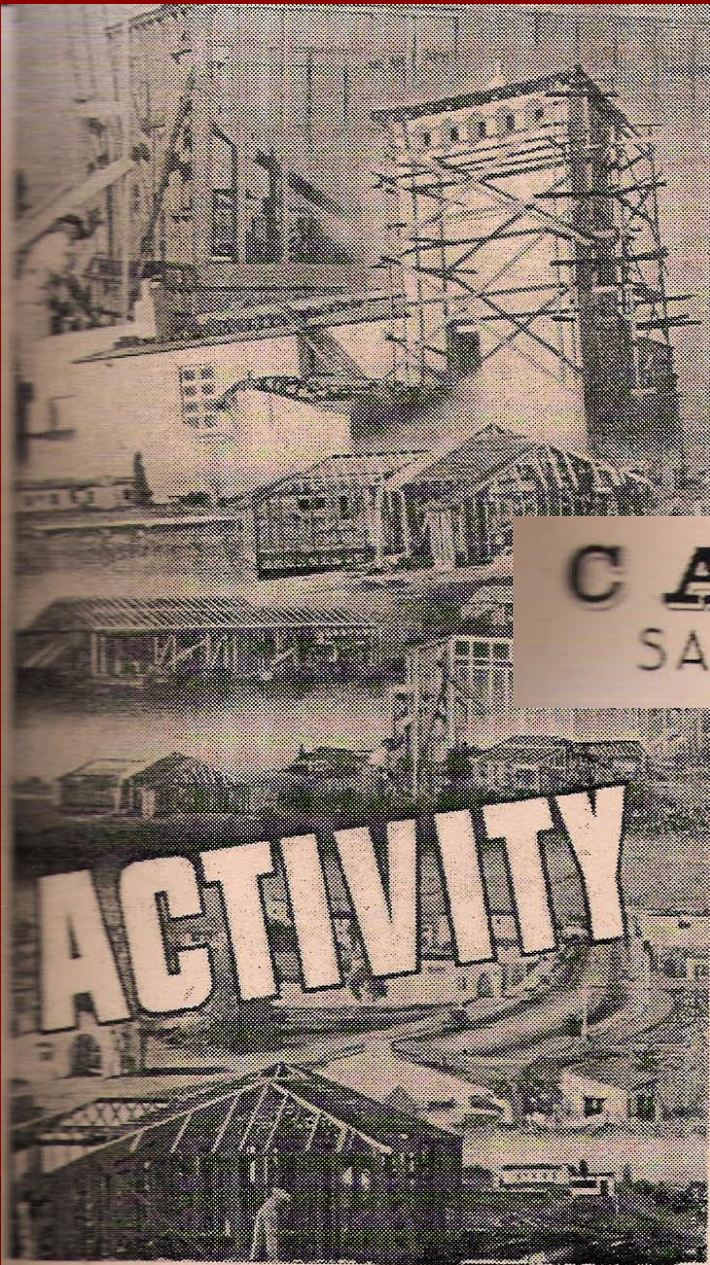
Laguna Beach 400      Fullerton 641      Newport Beach 733

SINCEREST BEST WISHES  
 To . . . . .  
 ADOLPH . . ABE . . MIKE  
 From . . . . .  
**HAM COTTON**

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**RANCHO LA BREA**

(Original advertising from the 1938 Dedication Ceremony program)



**CAPITAL CO.**  
SAN CLEMENTE

(Original advertising from the 1938 Dedication Ceremony program)

San Clemente  Historical Society

**DIVEL FUNERAL CHAPEL**

Phone 2221  
Superior Ambulance  
Service

**ROY R. DIVAL**  
**MORTICIAN**  
SAN CLEMENTE, CALIF.

In Appreciation of the Development  
in San Clemente . . . Best Wishes

*Mrs. Emma Servus*

**JEWETT'S HOTEL and CAFE**  
HIGHWAY 101 . . . SAN CLEMENTE, CALIF.

MEALS . . . LUNCHEES . . . BANQUETS  
24-HOUR SERVICE  
Free Parking  
Innerspring Mattresses

Phone . . .  
San Clemente 493

REAL ESTATE      INSURANCE      RENTALS  
All Branches

**THE HUNTER CO.**

THE PIONEER AGENCY  
102 AVENIDA DEL MAR  
San Clemente, Calif.  
Phone 2911

**FLORIS LA GRANGE**  
LADIES' TAILOR

130 DEL MAR  
SAN CLEMENTE, CALIF.

FLOOR COVERINGS in the New  
San Clemente Theatre by . . . .

**LINDLEY CARPET CO.**  
1428 SOUTH MAPLE AVE.  
Telephone PRospect 0221  
LOS ANGELES . . . CALIF.

BEST WISHES . . . Strang Construction Co.  
and Pacific States Theatres

**J. O. CHILTON LUMBER YARD**  
**BUILDING MATERIALS**

Phones: San Clemente 425 . . . Laguna Beach 5092  
SAN CLEMENTE CALIFORNIA

ALL BRICK WORK in the  
San Clemente Theatre . . .  
by

Phone  
2877

**B. K. HOLLY and SON**  
BRICK CONTRACTORS  
SAN CLEMENTE, CAL.

(Original advertising from the 1938 Dedication Ceremony program)

Flowers by . . . .

