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## [FDL Movie Night Preview “Accidental Icon: The Real Gidget”](#)

By: [Lisa Derrick](#) Sunday October 9, 2011 10:23 am





“Gidget” a girl midget, is what the surfers at Malibu’s Surfrider Beach called Kathy Kohner when she showed up to surf in the summer of 1956. As she learned to ride the waves, she also saw another side of society, a crew of guys who lived to surf, who had practically signed a blood oath to drop out of society. Her diaries became the source material for her father’s bestselling novel *Gidget, The Little Girl with Big Ideas*. Translated into Spanish, French, Yiddish and Japanese, the book was bought by Columbia Pictures, and became the basis for the Gidget films, a TV series starring Sally Field in her debut role, as well as subsequent TV shows.

The character of Gidget—her innocent yet bold, fearless personality; her willingness to break with convention—struck a chord, forever changing the face of surfing and youth culture. By 1960, the Beach Boys had released their first album, foam boards were introduced; surfer competitions popped up. The beaches, once a place for family getaways, grew packed with teenagers exploring their freedom. Surfing became a major sport and a commercial industry.

As well as popularizing surfing and changing the face of Southern California, the character of Gidget became an inspiration for women surfers and an accidental icon of feminism and female empowerment.

This Monday on Movie Night we discuss *Accidental Icon: The Real Gidget* with director Brian Gillogly.

[1 Comment Recommend](#)

Tags: [movie night](#), [Kathy Kohner](#), [surfing](#), [Gidget](#), [feminism](#), [Brian Gillogly](#), [female empowerment](#), [Accidental Icon The real Gidget](#)



## One Response to FDL Movie Night Preview “Accidental Icon: The Real Gidget”

1. [welshTerrier2](#) October 9th, 2011 at 10:48 am [«](#)

I saw the title of your post in the Recent Diaries column and tried to guess what your post was about.

I guessed wrong.

The woman on whom the character in the movie *Norma Rae* was based died this past week. I thought the Gidget reference was a reference to Sally Field who played both Gidget and *Norma Rae*. Close but no cigar.

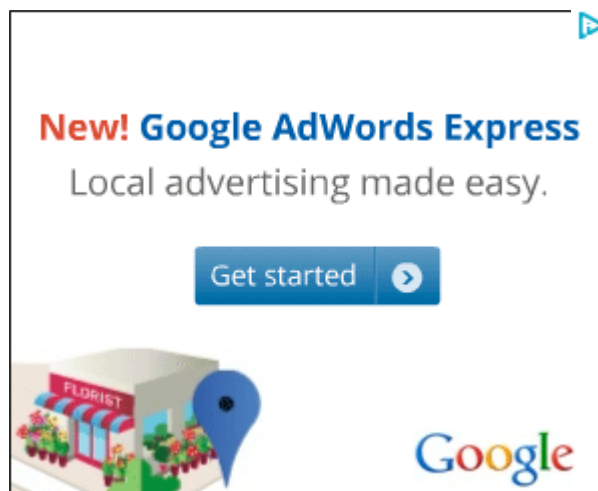
When I watch *Norma Rae*, I always think of John Lennon’s “Working Class Hero”.

Whether it's surfing, the workplace or anywhere else, social progress always depends on heroes and heroines who lead the way. Too many of us wait until the vanguard has broken through before we're comfortable enough to join the fray. More of us should step up and fight, right at the outset, for what we believe is simple right and wrong. We should not live our lives in fear of power and convention.

We owe that to each other and to ourselves.

Thanks for the post. Recommended.

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