

# HOLLYWOOD

## HUGH HEFNER

Story by GiGi Bishop

**Our favorite PLAYBOY of all time... Hugh Hefner managed to drag himself out of bed and away from all of his girlfriends long enough to save the day. HOORAY FOR HEF!**

Yep. Playboy magazine founder and notorious ladies man—forever—Hefner donated the last \$900,000 needed for a conservation group and—all the rest of planet earth who enjoy the thrills of Tinseltown, movie stars and the film industry—to purchase the land that saved the Hollywood sign.

Hefner's role in helping the group reach its fundraising goal was happily announced by several Los Angeles city officials, the Governor of California Arnold Schwarzenegger, and the San Francisco-based Trust for Public Land at a packed news conference in the Hollywood Hills.

"My childhood dreams and fantasies came from the movies, and the images created in Hollywood had a major influence on my life and Playboy," Hefner said in a statement. "As I've said before, the Hollywood sign is Hollywood's Eiffel Tower and I'm pleased to help preserve such an important cultural landmark."

Hef's sign-saving role in rescuing the Hollywood icon symbol was absolutely pivotal. And amazingly, this was not even the first time that he

has managed to keep the beloved white letters high above the city of angels from meeting doom and gloom.

The first time that Hefner saved the Hollywood sign was back in 1978, when those all too famous and instantly recognizable letters on the sign became so dilapidated and unstable that they were literally rolling down the hill. Hefner organized a "Save the Sign" auction in which he and numerous other celebrities bought individual letters. Rocker and shocker Alice Cooper paid \$27,000 to restore a missing "O," Hef paid for the "Y" and crooner Andy Williams put down the same amount for the "W."

"It would have been a real shame after having restored it if it wound up sold," Hefner told People magazine. "It's become something iconic and represents not only the town, but represents Hollywood dreams, and I think that's something worth preserving."

And as fate would have it this time around Hef once again got there just in time to save the day. According to Keith Dickson, the general partner of Fox River Financial Resources, the company that previously owned the property, one very determined and prospective buyer wanted the property with the intention of building a zip-line park; another wannabe buyer-

represented a "secret club" whose members had their hearts set on building a clubhouse right on the peak of the hill—which by the way has a bird's eye view of all of L.A.

turn the area over to the city of Los Angeles to be incorporated into the surrounding Griffith Park area which carries the power to prevent any possible future construction.



Hugh Hefner with his usual and gorgeous girl-next-door entourage

But in the end, before any deals could be made, the land trust needed to collect a staggering grand total of \$12.5 million by Fox River's strict deadline. Everyone came up short of immediate cash for the deadline—then Hefner stepped in.

The Trust for Public Land will now

"It's like saying let's build a house in the middle of Yellowstone Park," Hefner said. There are some things that are more important. The Hollywood sign represents the dreams of millions. It's a symbol."

Thanks to Hef, that symbol will be here for a long time.