## HOSMER'S

---

FLOWERS FOR EVERY OCCASION  
\* WE DELIVER ANYWHERE \*

---




*Flowers*

---

Bonded Members of the Florists  
Telegraph Delivery Service

---

341 COAST BOULEVARD SOUTH  
PHONE 87      LAGUNA, CALIF.





## I V A'S

### Beauty Salon

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Soft Water, Exclusively

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Phone San Clemente 2081

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132 AVENIDA DEL MAR  
San Clemente, California

(Original advertising from the  
1938 Dedication Ceremony program)

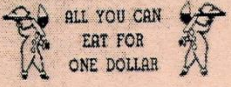
DECORATING . . . .  
STAGE EQUIPMENT  
DRAPERIES and  
FURNITURE . . . for the  
SAN CLEMENTE  
THEATRE

By the  
**Robert E. Power Studios**  
1717 CORDOVA STREET  
Parkway 3107 . . . LOS ANGELES

WATCH FOR THE NEON CHICKEN  
101 HIGHWAY IN SOUTH SAN CLEMENTE

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\*  
\*

*Green Acres . . .  
Chicken Dinners*


ALL YOU CAN  
EAT FOR  
ONE DOLLAR

\*  
\*  
\*  
\*  
\*

PHONE SAN CLEMENTE 440  
• MR. and MRS. GEO. A. RETTKE, Owners •

LIGHTING FIXTURES in  
the San Clemente Theatre  
Designed . . . Manufactured  
and installed by . . . .

\*  
\*  
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\*  
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\*

**STICKLEY, STEIN & GERARD**  
Telephone . . . Fitzroy 3171  
2404 WEST SEVENTH ST.  
LOS ANGELES . . . CALIF.

# Played at the Miramar!



## **LIVE!** Top Talent **LIVE!** **ENTERTAINMENT** Look Who's Coming

**Feb. 13**  
**UNKNOWN COMIC**  
7 & 10 p.m./\$5 & \$7.50

**Feb. 14**  
**A LA CARTE**  
10 p.m./\$5 (all seats)

**Feb. 20**  
**DAVE MASON**  
7 & 10 p.m./\$8.50

**Feb. 28**  
**THE ORIGINAL: ASSOCIATION**  
7 & 10 p.m./\$5 & \$7.50

**March 3**  
**BLACK OAK ARKANSAS**  
Featuring Jim Dandy  
7 & 10 p.m./\$6 (all seats)

**March 7**  
**THE TOWER OF POWER**  
7 & 10 p.m./\$5 & \$7.50

**March 14**  
**JERRY LEE LEWIS**  
7 & 10 p.m./\$15 reserved seats

For tickets send stamped, self-addressed envelope or come in person between 1 and 9 p.m. (7 days) or call 492-7445.

All New

**Miramar Theater**

Coast Hwy. at Ave. Pico

San Clemente

**Reservations: 492-7445**



# THE SURFER

**BEACHLINES**  
Ticket line for surf movie at  
the Miramar, a classic 1928  
Mediterranean style  
theater in San Clemente.  
Rare "Endless Summer"  
movie poster courtesy of  
Rus Calisch.



**San Clemente local** Sean McGonagle is using his instinct for dressing: a jacket of polycotton blend and elastic waist polycotton drawstring pants with slash pockets and an all-cotton band shirt with engineer stripes also by instinct. Off Shore leather shoes complete the picture.

**Tracey makes good company** for Sean with her Beach Townie look: a two-colored polka-dot mini-sundress in 100% cotton. Tanned shoulders optional.

**Trestles regular** Joe Rica knows he's got the ticket when he's wearing this Hawaiian print shirt and

corduroy walkshorts both by Off Shore. Footwear is by Rainbow Sandals.

**Anne keeps out** of Joe's clutches in a cool cotton ruffled miniskirt with matching tulip camisole and wrap belt by Lee Ann.

**World-ranked Californian** Joey Buran knows he's got toes on the nose with these Häng Ten corduroy walkshorts with zipper, button and cargo pockets: the February of polycotton blend, the jacket of nylon with zipper and side pockets. The socks go with the feet and vice versa.

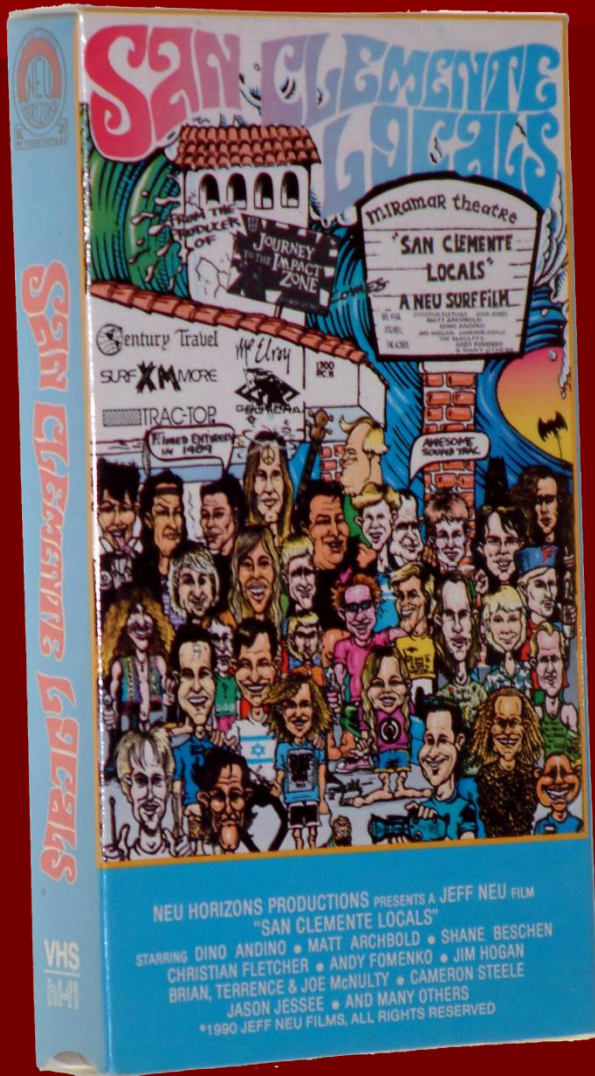
**Shelli keeps warm** while waiting in this striped polo shirt of 50% cotton/50% polyester, a coordinated cotton vest with zipper and drawstring, and all-cotton pants with elastic waist and drawstring by Häng Ten and Scott Shave Ice sandals.

