

How Well Do You Know Your Town's History?

By Jan Dennis

During the late 1960s, the community became increasingly interested in the maintenance and preservation of the Municipal Pier and surrounding beach area. In 1957, the Manhattan Beach City Council had approved the deed transfer of the Pier to the State of California for the sum of \$1, along with the ability to retain mineral and oil rights. Los Angeles County assumed maintenance of the Pier with conditions: no night usage, it had to be closed during storms, and no cars on the Pier.

There were elements of Pier work done by the State which brought attention to other surrounding beach areas. It was not only the years that took a toll on the Municipal Pier and The Strand, but the weather as well. Powerful wave action was so strong that sand was driven across the bike path, to the entry of the Pier and up onto the Strand.

In 1968, City Manager Gayle T. Martin did a detailed analysis of the initial construction, history and financial consideration for rehabilitation of The Strand. The report revealed that initial construction of The Strand started in 1917 at a cost of less than \$100,000, which was financed by special assessment districts. After serving for more than 50 years as one of the City's prize assets, it had reached a point of deterioration which was both unsightly and hazardous. At the time, the City Manager had recommended that the City Council appropriate funds in the coming budget year for engineering studies to determine necessary action and estimate the project costs.

Another issue that affected The Strand in 1968 was a proposal by the Underground Utilities Study Committee. It was proposed that the "Beach Area," bounded by Highland Avenue on the east, The Strand on the west and the entire length of Manhattan Beach Boulevard from its most easterly point in the city to where it connected with the beach area, have its utility wires be placed underground. This area was to become the City's first underground district, known as "the T."

It would be many years and arduous delays before the first Undergrounding Assessment District, 85-1, was approved. In 1989, the City Council passed appropriate resolutions to create the area within First Street, Bayview Drive, Eighth Street and The Strand, a much smaller area than the original proposal.

Not everything was as worrisome as undergrounding. In 1966, Charlie Saikley introduced a new venue to the activities held at Pier side. Charlie started the first girls' volleyball team. Practice took place at Live Oak Park, which at the time provided a sand area now used as the park's tot lot. It was Charlie who saw the practical need to lower the volleyball net height in order for the young ladies to play. Prior to 1970, Manhattan Beach had the only courts set in this manner.

In 1968, the Sixth Annual International Surf Festival took place, and a year later the Hyperion Outfall Serenaders were formed. The group in 1975 by City Council proclamation became the City's official Dixieland band.

However, with all the fun and games, the Police Department was still working to promote a positive image to the community by switching to all-white vehicles and becoming acquainted with a young man by the name of George Jung. In 1967, many saw Manhattan Beach as a quiet, low-profile community, but to others it was labeled as the reigning party town on California's southern coast. George wanted wealth, and in the temper of the times, what better way than go into the drug trade? To George, this was the place - close to the airport and to the Mexican border. George, originally from Boston, lived in Manhattan Beach and was finally caught and sent to prison after losing approximately \$100 million, which he made by selling drugs. More of George's story can be found in the book *Manhattan Beach Police Department* by Jan Dennis.

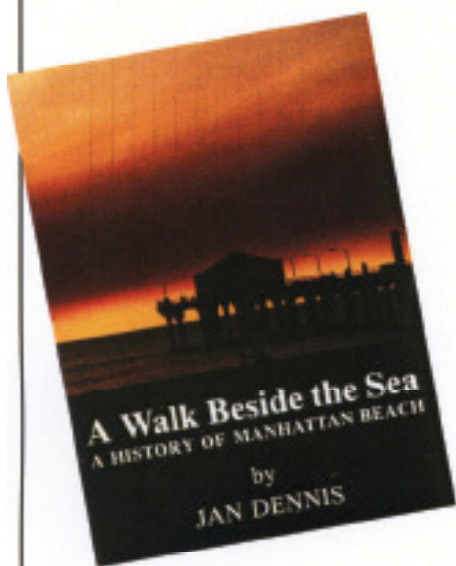
To be continued... •



In 1962, it was not only the Pier that received damage from a winter storm, but a caved-in parking lot and sand inches deep on parts of the Strand.

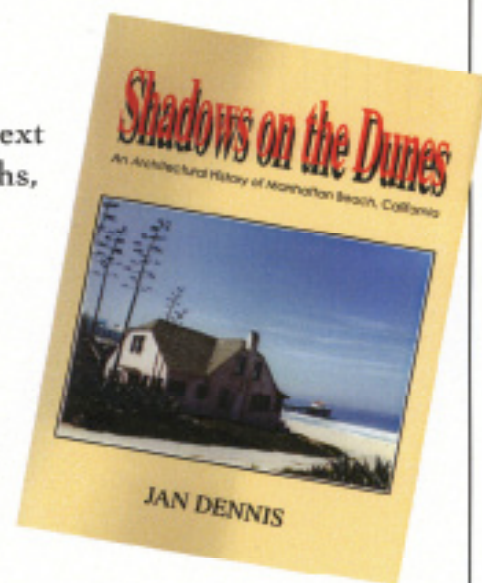
Manhattan Beach A GIFT OF HISTORY by Jan Dennis

*Enjoy a treasure of memories . . .
While enriching your knowledge of Manhattan Beach*



"Shadows on the Dunes"

An architectural history described in text and over 200 b&w & color photographs, illustrations and documents.
8 1/2" x 11" hardcover format.



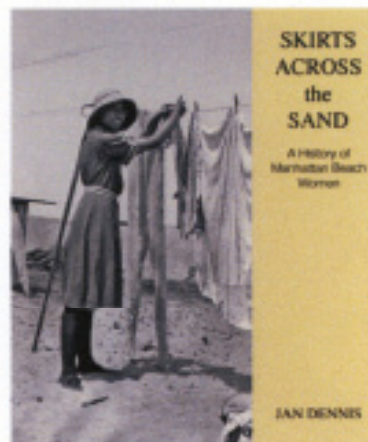
"A Walk Beside the Sea"

A fascinating text richly illustrated with over 200 b&w photographs.
8 1/2" x 11" hardcover format.

NEW

"Skirts Across the Sand"

An historic development and portrait of Manhattan Beach women who not only rocked the cradle but also rocked the boat.
208 pages, over 180 black & white Photographs plus 16 pages of colored art works.
8 1/2" x 11" hardcover format.



All 3 coffee table books with full color book jackets

EACH
\$37.80 including tax

Please enclose check payment with order . . .

Also available at Hilloide Pharmacy and MB Chamber of Commerce.

Call Jan Dennis
(310) 372-8520

P.O. Box 174
Manhattan Beach, CA 90266