



Historical Highlights

Volume 35 No. 2 Published by the Culver City Historical Society Spring 2014

HISTORICAL SOCIETY INSTALLS NEW BOARD FOR 2014-2016 TERM

COLUMN ONE

MGM AND THE HEART OF SCREENLAND

Stephen Sylvester, co-author of *M-G-M: Hollywood's Greatest Backlot*, and Oscar-winning cinematographer Fred Koenekamp will share the spotlight at the Society's April 16 general meeting.

Sylvester will present a short film and a PowerPoint presentation illustrating the history of the sound-stages and outdoor sets where Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer produced many of the world's most famous films.

(cont'd on page 3)



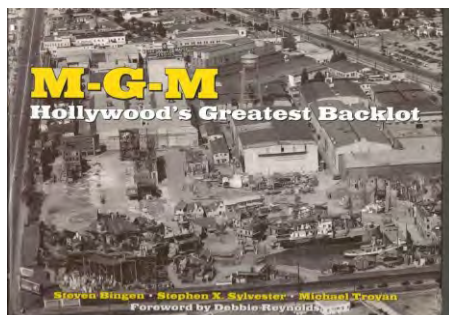
L-R: President Michelle Bernardin; Dennis and Hope Parrish, VPs, Programs; City Manager John Nachbar; Julie Lugo Cerra, VP, Museum/ARC; Adrienne Bernardin, Secretary; Linda Forman, Treasurer; and Tami Eskridge, VP, Development and Membership Chair.

SONY PICTURES PLAZA SITE OF INSTALLATION

On January 15, the biennial Installation of Officers was held at Sony Pictures Plaza. The evening was expertly orchestrated by member Michele Cerra Lachoff and City Manager John Nachbar performed the installation.

Councilmember Andy Weissman was the evening's auctioneer, where bidding grew fierce and three of the movie chairs (profiled in the Winter 2014 issue of *Historical Highlights*) were sold for \$280 each. The Society is grateful to Todd Tipton at Community Development for rescuing those chairs, one of which is in the Society's permanent collection and can be seen at the ARC. Cultural Affairs Commission Chair Marla Koosed won the 50/50 cash raffle.

Very special thanks go to Sony Pictures Entertainment for hosting the event, and specifically to Janice Pober, Kristin Cavanaugh, and Rhona Davis, who were central to this event fundraiser being so successful for the Society.



~ APRIL 16 GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING ~

Special Program: "M-G-M: Hollywood's Greatest Backlot"

The Culver City Historical Society's Spring General Membership Meeting will be held on Wednesday, April 16 at 7:00 pm in the Multi-Purpose Room at the Veterans Memorial Building, 4117 Overland Avenue, at the corner of Overland Ave. and Culver Blvd. Please park and enter from the rear of the building.

The program will examine this wonderful book, *M-G-M: Hollywood's Greatest Backlot*, presented by co-author Stephen X. Sylvester, who will tell of the 90-year history of the famed studio which once claimed "more stars than there are in the heavens." He will be joined by famed Academy Award cinematographer, Fred Koenekamp who will share his memories of the MGM years. (see Column One above for more information).

The public is invited to enjoy the free program and students are encouraged to attend. The CCHS Archives & Resource Center (ARC) will be briefly opened following the meeting. For more information, please call the Society at (310) 253-6941 or email us at info@CulverCityHistoricalSociety.org. Also, visit our website: www.CulverCityHistoricalSociety.org for updates.

See you there!

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by Michelle Bernardin



Dear Members,

Happy Spring! It was lovely to see so many of you at the Installation of Officers. We have a few new board members, and some entering second terms in their current positions. I can attest that this is a very enthusiastic and excited new group, who are going to

bring you interesting topics for General Meeting programs, a new look to our website, and much more!

As a friendly reminder, you can support the Historical Society with your everyday shopping, and it won't cost extra! Ralphs grocery store chain donates a portion of sales to the Historical Society, with a simple swipe of your club card. The next time you are at the ARC, pick up a Ralphs sheet with our dedicated bar code. Bring the sheet to Ralphs and show it to the cashier along with your club card. That's it! We have already seen success with this program!

As you flip through this newsletter, you may notice there are not as many pages to turn. In an effort to decrease printing costs, we are exploring a more condensed publication, with the thought of putting more stories and information online. We hope that you appreciate our efforts in making the most of your annual membership to the Society.

I look forward to seeing you at an upcoming program, or during our open hours on the 1st and 3rd Sundays. As always, thank you for supporting your Culver City Historical Society!