**Dena does some distracting** to ease the long wait and her Beach Townie mini-comper with six-button tunic top in 100% cotton helps her make her point.

**Dean keeps in great shape** in the striped interlock placket shirt in a polycotton

## Passed at the Miramar!

San Clemente  Historical Society



# CB man's surf movie bows tonight

By FRED SWEGLAS  
Sun/Post Staff Writer  
SAN CLEMENTE — Three years of dreaming, conceptualizing, saving money, traveling, cinematography and getting caught in the impact zone of the world's heaviest waves will come to fruition for Jeff Neu tonight.

## Citizen of the day

The Capistrano Beach filmmaker's feature-length surf movie, "Journey to the Impact Zone," will make its world premiere at 7 o'clock at the Miramar Theatre. Neu, a 30-year-old surfer who took up cinematography five years ago, has spent \$70,000 of his own money to produce and promote the 90-minute film. It features many of the world's top surfers, including a generous sprinkling of San Clemente surf stars Neu has frequently filmed and ridden waves with during the 13 years he has lived in the San Clemente area.

"It's my dream come true," he says of tonight's movie premiere. Neu has booked a four-night run at the Miramar, after which he will fly to New York to launch a series of East Coast screenings of his film. He is particularly excited about tonight's West Coast debut, because it is in his hometown and it will mark a rebirth of San Clemente's landmark 50-year-old Miramar Theatre.

The Miramar, which had struggled in recent years trying to compete against shopping mall cineplexes, has been shut down for more than a year. It was sold recently to Los Angeles investors who intend to bring it back to life.

Neu plans to reopen the Miramar tonight through Saturday night with a flourish, offering live music and a bikini show at 7 each evening, followed by his movie at 8 and drawings for an array of surfing-oriented door prizes.

Neu moved to San Clemente at the age of 17 so he could live near his favorite surf spot, Cotton's Point. He went to work at Safeway supermarket and has continued to work at various Orange County Safeway markets for the past 13 years while surfing, attending film and communications classes at Saddleback College,

saving his money and producing his movie.

Over the past three years he has filmed his movie at beaches in California, Hawaii, Mexico, Indonesia and Europe. He sold off a little of the footage to surfwear companies for promotional films but kept the best and — after accumulating boxloads of footage — quit his job at Safeway four months ago to devote fulltime to editing, choreographing, polishing,

completing and promoting the movie.

The most painful part, he says, was editing down his reams of footage and having to toss out some superb surfing action.

"I just took the best of the best," he says. "I went through a terrible stress period about three months ago, trying to make creative decisions. It's edited super-tight. The surfing action is too intense, almost."

Neu, who does his cinematography with a hand-held camera in the water, faced some highly intense moments during shooting sessions when hammered by thundering waves at some of the world's gnarliest surf spots.

At one of Hawaii's fiercest beaches, Backdoor Pipeline, he filmed two-time world champion Tom Curren dropping into one particularly big, barrel-shaped wave.

"I was shooting with a super wide-angle lens," Neu recalls. "He almost came right down on top of me. I've got the shots that'll blow your mind."

Other photographers in the water bailed out and dove for cover, but not Neu.

"You can see these water splashes (in the film), and this guy's fins go off to the right. I'm still up there, about three seconds after that, still shooting. The lip (of the wave) drilled me."

"I was right there in the impact zone, and the lip hit me square in the shoulders and pulled the camera right out of my hand."

"The camera hit me in the head. I bounced off the bottom and lost a fin. I came up scraped pretty bad (from the coral bottom and kind of dazed)."

That harrowing incident in the impact zone was not the inspiration for the name of the movie. The title, Neu says, came to him in a dream, together with the concept for the opening of the movie, which is a tongue-in-cheek Twilight Zone skit.

Neu has been pleased with reviews "Journey to the Impact Zone" has received from surfing magazine editors and from others who have viewed private screenings. He thinks South Orange County surfers will be entertained seeing local surfers like Matt Archbold, Jim Hogan, Dino Andino and Brian McNulty surfing local beaches, along with the world's top 15 surfing internationally.

"Journey" was such a labor of love for Neu that he painstakingly choreographed all the surfing action to his rock 'n' roll soundtrack.

"I did the soundtrack first, and every (surf) segment is choreographed to the music. When you're watching Archie (Matt Archbold) surf, every lip smack is timed to the hand claps or the drum beats of the music."



