

CANALS--VENICE

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SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA ASSOCIATES NEWS



Transition in the Venice Canals



## Transition in the Venice Canals

By Cherri Brantner

Photography by Diane Hadley and Tom Licari

In February of this year the Los Angeles City Council approved the Venice Canal Restoration Project. This restoration includes the removal of debris from canal bottoms, stabilization of banks and reconstruction and restoration of bridges and sidewalks. Approval of the Environmental Impact Report has been a critical factor in getting this project under way. What now stands between the existing conditions of the canals and the restoration project is adequate funding which is estimated to cost \$775,000. Budgetary constraints (Proposition 13) have forced the city of Los Angeles to delete the project from the capital improvement budget this year. The city is asking to have the canals declared a cultural and historical landmark which would make them eligible for funding from state and federal agencies such as the National Endowment and federal historic preservation funds. All work is to be done in a manner consistent with the preceding historical identity and integrity of the area.

There are many Canal residents who would disagree today that anything further can be done to save that very same element so critically defined by the EIR: the historical identity and integrity of the Venice Canals. Transition in the Canals is immediately apparent these days when one walks down the palm-lined paths and views the multiple contradictions that time and place have brought. Gone are the days when the canals evoked a lush and quiet mystery of time having stopped. Gone too are the qualities of gentle and compatible scale, gracious charm, and non-threatening diversity. What has evolved today is a community struggling for an identity.

The Ballona Creek estuary and surrounding salt marshes were once a rich coastal marine resource in Southern California, now having been obliterated by the channelization of Ballona Creek and the development of Marina del Rey and surrounding areas. Those natural riches have been replaced by other types of riches and adjacent speculation. In 1974 the average 30 x 90 lot, substandard by Los Angeles definitions, would have cost approximately \$18,000. That same lot today might be \$125,000.



### About The Photographers

Diane Hadley and Tom Licari met six years ago while working as research associates at the Institute for Marine and Coastal Studies at USC. As environmental biologists they produced a variety of work in the field of marine biology through their documentary photography, illustration, graphics and the research and preparation of environmental land use reports. The finely honed skills which they developed in photography and illustration were further encouraged by their extensive travel experiences. Both have studied photography under Leland Rice and Jerry McMillian.

This similarity in direction and talent has led to their partnership and establishing of Photo Sphere Art Studio in Venice. Through the combination and evolution of their skills they are currently producing a variety of interesting work: photo murals, graphic illustration, portfolios, photo documentation and architectural photography, corporate identification and the custom printing of technical material.

As artists, both are pursuing personal photographic projects. Ms. Hadley's current concern in art is in redimensionalizing photography. Her primary work deals with hand-colored, three-dimensional construction site-scapes. She is preparing a collection of this work for exhibition.

Tom Licari is pursuing a personal expression and possession with documenting the vintage automobiles of the 40's and 50's. His current work involves these images, many of them hand-colored, and presented in various forms: surreal still shots, photo murals and photo montages amongst them. He is currently compiling a book of these images.

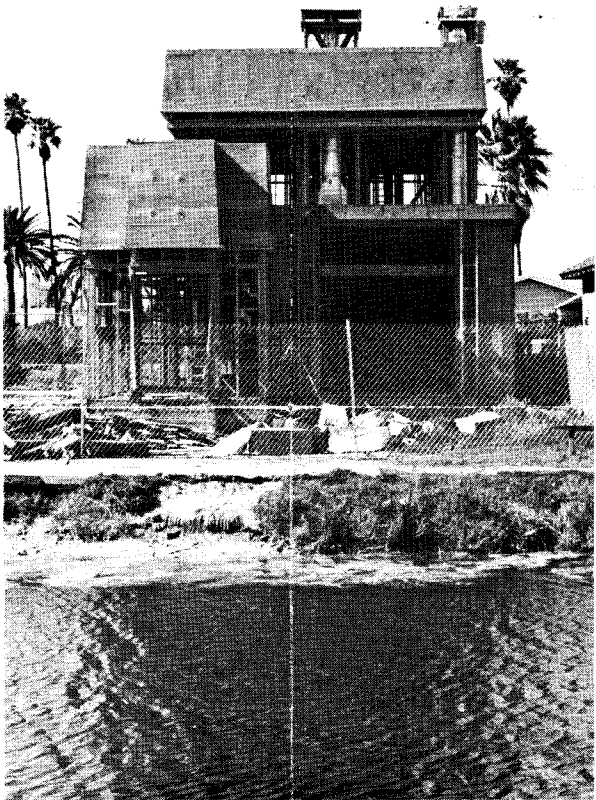
Photo Sphere Art Studio is located at 432 Carroll Canal in Venice, 823-2321. It partners share a mutual concern for the transition of the Canal neighborhood.