A BRIEF INTRODUCTION TO OUR NEW BOARD MEMBERS

We are very happy to welcome the following new board members:

ADRIENNE BERNARDIN, Secretary (or "Tito" as she is commonly referred to by friends and family) was born and raised in Culver City. She is an alum of both St. Augustine's elementary school and Culver City High School. Adrienne has a bachelor's degree in Political Science from Cal State Long Beach, and is currently working as an Office Manager at UCLA in the Kidney and Pancreas Transplant Department. When she's not working, she enjoys spending time with family, friends and her two crazy cats.

DENNIS AND HOPE PARRISH, VPs, Programs, are father and daughter who represent the second and third generations of their family working in the motion picture industry. Dennis' father was a property man for many years and Dennis followed in his footsteps as a property master and set decorator for 53 years. Hope's maternal grandfather was a special effects man and talented welder for movie studios. Hope is a graduate of Culver City High School and continues the family tradition as a property master. She is known for her work on *Django Unchained* (2012), *The Curious Case of Benjamin Button* (2008) and the recent *Nebraska* (2013). The Parrish family loves Culver City and has lived on Mentone Avenue for 75 years!

MARTI DIVIAK, Costumes Chair, was a Founding Member of the Historical Society, serving as its first Treasurer and later served as President for two years. She was also active in various chairmanships including the Museum Chairman. She enjoyed the honor of chairing the first official (cont'd on pg. 3)

Historical Highlights

Web: www.CulverCityHistoricalSociety.org
PO Box 3428 · Culver City, CA · 90231-3428
Tel: (310) 253-6941 · Fax: (310) 253-6942
email: info@CulverCityHistoricalSociety.org

The Culver City Historical Society, founded in 1980, is a non-profit membership organization created for the purpose of collecting, preserving and exhibiting the history of Culver City and its cultural and civic accomplishments.

The Society Newsletter is published quarterly.

Editor Judy Stangler

Officers and Committee Chairs

Michelle Bernardin President
Stu Freeman Immediate Past President
Hope Parrish and Dennis Parrish
..... VP, Programs
Julie Lugo Cerra VP, Museum/ARC
Tami Eskridge VP, Development
Adrienne Bernardin Secretary
Linda K. Forman Treasurer
Steven J. Rose Parliamentarian
Tami Eskridge Membership Chair
Joy Jacobs Communications Chair
Jeanne Conklin Historic Sites Chair
Gerry Sallus Government Liaison
Marti Diviak Costumes Chair
Dave Tavres Webmaster
Kevin Lachoff Photographer

Editor's Column

Programs are in the planning to spotlight our city's past and current activities, especially its extraordinary role in the history of the motion picture. This year MGM is celebrating its 90th Anniversary. Earlier this year, MGM's mascot, "Leo the Lion," had his paws implanted in the TCL Chinese Theatre in Hollywood! Stop by the ARC after the April 16 meeting and see if you can spot "Leo" in our display.

Also, please note that often more information on a particular subject or historical piece can be found on our website.

Remember, it's YOUR Historical Society—we can't succeed without YOU!



WINNERS OF THE "CAMERA CHAIRS" AT THE INSTALLATION

President Michelle Bernardin, holding a "Camera Chair," is surrounded by the three winners. L-R: Stu Freeman, Steve Rose and Chuck Eskridge.

An ARC Update

by Julie Lugo Cerra
Vice President,
Museum/ARC and
City Historian



THE SOCIETY TO SHOWCASE MAY AS PRESERVATION MONTH

The National Trust for Historic Preservation sponsors Historic Preservation Month each May. It is a time to showcase the social and economic benefits of historic preservation efforts. Historic Preservation is integral to building community identity!

Our Society began nearly 35 years ago, as an advocate for historic preservation. Our interest was multi-faceted, including sites and structures, research and growing and sharing of a collection of historic importance – at no cost to the community.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION ADDS MUCH TO A COMMUNITY

Historic Preservation is important to a community's image and vitality. If one looks at our landmark structures, like the Culver Hotel, the Hull Building (Akasha), the Washington Building, the Citizen Building, the Culver (now Kirk Douglas) Theatre, Helms Bakeries, the Ivy Substation, and local movie studio structures, (some recognized on the National Register), it is clear that a community's economic development and reputation can be served through thoughtful preservation.

In the mid-1980s, the City of Culver City contracted with 30th Street Architects to prepare our first Historic Structures survey. That led to the 1991 adoption of an historic preservation ordinance. In 1996, the city council appointed a city historian. The work of historic preservation was eventually entrusted to the Cultural Affairs Commission. In 2004, the commission celebrated the first installation of required plaques being installed at each Landmark structure.

Since the first survey nearly 30 years ago, many other structures have "come of age," but the city, even with the technology to identify the age of

qualifying structures, has been reluctant to put the time and effort into observing its municipal code in this area, or the council's promise in 1991 to apply for Certified Local Government status or utilizing Mills Act funding.