Jeff Neu is obviously excited that his surf movie will premiere tonight at the Miramar Theatre in San Clemente.

Premiered at the Miramar!

# In the News!

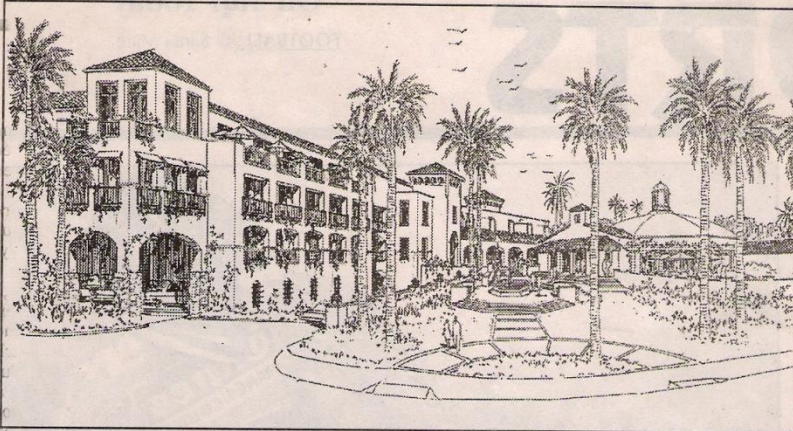


**WHAT'S NEXT?—** The Miramar Theatre, a city landmark at 1700 N. El Camino Real, is still up for sale. The theater, which

opened in 1938, has been closed for seven months with no interested buyer in sight.

—News Photo by Mike Kitada

# CHI BY THE SEA



An artist's rendering of the proposed China Healthways Institute expansion project in North Beach.

## City to get a look at CHI

By Debbie Talanian

# SUN POST NEWS

THURSDAY  
January 18, 2001  
VOL. 65, NO. 7

## CHI plan OK'd, buildings for sale

Planning Commission approves science center; owner puts bowling alley and theater on the market

By DEBBIE TALANIAN  
Sun Post News

Richard Lee received praise and approval from the Planning Commission Tuesday for his plan to transform a long-vacant landmark building in North Beach into a science center. Lee is trying to sell off two historic buildings on the same Avenida Pico and North El Camino Real corner for fear his plans there never will be approved. Lee, owner of the CHI Institute, still needs City Council and Coastal Com-

mission blessings to finish what he's started at the old Sebastian's West dinner theater at 140 Avenida Pico. He knows it could be several months before he gets the green light to create a museum with exhibits about Eastern and Western health philosophies on vitality and healing.

The main sticking point is a waiver of 25 parking spaces. Lee has seven on the site where the city requires 32. The Planning Commission unanimously OK'd the request and Lee expects the City Council to do the same.

He said he's not sure how the Coastal Commission will view the project. But he said the state agency is far likelier to approve this project than anything he had planned for the Miramar Theater and bowling alley, now for sale for \$1.95 million.

Needed parking waivers for Lee's theater and bowling alley projects would be significant. Lee doesn't think

the Coastal Commission would justify the waivers for anything he wanted to do there, like create business offices, training rooms and a bed and breakfast.

"The CHI Science Exploratorium is very much public-oriented," Lee said. "We would need a use like that for the Miramar Theater (complex). We looked at many possibilities ... but all the plans we devised for the Miramar Theater (complex) with the parking waivers would likely not make it through."

Lee is hopeful the Coastal Commission will look favorably on his science center, which would be open to the public and should appeal to the crowd that frequents North Beach.

"They will probably see this as a use that fits very well with the beach-going public so I am hopeful that they will approve it because it is something that's valuable to the coast," Lee said. "If they say no then they will stop the project." Because the buildings Lee owns have

historic significance it is unlikely he could tear down the structures or courtyards in favor of parking spaces. He has to rely on public spots nearby.

Planning Commissioners on Tuesday expressed concerns about parking but were pleased with Lee's willingness to take on the complicated property and open his project to the public.

City Planner Jim Hare told commissioners there are several examples of projects in the city that rely heavily on public parking to meet the needs of their businesses. He said Lee's project was no different than those.

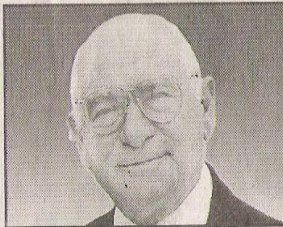
"It is rare and wonderful. We have an owner who's willing to use this facility in this manner, then give the rest back to the public," Commissioner Dottie Prehaska said. "It's late but it's great and we'll keep it. I'm tickled with it."

Lee moved his offices last week from

See CHI page 12

# Rallying to save old Miramar Theatre

The Warner Grand in San Pedro in all its restored art deco splendor could be Exhibit A to present to the court - successfully staging an Alfred Hitchcock revival festival with a week of "Rebecca," "The 39 Steps," "Sabotage," "Lifeboat," "Suspicion," "Rear Window," "Marnie," "The Birds" and so forth all in a thrilling, chilling row.



JOHN HALL  
HALL AROUND TOWN

regular general business meeting starting at 7:30 p.m. in the Ole Hanson Room at the Center, and the world at large as well as the membership is invited. Encouraged. Begged.

