That’s Entertainment
By Donald Norden

It was 1974 and I was 14 years old. I was visiting a security guard named Ken Hollywood, at MGM’s East Gate. He handed me a pencil and paper, saying “Two fellas will be coming out soon that you will want to meet!” And that was it.

Growing up in Culver City, I spent almost all my time on the back lots, either being chased, or just hanging out, watching as TV shows and movies got filmed. We were sharing stories together at this gate when, lo and behold, a Rolls Royce driven by Fred Astaire slowly rolled to a stop. Ken waved to Fred as we approached him with paper in hand. He graciously signed his name, shook my hand, and drove off.

When I thought things couldn’t get better, an old Chevy Impala appeared. I was not even thinking this was a star since his car was no better than my dad’s, but I did a double take and couldn’t believe my eyes — it was Gene Kelly! He yelled out to me, “Let me pull over so we can talk.”

“What was your favorite movie of all time to be part of?” I excitedly asked. “I’m gonna surprise you,” Mr. Kelly responded. “It’s not a musical.” After a long pause he said, *The Three Musketeers.* “That’s my favorite, too!” I exclaimed. “All the athletic preparation needed to make it look real was more difficult than almost any of my dance numbers,” he added. “I love that show. You look like you were born with a sword in your hand,” I said. “You’re very athletic, and I can’t help but admire your skill.”

He then shared his love of baseball. The Pirates were his team. I told him, “When it rains we sneak into the backlot and dance on the same cobblestone street where you performed *Singing in the Rain.* Well, mostly we just splash and sing.”

I was probably blushing as I giggled, and then he smiled that wonderful, iconic smile.

*Donald blogs at phantomofthebacklots.com.*

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**UPCOMING EVENTS**

The April 15, 2020 General Meeting and Program Has Been Cancelled

As we continue to monitor and adjust to the changing environment in our city and broader world, we are erring on the side of caution and minding the current city-wide recommendations for large gatherings. Unfortunately, we are cancelling our next General Meeting and Program on Wednesday, April 15.

We are working on a program of the Culver City airports and Petrelli’s Airport Café, and look forward to presenting this fantastic program in July. *Stay tuned!*

Stay safe, stay healthy, and be there for each other in these confusing times. More than we value history, we value you. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us.

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Lobby Card for *Singing in the Rain* (1952)

Actor Eddie Quinlan at the Culver City Airport
Dear Members and Friends:

Spring is on its way! I want to introduce to you our 2020-2022 Board. If you missed the installation, the food was delicious and the evening was outstanding. I can’t thank Vice Mayor Göran Eriksson enough for his wonderful words that he spoke while installing us all. Yes, I am here for another two years at which time I must pass the torch, as I will be termed out. Emelie Gerard has moved into a new position. She is now our VP of Development, which involves fundraising, organizing the Founder’s Day Picnic, and purchasing new items for our store. I am excited to see what she comes up with.

Dennis Parrish (my amazing Dad) has taken on the great programs he presented to us in the past. I cannot wait to see his next Program! Tami Eskridge is BACK...and she will now be our new VP of the Museum and Archives. With the many great donations we have received, I am looking forward to working with her on new exhibits for your enjoyment. Also, Carolyn Wispe-Burns will continue to be our Treasurer. Michelle Bernardin, our immediate Past President, has also been editing this newsletter. Let us know if you’d like to relieve her and join our team!

I can happily report that these dedicated committee chairs will be continuing in their current positions:
- Denice Renteria – Costumes Chair
- Andrew Weissman – Government Liaison
- Julie Lugo Cerra – Historic Sites Chair
- Jeanne Conklin – Membership Chair
- Michael Laase – Parliamentarian
- Kevin Lachoff – Photographer
- Mark Morris – Videographer
- Scott Malsin – Webmaster

I cannot thank our Wednesday volunteers enough for their hard work and dedication to get the museum digitized! We continue to make huge gains, and it is through the generous support from you, our members, and the amazing people that I have just mentioned. Thanks to you all, and I look forward to seeing you at our next General Program to see what Dad has in store for us!

