



NEWS

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An Old Costume Finds a New Home

When Culver City native Carol Ball attended the MGM auctions in 1970, she was a teenager looking for costumes to wear for Halloween. Among her purchases was a two-piece dress worn by Marjorie Main in MGM's 1946 production of *The Harvey Girls*. The film is about a group of young women, including Judy Garland, who head out West to work as waitresses at the Harvey House restaurants. Marjorie Main is seen in this costume in the very first scene of the movie as the girls are singing the popular "On the Atchison, Topeka and the Santa Fe."

But Carol never wore the costume and it spent the next 40-some years in her cedar chest. In 2011, Carol, a Life Member of the Society, decided to donate it to an organization that she knew would treasure it: the Culver City Historical Society!

"How wonderful to finally see my donated Marjorie Main Harvey Girls costume on display for all to enjoy," said Carol. "It's so good to know that it will be cared for and stored by our own historical society. It's another fun reminder of those summer days I will never forget in 1970 that I spent at the MGM auction."

The 1890s costume, now exhibited through July in the Archives and Resource Center, was designed for the film by Helen Rose. The display also includes photos of Byron Harvey Jr., grandson of the Harvey House founder Fred Harvey. The display and selected accessories were created by Denice Renteria and Costume Chair Sharon Shore.



July 15 General Meeting and Program The Story of Johnnie's Pastrami

Do you remember where you were in 1952? The favorite TV show was "The Jackie Gleason Show," the favorite song was "All of Me" by Johnnie Ray, and on the corner of Washington and Sepulveda there was a not so famous restaurant called Johnnie's that would later become Johnnie's Pastrami! Today that restaurant is a Culver City icon. People come from near and far to eat at this establishment. The Culver City Historical Society invites you to hear the story of Johnnie's Pastrami on Wednesday, July 15, 2015, at 7 p.m. in the Rotunda Room in the Veterans Memorial Building at 4117 Overland Avenue, Culver City.

Who's Johnnie? Did they have a reason to pick this spot? How come those pickles are so good? Do you remember sitting outside with the fire pits eating or playing the jukebox from your favorite booth? These questions and more will be answered through a PowerPoint presentation and discussion of this well-known eatery. Door prizes will be given and there will be a 50-50 raffle.

The public is invited to enjoy this free program. Bring a friend and your stories to share with the families of Johnnie's Pastrami. For information call (310) 253-6941 or send an email message to info@CulverCityHistoricalSociety.org.

OUR MISSION

The Culver City Historical Society was created for the purpose of collecting, preserving and exhibiting the history, cultural and civic accomplishments of Culver City and its environs.

Acting Newsletter Editor

Joy Jacobs

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MEMBERSHIPS

The Culver City Historical Society exists because of the involvement and generosity of people like you. Please help strengthen our voice for preserving Culver City's architectural and cultural heritage by becoming a member.

In Memorium

Barbara Ball
Randall Mytar



Your President's Message

By Michelle Bernardin

Dear Members,

Culver City during the summer is pretty idyllic – close enough to catch ocean breezes, not locked into the valley. Harry Culver definitely knew what he was doing!

In August, we will be the coolest place to hang out at Fiesta La Ballona, figuratively and literally, if past scorching temps have shown. The ARC will be open during the Fiesta from 12noon-4:00pm on Saturday (8/29) and Sunday (8/30).

We have moved our annual picnic (usually in July) to September, to coincide with the anniversary of the city's incorporation. Sunday afternoon, September 20 will be our FOUNDER'S DAY PICNIC! Bring your family! No traffic getting to Vet's Park! Also, the Archives will be open for everyone to explore our city's history.

While we have an incredible amount of fun coming up, I would also like to encourage you to consider volunteering on one of our working committees. They are wonderful introductions into what we do! The Museum or Costumes committees are great ways to work with the collections up close. If organizing parties and events is your game, we can use your help for the Founder's Day Picnic or our Centennial Committee.

Later in the summer, our Nominations Committee will begin meeting about the board for next term, starting January 2016. You have skills that you can contribute and I would encourage you to consider officially joining the team! This group only thrives and succeeds because of its volunteers. Your time is very valuable – we won't waste it!

I look forward to seeing you at our next General Meeting on Wednesday, July 15. Many of us have a special affinity for Johnnie's Pastrami. (Meet me at Johnnie's afterwards for a song from the juke box and a sandwich – with mustard!) As always, thank you for supporting your Culver City Historical Society!