SCAN appreciates your contributions to our monthly calendar. We welcome letters, articles, and photographs for publication. All material is due on the 10th of each month. Address all contributions to SCAN/AIA, Suite 510, The Bradbury Building, 304 South Broadway, Los Angeles, California 90013. Annual subscription rate is \$5.00.

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This issue of SCAN produced in part through a donation from Harry Shimabukuro, AIA.

	SUNDAY JULY 1	2		
		ARCHITECTS CLUB 1510, TOASTMASTERS: Meeting. The Toastmasters Club was formed to "afford practice and training in the art of public speaking and in presiding over meetings, and to promote sociability and good fellowship among its members."  Anyone is welcome to attend a meeting of Toastmasters 1510. Dinner, 6:30 at The Original Barbeque, 801 S. Vermont. Meeting follows at 7:30 p.m. Contact Millard Lee, 483-8822, for further information.		
Continued from Page 8  Two reasons might be suggested. Suffice it to say that finding \$10.5 million and the legal means to place the land in the public's hands has been a monumental 10-year ordeal. Spearheaded by County Supervisor Ed Edelman in response to the pressing park needs of his own constituency, the effort has involved not only the County's Recreation and Parks Department, but its Flood Control District, the City of Los Angeles, and the State Recreation and Parks Department in a pioneering four-way coalition of agencies.			10	AIA CHAPTER MEETING: "Energy Conscience Design," Sequoia Room, Pacific Design Center. 6-8 p.m., Reception and Exhibit \$4.50/person. RSVP by July 6 624-6561. 8 p.m., meeting, Berry Wasserman, State Architect, guest speaker.
Accompanying the political maneuverings is a lack of public attention that is wholly uncharacteristic of such large projects — especially one which will become a reality only after years of negotiations, court procedures, stand-offs, appraisals, studies, and meetings. Perhaps it is because the Pan Pacific project is seen by county interests as a park of local or neighborhood significance that it has been an issue only within the Beverly-Fairfax and Wilshire district communities.		16		
The Pan Pacific Auditorium for them was an irritant and an obstacle — in official parlance, "urban blight." Anything complicating the acquisition negotiations caused extreme reaction; anything diverting attention to future uses of the site and building was unwelcome, since the matter at hand involved securing necessary funds from the governmental agencies. When the county's EIR appeared with an amalgam of agency requirements that left only a "passive park" as a future option for the land, both the local community and the preservationists jumped fully into the fray.				
The resolution of the park and the building's future seems now to be in the hands of the county as lead agency and the state as landowner. A 15-member Citizens Advisory Committee has been named with alleged equal representation from state, county and city interests. However, the legal status of this committee is simply advisory. The members overwhelmingly are activists from the community, and there is no official voice for preservation among them. The committee's existence is a cause for optimism, however, since it represents an opening of this Pan Pacific issue to public scrutiny and information.			30	
Cont. below				



# calendar july




## exhibits

Due to the required processes stemming from the Conservancy's loud objection and their efforts toward National Register listing, the whole subject of the building's future is being reconsidered. The local firm of Gruen Associates, with historical architect Ray Girvigian as consultant, is now negotiating with the county on the preparation of a building reuse feasibility study and on the mandated master plan for the park. But the battle is far from won.

We return to the question of why the architectural community as a whole has been unresponsive up to this time. True, the political arena in which these 10 years of negotiations took place was limited to the local area. True, too, that the recent rash of causes — from the Central Library, to Watts Towers, to the Wiltern, to Spring Street — has awakened but overburdened the protectors of the built environment. However, problems surrounding the Pan Pacific issue may be traced to a subtler cause: the difficulty of recognizing the significance of the artifacts of the recent past. The architectural conservation effort here in Los Angeles is in its infancy and its companion task of raising public consciousness about

L.A. buildings is indeed a must start almost from ground zero. While people in New York, Britain, and Japan are enthusiastic and well-informed on the subject of Moderne buildings, those who see them every day here seem indifferent to their importance.