"We'll have dessert, refreshments and a few surprises, too," said Lee. Plus a video replay of Santa Barbara architect Henry Lenny's earlier presentation to the group regarding the joys and glories of keeping his

Most recent dream that exploded was advanced by Richard Lee, owner of China Healthways Institute, five years ago. He bought the property in a package deal that included the also vacant old bowling alley next door and the original Casino dance ballroom and later dinner-theater across the alley.

The super plan was to convert all of the forlorn trio of dying relics into the Chi learning

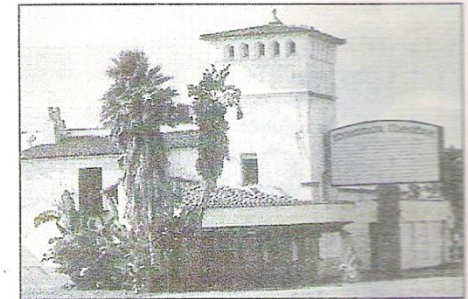
for Chi activities but after failed attempts to sell the movie house and bowling alley sought to bulldoze them to be more marketable, before the preservationists rushed in with their stop-the-music protests. I don't intend to throw myself or my word processor in front of a bulldozer, but I guess I'm one of them. So I'll be there Friday night, too, yelling and hoping for the best.

The Historical Society

# Historical movie house is sold to developer

**Cities • San Clemente**  
 preservationists say the Miramar,  
 built in 1937, is a treasure.

By **JOEL ZLOTNIK**  
 The Orange County Register



**STEVEN DELSON PAID \$1.95 million** for the Miramar Theatre and the next-door bowling alley in San Clemente • File photo: The Register

INTE  
 s 64-year run as a  
 use is coming to an

lson, who opened  
 property last week,  
 some architectural  
 colonial tower. Early  
 hat the structures -  
 decade - will not re-

ramar) to become  
 toric eyesore," Del-

Ehlow said that when his now-44-year-old son Al Jr. was a week old, he and his wife took him to the Miramar to see "The D.I." with Jack

## Saving Cinema Takes Thick Plot

San Clemente, preservationists are up against factors that have plagued such efforts nationwide.

STANLEY ALLISON  
 Staff Writer

The Miramar Theatre in San Clemente is from a simpler, quieter time when a guest could see a cartoon, a newsreel or a double feature for a quarter — 35 cents if you wanted to sit in the plush, high-back loge seats. But over the years, like so many single-screen movie houses, the Miramar succumbed to the big chains, unable to compete with stadium seating, surround sound and multiplex venues.

Built in 1937, a Spanish Colonial design, the cinema is empty now. No movie has been shown at the Miramar since the mid-1960s, and its owner is thinking of knocking the place down.

A group of residents — some who worked at the theatre in its heyday, some who simply admire its place in the city's history — is hoping to revive the Miramar. But like other grass-roots groups trying to bring the cinemas of a gone era out of retirement, the San Clemente Historical Society has discovered a tough reality: "The old buildings simply don't make for good theaters anymore."

So if the Miramar is to be reformed, it will most likely be as a performing arts center or a restaurant.



DON KILSEN Los Angeles Times  
 THEY WERE THERE: Don and Lois Divel were among the early ushers at the Miramar. It was the scene of their courtship.

one being the potential for flooding at high tide. The foundation had hoped to raise the curtain last year, but it is still several million shy of its goal.

The Port Theatre in Corona del Mar was recently sold by someone who had dreamed of returning it to its former glory

*You just can't knock it down. People don't build theaters these days.'*

Fred Divel, preservationist and son of Don and Lois Divel, above

architectural features?" Delson said a performing arts center would have to be enormously successful to stay afloat.

But Fred Divel is undeterred. He and others in the historical society believe the Miramar can sustain itself.



**TUESDAY**

July 22, 2003

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www.ocregister.com/sanclemente

## A new idea for theater: Church

Pastor presents one vision during historical society discussion on how to save old Miramar

By FRED SWEGLES  
SUN POST NEWS

Friday, as more than 100 people packed a Community Center meeting room to ponder the fate of San Clemente's landmark cinema building, Pondo Vleisides stepped to the podium and suggested a divine idea.

A church. Vleisides, a lifelong San Clemente resident, is senior pastor at San Clemente Evangelical Free Church, a new but growing congregation he said has 75 members and about 150 attendees.

The landmark movie theater - erected in 1937 - has been shuttered for the last decade as one idea after another has been floated to resurrect it. Now, owner Richard Lee has applied to the city for a demoli-

# MIRAMAR MASS

9-30-04



FRED SWEGLES, SUN POST NEWS

Pondo Vleisides addresses a San Clemente Historical Society gathering Friday at the Community Center, describing his vision for reuse of the former Miramar Theatre. **See story on Page 1**