Hope

YOUR PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE
By Hope M. Parrish

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Hope

Your 2020-2022 Historical Society Board at the January 15 Installation of Officers. (Kevin Lachoff)
Charles Reyes Lugo, my father, was the youngest of eight children born to Mercurial and Rita Reyes Lugo on the local Lugo Ranch. My little brother and I could count on visits annually to the LA County Museum to visit the early Californio exhibits that included a portrait of ancestors like Don Antonio Maria Lugo, from whom there is a direct line. The Lugo family is recognized by the Pobladores as Early Californio settlers. As descendants, we developed a sense of pride in our Spanish history, which was enhanced by Culver City’s La Ballona Days that began in the 1950s. We were not limited to just one line in our ancestry, however.

Even in the early days, this land became what I call “an oasis within the urban metropolis.” And how do we know this? Local directories in early years listed names that were Asian, English, German, Spanish, etc. Although we celebrate our Hispanic history, Culver City developed from a rich, broader heritage. And what kind of food do we enjoy? We all know the names of a favorite taco stand, but then there are Italian restaurants, and Japanese and Chinese along with many others. We clearly know that we don’t have to limit our experiences by heritage!

Although I enjoyed visiting relatives on the Lugo Ranch as a child, it was not until my parents’ later years that I learned more about my father and his experiences on the ranch where he was born. He not only worked in the fields, and at the Lugo Ranch Stand, he also went to school and delivered fresh vegetables to locals. Included in their customer base were many Asian families who invited people like my father, a young delivery boy at the time, to sit at their tables and enjoy their food, where he became a chopsticks pro!

In his later years, Daddy began to share more stories about his youth. It came in very handy, especially when he was joining us for dinner. I kept chopsticks on hand and I will never forget the great memories made by a grandpa teaching his little granddaughter how to use them, as he told stories of growing up on a portion of Rancho La Ballona, which became Culver City.

Marking Our Diverse History

PLEASE RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP!

The envelope in this newsletter will make it convenient for you to send back your membership renewal, which was due in January 2020. You can also do this online! Please go to our website at CulverCityHistoricalSociety.org/membership. There, you will be able to pay instantly with your credit card and save a stamp! You don’t need to renew if you are a Lifetime member, but please consider making a donation. We count on the support of our members to be able to maintain the Archives, and to continue the promotion and preservation of Culver City history. Rates for individual and family levels will be increasing beginning January 2021!

Your continued support is always greatly appreciated.
Benefactor ($1,000)
Corporate Sponsor ($500)
Family Lifetime Member ($500)
Individual Lifetime Member ($300)
Patron Member ($100)
Business Member ($50)
Family Member ($30)
Individual Member ($20)
Non Profit Organization ($15)
New Member ❑ Renewal

Name/Company ____________________________________________________________
Contact Person __________________________________________________________
Mailing Address ___________________________________________________________________
City _____________________________________________ State _______ Zip Code ___________
Email _____________________________________________ Phone_________________________
Voluntary Contribution to Museum Fund   $_________________

Please check type of membership and enclose your check payable to:
The Culver City Historical Society, P.O. Box 1356, Culver City, CA 90232
Tax Deductible 501 (c)(3) #95-4188800

Please Renew or Become a Member of the Culver City Historical Society Today!
Join others in preserving the history of the “Heart of Screenland” and support the Culver City Historical Society Archives and Resource Center (ARC). We can’t preserve local history without you!

Supporting Corporate and Non Profit Sponsors
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- Sony Pictures Entertainment, Kristin Cavanaugh (310) 244-5368
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- Cantalini's Salerno Beach Restaurant, Lisa Schwab (310) 821-0018
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- S.A.V.E.S., Sadie Cerda (310) 838-2702
- SendOutCards, Richard A. Marcus (310) 397-4696
- Sorrento Italian Market, Albert Vera (310) 391-7654
- Tower Insurance Associates, Janice Beighey (310) 837-6101

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