Congratulations to The Society's "Starring" Members

William Hahn, who was recognized on May 8 with the French Medal of Honor for his WWII service in France. The ceremony was held on the *USS Iowa*, which is docked in San Pedro.

Chris Wilde, one of Harry Culver's grandsons, for giving the profound "Thought of the Day" at the Mayor's Luncheon on March 22.

Welcome to Our New Members

Susan Hurwitz Arneson
Kelly Kent
Nangee Warner Morrison



On Sale – 25% Off

Perfect for either sun or rain!
Regularly \$40, now \$30. Stop by the Archives or purchase online and select "local pick up."



Notes From Your City Historian

By Julie Lugo Cerra

An Independence Day Treat from the Archives

It seems like most Culver City natives have a story to tell about “going to the movies.” After all, when you grow up in the “Heart of Screenland,” not only were movies made in our studios and on city streets, but we viewed them in local theatres. Our first movie house was on the Culver Hotel site. Initially, that two-story building housed the theatre on the first floor, with city offices above.

Over time, your historical society has been able to “flesh out” some little known history. For example, the initial movie house was run by Pearl Merrill and Laura Peralta, ladies with a history in vaudeville. When the theatre was earmarked for demolition to make way for Culver’s landmark hotel, the owners decided to move down the street and build their own theatre. And yes, you guessed it—they combined their names to call it the “Meralta!” Will Rogers agreed to be the opening act in 1922. The theatre thrived until WWII, when a fire destroyed it. This was especially sad since the owners lived in the upper level apartment, where they could watch the movies. At the time, there was a wartime moratorium on building, but our city found an interim space on the second floor of the 1928 city hall, (where our new city hall stands today).

We had the privilege of interviewing Laura Peralta’s niece who gave us more information. And with the internet, we have been provided with gifts that further tell our stories. There are few photos of the owners, but we know Pearl Merrill served on the Board of Education, while Laura Peralta became active in the Culver City Woman’s Club. The invitation to the 1945 re-opening of the Meralta offers a sketch of each of the owners and a heart-felt welcome back as shown, (courtesy Wm. Barnett). The small print reads:

“ Out of the ashes of the old Meralta, a more beautiful theatre has arisen. We proudly dedicate it to you, the people of the community. In these days of world weariness we strive to raise the morale of our Americans, not in order to forget our duties to our country but rather to inspire grateful realization of the wonders of this land and the purpose for which our boys have left their homes.

We are proud that in these troublous times we are again able to fill a need in this community of which we have been a part for twenty-six years. To all those associated in our endeavors we are happy once more to greet you and to our new friends we welcome you and heartily solicit your patronage. It will be our policy to offer the best in entertainment for all—particularly the children who need special guidance through the post-war period.

We wish you to feel that this is your theatre, dedicated to your enjoyment, recreation and entertainment.”

This seemed fitting to share as we get ready to celebrate Independence Day!



Mark Your Calendar

July 15: General Meeting and Program
Rotunda Room, VMB, 7PM

Aug. 29 and 30: Fiesta La Ballona
ARC open 12noon – 4PM

Sept. 20: Founder's Day Picnic
Vet's Park
(formerly known as our Annual "Picnic in the Park")

Oct. 21: General Meeting and Program
Multi-Purpose Room, VMB, 7PM

ARC OPEN DATES

1st and 3rd Sundays, 1-3PM

July 5*
July 19
August 2
August 16
Sept. 6
Sept. 20
Oct. 4
Oct. 18

*Noted genealogist Alex King will share an amazing resource to access pre-1915 newspapers that covered life on local ranchos, and a proposed Port Ballona!



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On April 15 at our general meeting, the history of the Vera family and Sorrento Market was presented in a PowerPoint presentation, followed by questions and answers. Pictured (l to r) are Albert Vera, Jr., his aunt, Katherine Barriciello; Hope Parrish, VP, Programs; and her dad, Dennis Parrish. A portrait of Albert Vera, Sr. is pictured in the background.

The Archives and Resource Center was used by Showtime to backlight the filming of "Masters of Sex." The production company donated \$500 to the Society for the use of our facility!



George Jones was our guest speaker in the Archives and Resource Center on April 19. He gave a talk about the history of local railroads to engrossed listeners.