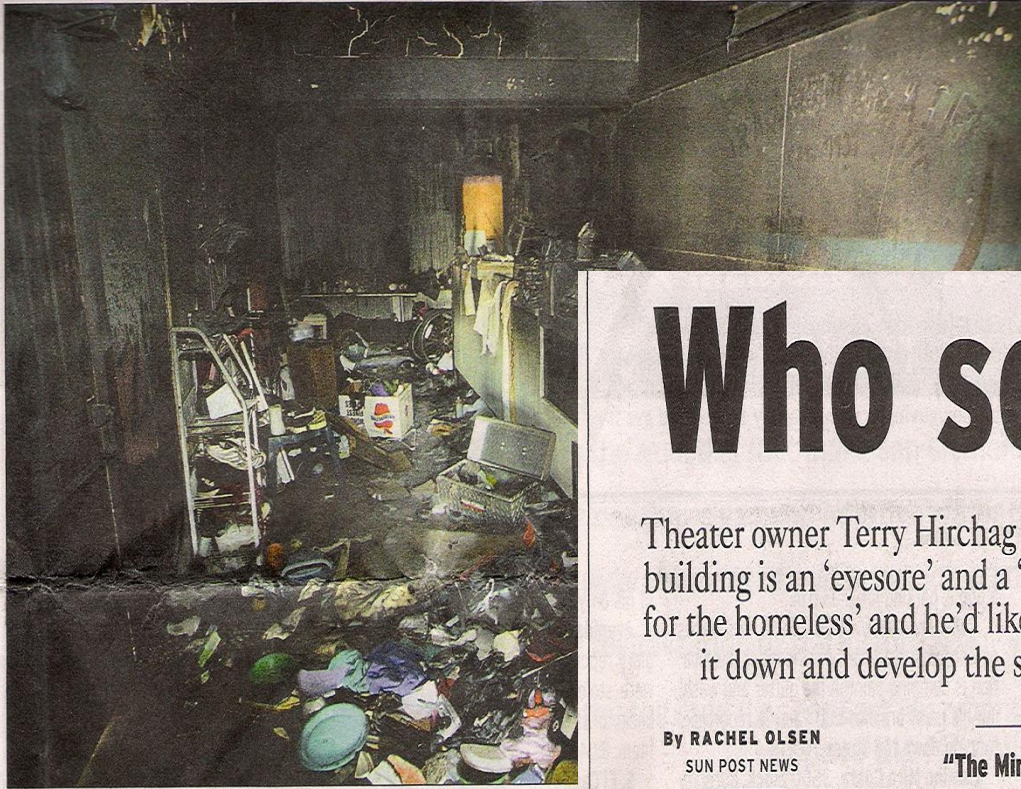
San Clemente  Historical Society

# !! Tragic Close Call !!



November 2005

## THE MIRAMAR THEATER



**THE DAMAGE:** Police believe an arsonist ignited the fire that burned the building, which has been vacant for several years and homeless people had lived there.

# Who set the fire?

Theater owner Terry Hirschag said the building is an 'eyesore' and a 'magnet for the homeless' and he'd like to tear it down and develop the site.

By **RACHEL OLSEN**  
SUN POST NEWS

Investigators say arson was the cause of a fire Monday night at a San Clemente historical building.

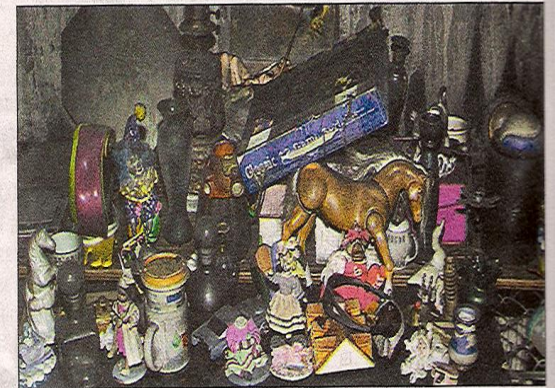
Orange County Fire Authority Capt. Stephen Miller said investigators are looking at suspects. The investigation could take several days or weeks, he said.

On Tuesday, workers shifted through piles of rubbish at the burned Miramar Theater, on El Camino Real.

**"The Miramar is important historically on so many levels."**

**MIKE COTTER**  
SAN CLEMENTE  
HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
PRESIDENT

almost the entire walking area. Broken glass, bikes, a shoe rack adorned with shoes, a Saddleback College school binder filled with papers and artwork littered the damaged facility. Children's toys were even found on the second story



PAUL BERSEBACH/SUN POST NEWS

**TOYS AND FIGURINES** litter a table inside the Miramar Theater, 1700 N. El Camino Real in San Clemente.

smoke damage.

Terry Hirschag, owner of the Miramar Theater, worked with the crew and walked around the property that had been boarded up for the past six

Somehow, he said, individuals found their way in.

In the year since he purchased the Miramar, Hirschag said he's boarded up the old



### AS REMEMBERED BY

# Remembering afternoons at the movies

A few weeks ago the San Clemente Historical Society had an article in the paper asking people for their memories of the Miramar theater. I thought it would be interesting to look back at the interviews I have done with longtime residents and see how many of them mentioned the theater. These inter-



PATRICIA HOBBS

wouldn't dare sit any place else - sort of the eternal pecking order. It would get so rowdy that they'd hire rent-a-cops."

**Cliff Russell** - "I'd work some for Mr. Strang and helped him build the movie theater. You picked up whatever jobs you could."

**Don Divel** - "Cecil Oathout and I were the first ushers at the theater when it opened in 1938. We wore tuxedos to work."

**Helen Bogart** - "During the 1950s at Christmas time had a big party at the theater. The local merchant furnished gifts for prize

**Lee Brown Miller** - "In the late 1940s, my friends and I went to the movies every weekday or Sunday afternoon. Tickets cost 14 cents. That was 14 cents plus 2 cents tax."

**Jeanna Austin Bas** - "Every Friday night in the 1950s, my parents would

Sun Post News

### AS REMEMBERED BY

# Remembering Miramar matinees

The Miramar Theater at the north end of town had its grand opening in 1938. The first program was a double feature - "Mad about Music" and "Goodbye Broadway" plus a Disney cartoon. The movie house was called the San Clemente Theater. It



PATRICIA HOBBS HENDRY

seated 700 and had 150 loges and upholstered opera chairs.