In the next issue, the history of the Pan Pacific Auditorium and its place in the annals of local and architectural history will be presented. The newer approach to architectural preservation — conservation — will be discussed in pointing to the ways in which the historical edifice may be conceived as a public asset rather than a liability. We have been and will continue to monitor the political process that determines the Auditorium's and the park's fate. And we will be following the work of the Gruen firm as they distill and ultimately mold into a plan the many community and cultural interests presently confronting this important future monument and park.

**Fran Offenhauser**

**ARCO CENTER FOR VISUAL ART:** Documentation as Art/Art as Documentation, George Geyer and Tom McMillin. Through July 14th.

Photographers' Photographers. Photographers select Photographers Grey Crawford, Steve Danko, Brian Forrest, Michael Levine, Susan Rankalitis and others to exhibit work. Through August 18. Atlantic Richfield Plaza Fifth and Flower, B level 488-0038

**CITYSCAPE FOTO GALLERY:** Morrie Camhi, Petaluma Series, photographs. Through July 15. Call 796-2036 for gallery hours. 97 E. Colorado Blvd, Pasadena.

**DUBINS GALLERY:** A special exhibit of selected works on paper by Gallery artists. Through July 27. 11948 San Vicente Blvd. 820-1400

**JANUS GALLERY:** Jim Morphesis, new paintings. Through July 14. 21 Market Street, Venice. 399-9122

**LOS ANGELES INSTITUTE OF CONTEMPORARY ART:** Maria Nordman. The exhibit will be held at 12839 Washington Blvd. (A key may be obtained across the street at the market) Preparation for the Washington Blvd. project has taken over a month. Elyse Grinstein contributed architectural consultation and advice. This project is sponsored in part by a grant from the Museums Program, National Endowment For the Arts and CETA Title VI. 559-5033 Through July 22

"Sound" sound work and acoustic experimentation. July 14-August 31.

David Hockney T-Shirts available by joining LAICA, through July 31st. 2020 S. Robertson Blvd. 559-5033

**LA LOUVER GALLERY:** Wallace Berman, Through July 14. Charles Garabedian opens July 17, through August 4. 55 North Venice Blvd., Venice; 396-6633.

**MALIBU ART AND DESIGN:** Gurdon Woods, "Movements in Time

## tours

**THE GAMBLE HOUSE:** Open for public tours, \$2/person. Call 793-3334 for time. 4 Westmoreland Place, Pasadena.

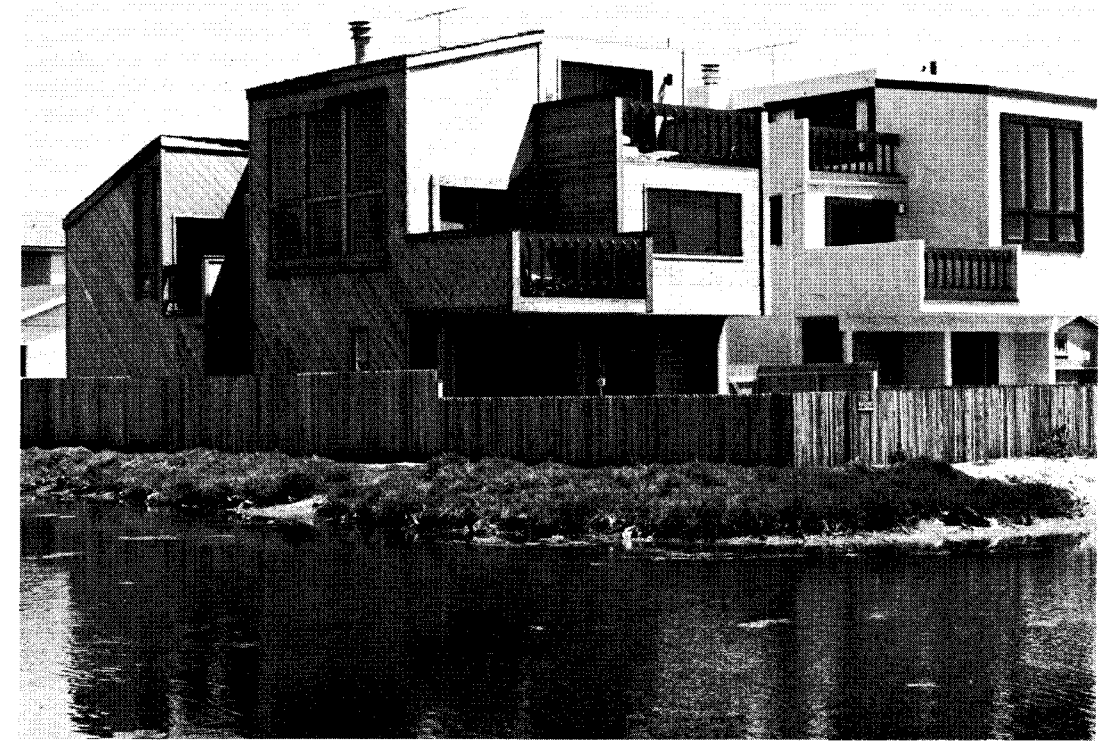
**NEWSPACE GALLERY:** Wade Saunders, "Trees." Jean St. Pierre, Paintings and Drawings. Through July 28. 5015 Melrose Avenue, 469-9353

