



## Special Use Permit Updates



### Starlight Bowl may see new life yet

Local nonprofit still working on plan to get Balboa Park landmark reopened

SANDIEGOUNIONTRIBUNE.COM

We are still working out details on the first draft of a special use permit with the City of San Diego. Save Starlight is still in the negotiating process with the City and we hope to share exciting news with you very soon!

Special thanks to James Hebert from the San Diego Union Tribune for writing an article about our progress [Read More](#)

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## Celebrity Auction Fundraising Campaign



Fender Stratocaster Guitar signed by Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers

For the past two months, our community outreach team has been collecting autographs from artists on guitars in order to auction them in the future. Our campaign has already gained much momentum with participating artists such as John Mayall, Tower of Power, and Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers.

Stay tuned to learn when and how we will launch this auction!

Special thanks to our sponsor's [ActiveMusic](#) and [Fender Guitars](#)

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# The Starlight Bowl

## The Starlight Bowl

By Welton Jones

For San Diegans, the words “Starlight Bowl” probably wake a vision of dancing, singing, costumed musical comedy, outdoors in the soft summer airs of Balboa Park, interrupted only occasionally by airplanes headed toward Lindbergh Field but mainly blissful beauty, aglow with nostalgia.

That hasn't been reality for many years. The historic 4,273-seat amphitheatre is still there, though worn from years of neglect, but there hasn't been a show on its stage since 2010, when the remnants of the San Diego Civic Light Opera Association walked away. Famed architect Richard Requa, who



Ford Bowl, 1935. Courtesy David Marshall.

supervised the building of the 1935-36 California-Pacific International Exposition, called the bowl, “Undoubtedly the most valuable new single contribution from a cultural standpoint...” In second place, he listed the Spreckels Organ Pavilion.

Originally called the Ford Bowl, the amphitheatre was built in tandem with the Art Deco Ford Building next door (now the San Diego Air & Space Museum) as a showcase for Ford vehicles and a winding exhibition road down the slope behind the buildings, all for an estimated \$2 million.

Requa was assisted in the design of the concrete bowl by the prominent engineer Vern O. Knudsen, later dean and then chancellor of UCLA, who

pronounced the acoustics in the bowl as perfect.

Ford money also was provided for a season of 132 symphony orchestra concerts, usually two a day except Mondays, beginning in May 1935. Nino Marcelli conducted the San Diego Symphony for the first two weeks followed by the Los Angeles Philharmonic and the symphony orchestras of Portland, Seattle and San Francisco plus the Long Beach Women's Symphony.

Portions of these concerts were broadcast live, coast to coast, sponsored by Ford.

In addition to the orchestras onstage, the Ford Bowl had its own organ, an early Hammond billed as “the world's most powerful musical instrument” because of the 8,000 pounds of amplification equipment needed. Organist Walter Flandorf presided at the console on the concrete platform in the center of the bowl seating area, still there today, for concerts at noon and 5:30 p.m. whenever nothing else was scheduled.

When the orchestra season ended in October, the California Light Opera Co. presented “H.M.S. Pinafore” and “The Mikado” twice daily at no charge. Next, the Expo management provided five acts of vaudeville entertainment, each afternoon and evening, also free of charge, and a touring stage show called “Anything Happens” featuring the famed vaudeville and radio duo of Ole Olsen and Chic Johnson.

Though attendance was sparse for the 1935 shows in the bowl, the orchestral concerts were considered the artistic peak of the exposition.

When, for 1936, the Ford Company did not renew its sponsorship of the exhibit, it did agree to sponsor four weeks of 46 concerts in August and September by Marcelli and the San Diego Symphony and two by the San Francisco orchestra, conducted by Alfred Hertz, which proved to be great popular successes.

On opening night Aug. 14, 1936, according to *The San Diego Union*, the symphony's performance of the Idyll from Wagner's “Siegfried” was: “interrupted for the

The Starlight Bowl by Welton Jones

Our friends from Committee of One Hundred featured a wonderful piece in their Fall 2017 Newsletter that examines the past and the present state of Starlight Bowl

[Read More](#)

The Committee of One Hundred is a group dedicated to preserve Balboa Park's historic architecture, gardens, and public spaces since 1967 [Learn More](#)

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**Come visit our booth at Maker Faire  
San Diego 2017  
Oct 7 -8**



This year Save Starlight will have booth during Maker Faire San Diego 2017. Come say hi and learn about different types of technology that we envision inside Starlight Bowl.

Volunteers are welcome to join us!

[Learn more about Maker Faire 2017](#)

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**Give a gift today!**



Photo by Tony Amat

Help us continue our efforts! Your donation goes directly toward our campaign costs.

Thank you for helping us bring back a bit of San Diego's past into the future!

Tax ID #81-3430648

**[DONATE TODAY](#)**

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We're very excited that you signed up to receive email updates for the Save Starlight campaign. We'll be sending periodic emails to update you on the progress of the campaign and you can help!

**Our mailing address is:**

Save Starlight

9590 Chesapeake Dr Ste 3

San Diego, Ca 92123