Recently the San Clemente Historical Society asked local residents for

down together, going to the beach, theater or pool, we all just walked cross-country so we thought nothing of it."

Do you have memories to share about the movie theater? "As Remembered By" appears Thursdays in the Sun Post News. Write to P.H. Hendry c/o Sun Post news, 95 Avenida Del Mar, San Clemente, CA 92672.

on my way to the Miramar theater on Friday night. That was the place to go with lines of kids waiting to go to the theater."

CONTACT THE WRITER: CONTACT THE WRITER: "As Remembered by" appears Thursdays in Sun Post News. Write to P.H. Hendry c/o Sun Post News, 95 Avenida Del Mar, San Clemente, CA 92672



# Old theaters getting new lives all over

A man named Steve Needleman put \$3 million a couple of years ago into refurbishing an old vaudeville-movie palace named the Orpheum Theatre, vintage 1926, at the definitely unromantic 21st Century address of 842 S. Broadway in formerly decayed and down-trodden downtown Los Angeles.

The rest of the family in a family of entrepreneurs fig-



JOHN HALL

## HALL AROUND TOWN

ing Art Deco classic movie house in San Pedro, the Warner Grand, has been doing very well with well chosen revival festivals, the most recent being an Alfred Hitchcock retrospective with such as "North by Northwest" with Cary Grant and Eva Marie Saint, "Rear Window" with Jimmy Stewart and Grace Kelly, and "Vertigo" with Stewart and Kim Novak.

The historic Bay Theater on

40-year-old 50,000 pound Wurlitzer Opus pipe organ shipped west from the New York Paramount, and has been packing them in for his Monday night series of silents complemented by the rousing organ music.

Loderhouse purchased nearly 50 silent comedy classics starring Laurel and Hardy, Charlie Chaplin and Buster Keaton this summer, and it's likely now that this innovative

the Warner Grand in San Pedro and The Bay in Seal Beach can do it, why not San Clemente's 1938 Miramar, which is eight years more historic than the Bay?

Whatever, as we said here Tuesday, the fever grows for bringing the historic San Clemente movie house, closed since 1989 when its most recent attempted revival failed, back to life as another of those sinele

## LOCAL LOOK

# These are dark times, so ... let's celebrate!

By the numbers - and the groans...

Pick a number, any number - 18, 10 or 9. Record-breaking tsunamis, killer earthquakes, lunatic suicide car bombings, terrorist



JOHN HALL  
HALL AROUND  
TOWN

threats and monster hurricanes, this is probably not the best time for a celebration. But what can you do? The numbers keep coming up with a

smile even in these darkest of times.

Whichever, excuse, please,

it's Happy Anniversary to me today in triplicate. It was 18 years ago this month that I settled in on old Ramona in South San Clemente after 21 years in Placentia following earlier residences in North Hollywood, L.A.'s Crenshaw District, Van Nuys, the Hollywood Hills, Palo Alto, the Stanford Delt House and Burlingame after growing up on the corner of 42nd Place and Grammercy in South Central Los Angeles, then known as Southwest Los Angeles before the west exploded and went further west.

Ah, Placentia, the only town to name a street after me. It was grand by Tri-City Park and the lake, but San Clemente

was calling with an old siren song. I was almost born in San Clemente. My mother was visiting her parents, my grandparents, Tom and Violet Murphine, when she went into labor. Dr. Garnet B. Grant hadn't quite finished building the original San Clemente Hospital he founded, so he drove my mother and what eventually turned out to be me to Angelus Hospital in L.A. Dr. Grant also had offices and a home in old Hollywood, but got no further than downtown L.A. before he realized it was time to stop and unload all his passengers. Sure enough, it was April 19, 1928. So it was nearly two years before I became a Great Depres-

sion Era Baby via the Great Wall Street Crash of October 1929. Hey, that's another significant anniversary to pounce upon this month.

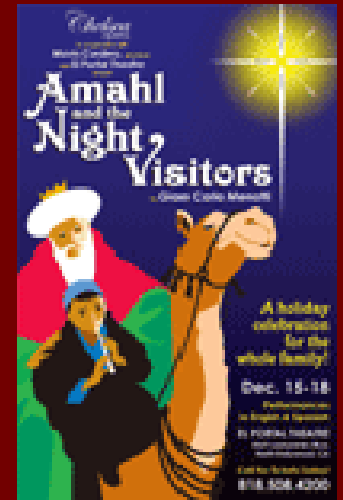
I may have mentioned it before that my grandfather was the first mayor of San Clemente and one of Ole Hanson's several partners, including Ham Cotton, who subdivided the virgin cattle land and rang the starting bell to get all this excitement off and running. Murphine and Hanson met while serving in the state of Washington legislature. When Ole was mayor of Seattle, my grandfather was director of public utilities. They left Seattle together to build a tract of

homes in Southwest L.A. and a hotel in Santa Barbara before getting to San Clemente.