**SPACE GALLERY:** "Summer Diversions," Artist in Different Media, through August 22. 6015 Santa Monica Blvd. 461-8166

## relocation

**CANWELL-HEUMANN AND ASSOCIATES** have relocated to 525 S. Virgil Avenue, Los Angeles.

**RON GOLDMAN, AIA**, has opened his new office at the Malibu Art & Design Center, Loft. 3900 Cross Creek Rd., Malibu.



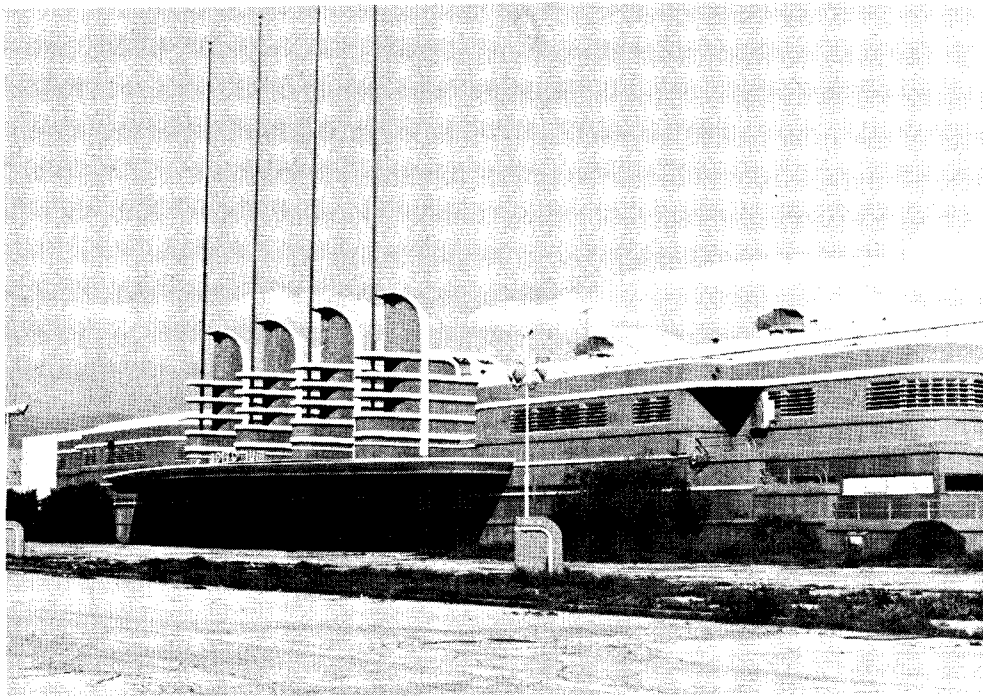


## Pan Pacific Auditorium . . .

It is little wonder that the Pan Pacific is a rallying point for senior citizen activists, fast food franchisers, and bureaucrats alike. A quick inventory of open space remaining in densely populated Los Angeles reveals little besides cemeteries and steep hills. And yet 28 flat acres of dust and tumbleweeds lie south of Beverly Boulevard between Fairfax and Gardner Avenues close to the Farmer's Market, the Park La Brea, the County Museum, and the CBS studios.