And now, because these commitments have not been honored, our community has sadly become combative in order to draw attention to properties like the Culver Ice Arena, just to get the city to revisit historic preservation. We need to do better. Please support your Society's positive efforts to encourage historic preservation as required by the Culver City Municipal Code.



Above: The CC Historical Society marked the Veterans Memorial Building (built 1950) as Historic Site #13. The plaque is visible on Overland Ave. near Culver Blvd.

This structure is an example of one which was not covered in the city's Cultural Resources Survey in the 1980s, since it was not yet 50 years old.

April 16 Program (cont'd from pg. 1)

The book features candid, exclusive voices and photographs from the people who worked there, and includes hundreds of rare and unpublished photographs. Sylvester will be selling and signing his book that night.

Koenekamp, known for his camera work on *Patton*, *The Man from U.N.C.L.E.*, *Papillon*, and *The Towering Inferno*, for which he won an Academy Award, and many other fine films, will also share his memories of the MGM years.

MARK YOUR 2014 CALENDAR

APR. 16: GENERAL MEETING AND PROGRAM ON M-G-M BACKLOTS (VMB – 7 PM)

APR. 20: L.A. HERITAGE DAY (PICO HOUSE). ARC CLOSED.

JUL. 16: GENERAL MEETING AND PROGRAM ON CULVER CITY SCHOOLS (VMB – 7 PM)

JUL. 27: ANNUAL "PICNIC IN THE PARK" (VETS PARK 1 – 4PM)

AUG. 22-24: FIESTA LA BALLONA

SEP. 17: CULVER CITY'S ANNIVERSARY OF INCORPORATION

OCT. 15: GENERAL MEETING AND PROGRAM ON POLICE & FIRE DEPTS. (VMB – 7 PM)

For more information on any of these events, please contact:
info@CulverCityHistoricalSociety.org
or Tel: (310) 253-6941. Or visit our web:
www.CulverCityHistoricalSociety.org

2014 ARC Open Dates

Call to confirm dates: (310) 253-6941

▶ 1st & 3rd Sundays, 1-3 pm ◀

Apr. 6 May 4 May 18

Jun. 1 Jun. 15 Jul. 6

Jul. 20 Aug. 3 Aug. 17

Sep. 7 Sep. 21 Oct. 5

Oct. 19 Nov. 2 Nov. 16
Dec. 7 Dec. 21

(Also by appointment)

NEW BOARD (cont'd from pg. 2)

fundraiser in May of 1980 with the display of the MGM costumes to the public which was the only time the entire collection was shown on live models. Prior to semi-retiring and working for the Culver City Education Foundation, Marti spent 30 years in the fashion industry serving as Regional Director of the Los Angeles Fashion Group from 1977 to 1979.

DAVE TAVRES, Webmaster, uses his passion for people and technology mainly to help people use technology to be more efficient and help advance their causes. He has lent his web and technology expertise to a number of nonprofits and other groups since he started his life as a "geek" in 1994 in Seattle during the booming internet start-up days. Aside from his geekdom, Dave loves history, photography, sailing and "making things."

Time to Renew or Become a Member of the Culver City Historical Society Today!

Join others in preserving the history of the "Heart of Screenland" and supporting the Culver City Historical Society Archives & Resource Center (ARC).

We can't do it without YOU!

TYPES OF MEMBERSHIP

_____ Individual Member (\$20)
_____ Family Member (\$30)
_____ Youth Member (\$10)

_____ Individual Lifetime Member (\$300)
_____ Family Lifetime Member (\$500)
_____ Patron Member (\$100)
_____ Benefactor (\$1000)

_____ Organization (\$15)
_____ Business Member (\$50)
_____ Corporate Sponsor (\$500)

Name/Company: _____ Contact Person: _____

Mailing Address: (Street) _____ (City) _____ (State/Zip) _____

Telephone: _____ Fax: _____ Email: _____

Please make checks payable to **Culver City Historical Society** and mail to

P.O. Box 3428, Culver City, CA 90231-3428. For further information, call (310) 253-6941 or email: info@CulverCityHistoricalSociety.org.

Contributions of both historic & social significance as well as monetary donations are encouraged, and the CCHS IRS tax exempt status may make such contributions tax deductible.

CULVER CITY HISTORICAL SOCIETY ARCHIVES & RESOURCE CENTER (ARC)

Veterans Memorial Building • 4117 Overland Ave., Culver City, CA

- ▶ The 1st and 3rd Sundays, 1-3 pm, and by appointment.
- ▶ Free admission. (Enter from parking lot behind the VMB.)

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