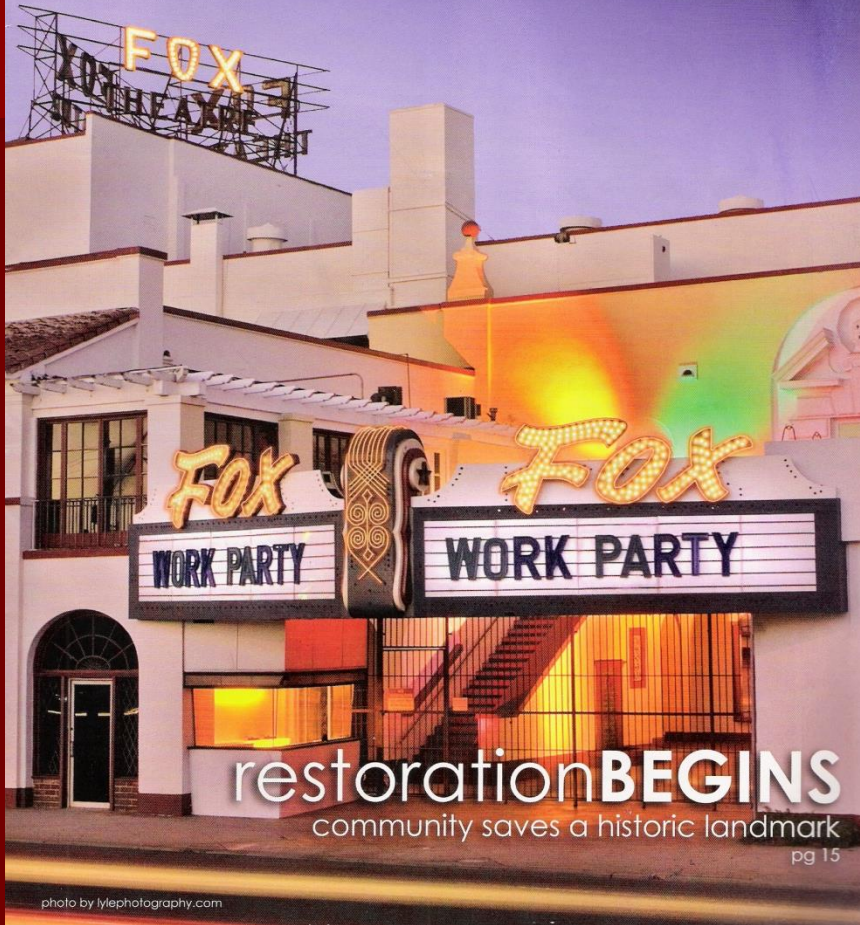
My initial memories of San Clemente as a 4- and 5-year-old were of visiting often from L.A., a spectacular Fourth of July party firing off skyrockets from the bluff in front of my grandparents home slightly north of Calafia Beach and directly East of Seal Rock, going fishing via a launch off the pier to a classic old barge that was anchored a mile or so out in the blue, being quarantined with the measles in one of the guest bungalows at the Cotton estate, later the Western White House, while all the grownups

SEE HALL • PAGE 7

# El Portal Theatre

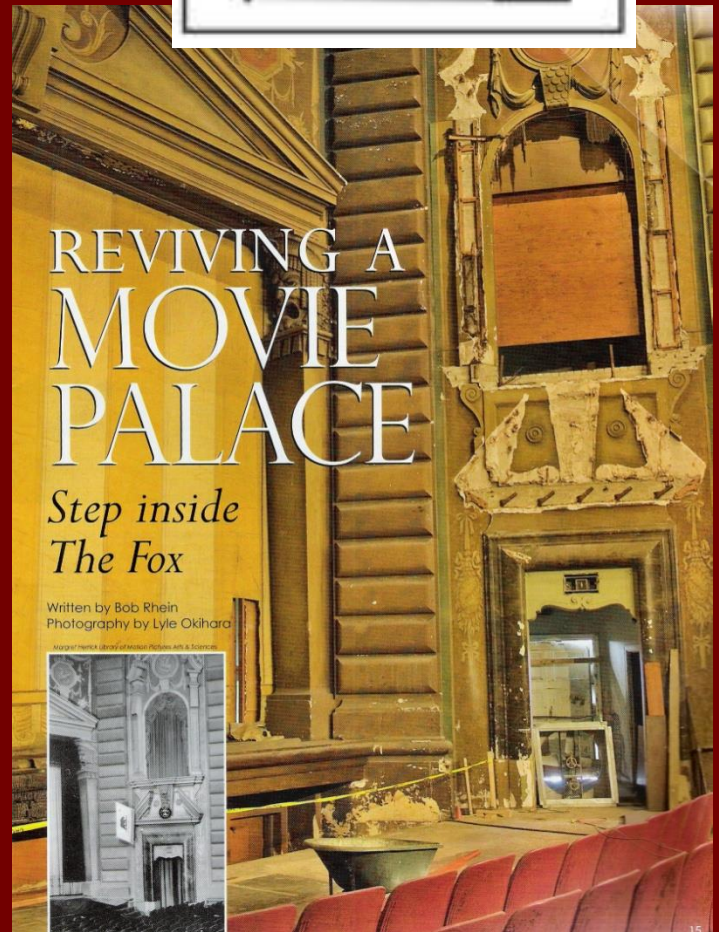


EXPERIENCE  
**FULLERTON**  
volume 3 issue 3



restoration**BEGINS**  
community saves a historic landmark  
pg 15

photo by lylephotography.com



REVIVING A  
MOVIE  
PALACE

*Step inside  
The Fox*

Written by Bob Rhein  
Photography by Lyle Okihara



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