Also slowly rallying to the cause is the architectural community because standing among the dust and weeds is a landmark of architectural and Los Angeles history, an example which is both symbolic and real, the streamlined Moderne Pan Pacific Auditorium. Host to shows, concerts, sports events, and rallies from the Depression to 1972, this precursor of convention centers epitomizes the optimism and thrills of our predecessors, the beginnings of modern mass entertainment, and the 1930's enthusiasm for the brave new world of planes, steamships, and motor cars. A winning competition entry by the local firm of Plummer, Werdeman, and Becket, the 100,000-square-foot shell marshaled the era of the "decorated shed," with a triumphant and futuristic green western entry facade fronting an essentially dull auditorium hulk.

About six months ago the building was saved from the threat of imminent demolition by a small group of vigilant preser-

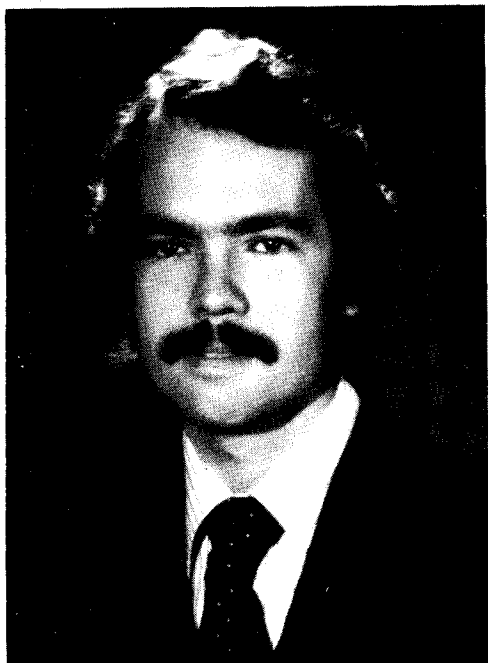


vationists loosely organized under the aegis of the Los Angeles Conservancy. Alerted that the county's environmental impact report for site acquisition had essentially condemned the structure, Conservancy members Margaret Bach, Tom Hines, Linda Mehr, John Miller, and Kathryn Smith moved quickly to establish its historic integrity and its official landmark status with appropriate city, state, and federal authorities. Since federal monies would pay for the

site's purchase, their actions were especially timely. National Historic Landmark designation prohibits federal monies from being used for demolition without prescribed review procedures

How could such a close brush have happened? Why has the architectural community remained so ignorant of the Pan Pacific's status? Why is there still so little organized activity?

**Continued in Calendar**



John J. Hekhuis, 25-year old apprentice architect and Thousand Oaks resident, has been awarded a Rotary International Graduate Fellowship for the academic year 1979-80.

Hekhuis will study design of public buildings in an urban context at the Helsinki Institute of Technology in Finland. He chose the Helsinki Institute of Technology because of its prominence in design and close association with great Finnish architects from Alvar Aalto to Eero Saarinen and Vilja Revell.

The Fellowship covers all expenses including tuition, books, room and board, travel, and also provides for an additional three months of intensive language study in Finland. Hekhuis plans to leave in mid-May.

According to Dr. Harlan Jones, President-elect of the Thousand Oaks Rotary Club, Hekhuis is the first winner sponsored by the Club in its 20-year history. Hekhuis competed for the award in District 524 which is

composed of 52 Rotary Clubs extending from Bakersfield to San Luis Obispo.

A 1971 honor graduate of Thousand Oaks high school, Hekhuis completed a five-year professional degree in architecture at Arizona State University (Tempe, AZ), graduating in 1976. He received the Outstanding Graduate Award from the College of Architecture, and was named to Who's Who Among American Colleges and Universities.

Since graduation he has worked for Edward H. Fickett, F.A.I.A., prominent Los Angeles architect, past president of the Southern California Chapter of the American Institute of Architects, and currently Chairman of the Architectural Commission for the city of Beverly Hills.

Hekhuis has been active as a member of the Board of Directors of the Southern California Chapter of the AIA Associates.