



# CULVER CITY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## NEWSLETTER

Volume 42, No.1  
Spring 2021

### Ince Boulevard

By Donald Norden

The most iconic real-life Hollywood neighborhood to ever sprout up is located right here in Culver City. This street is named after film pioneer Thomas Ince. One hundred years later, this street is still the center of attention. Amazon is building a new state of the art studio complex on the footprint of this old filmmaking institution, rich with tradition, history, and flavor.

My first memory was seeing Batman and Robin, Batgirl, the Joker and Catwoman filming a scene together in front of the Plantation Building that was Desi Arnaz's office.

Superheroes graced this neighborhood. Superman flexed his muscles prior to the "dynamic duos." The Green Hornet became not just a hit show, but part of this neighborhood. Kato, the character played by Bruce Lee, lived right behind the studio on Van Buren. Many of the kids exchanged greetings with him going back and forth from school.

Ince Boulevard runs a very short distance to be packed so full of iconic film history. It's paved now, but in its day dirt roads led you inside. *King Kong* in 1933 could be seen being made from the sidewalks outside the studio. In 1938, that set was burned down in *Gone With The Wind*.

Ince Boulevard was the hub of all the comings and goings on that night in film history. Neighbors old enough to have witnessed these memories share how every living creature that called the backlot home left in

mass exodus during the Burning of Atlanta.

If you were at the main gate at the right time, anything could happen. Bob Crane was known to show many kids around Stage 13. Jim Nabors would hand out candy – cherry Life Savers!

The four-way stop on Lucerne and Ince could at any given time have Andy Griffith's squad car, the Batmobile, the Green Hornet's Machine, or Catwoman in her furry ride.

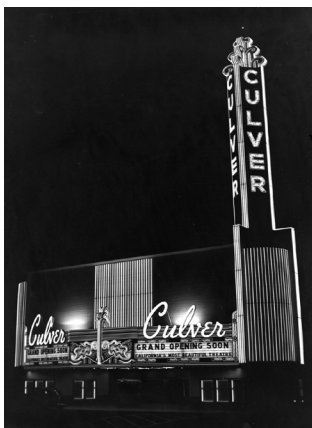
Just another day on Ince!



3800 Ince Boulevard, 1974. (Donald Norden)

### UPCOMING EVENTS

#### April 28, 2021 General Meeting and Virtual Program, 7pm The Culver Theatre: From *The Red Stallion* to Kirk Douglas



Culver Theatre, c. 1947  
(Marc Wanamaker)

Do you miss going to the movies? Go back in time as we revisit the Culver Theatre which still stands today! The Culver Theatre opened on August 13, 1947 with the film *The Red Stallion*. It was designed in the "Skouras style," an over-the-top baroque style named after its inspiration Charles Skouras, head of Fox West Coast Theatres. In the 1970s, Mann Theatres split the Culver into three theatres. In 1989, it was closed and later gutted after the 1994 Northridge earthquake. In 2004, Center Theatre Group restored, repurposed, and reopened it as the Kirk Douglas Theatre.

Clare Denk, interim vice president of programs for the society, will discuss its history from its opening day to its closing and subsequent deterioration during the 1990s. Eric Sims, associate general manager of Center Theatre Group, will discuss its restoration as well as share a couple of entertaining stories about Kirk Douglas and shed light on current filming projects taking place within the theatre during the pandemic.

More details on how to view this program virtually are forthcoming. Check our website and social media for updates.

# YOUR PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

By Hope M. Parrish



Dear Members and Friends:

Happy Spring to all!

It has been an exceptionally long year, and I am hopeful that we are moving toward some sort of normal and on a road to recovery.

After reaching out to you in January, we named a few positions that needed to be filled so that we could continue operations. We received an amazing response, with people asking how to get involved. This was the best news we had in a year!

Firstly, I would like to thank Emelie Gerard, our 2020 vice president of development and also former secretary, for her work with the Historical Society. It became necessary for her to step away for a little spell and hope she can rejoin us down the road. With unanimous support of the board, I am delighted to announce Denice Renteria as our new vice president of development. She has worked extremely hard as our costumes chair, and she has many wonderful ideas to implement over the next two years!

Secondly, as you are reading this, we have successfully printed our newsletter again. I want to thank Michelle Bernardin and Carolyn O'Brien, (Carolyn is one of our newest volunteers) for putting this together again. Like many, we were noticeably quiet last year, but we are back!

Which brings me to our General Meetings and Programs. After reading of the change to programs in our January membership renewal letter, member Clare Denk inquired how she could help. She has volunteered to bring us a program this spring (see front page). This will be our very first virtual program, and I hope you will join us as we present pieces of our city's history in a very modern modality.

Thank you for your continued support,

Hope

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The response from our members to the renewal letter we sent at the start of the year was amazing—thank you for keeping us busy, updating our records! If you have not yet had the opportunity to renew your membership, please use the renewal form on page 4 of this newsletter, or renew online! Please go to our website at [CulverCityHistoricalSociety.org/membership](http://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. Our wonderful members help us maintain the Archives and continue the promotion and preservation of Culver City history.

We know these are tough times, and we thank you for supporting us.

## 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.

### Newsletter Editors

Michelle Bernardin

Carolyn O'Brien

### Newsletter Design

Sue Slutzky

## OFFICERS & COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Hope M. Parrish, President

Michelle Bernardin, Immediate Past President

Denice Renteria, VP, Development

Tami Eskridge, VP, Museum and Archives

Clare Denk, Interim VP, Programs

Carolyn Wispe Burns, Treasurer

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Denice Renteria, Costumes Chair

Julie Lugo Cerra, Historic Sites Chair

Jeanne Conklin, Membership Chair

Andrew Weissman, Government Liaison

Michael Laase, Parliamentarian

Kevin Lachoff, Photographer

Mark Morris, Video Editor

## HOW TO CONTACT US

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Culver City, CA 90232

## STAY CONNECTED

[CulverCityHistoricalSociety.org](http://CulverCityHistoricalSociety.org)

[facebook.com/CulverCityHistoricalSociety](https://facebook.com/CulverCityHistoricalSociety)

[twitter.com/histofculvrcity](https://twitter.com/histofculvrcity)

[instagram.com/culvercityhistoricalsociety](https://instagram.com/culvercityhistoricalsociety)

## MEMBERSHIP

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.

[CulverCityHistoricalSociety.org/membership](http://CulverCityHistoricalSociety.org/membership)

## Welcome Our New Members

Guy Langvardt

Carlos Valverde

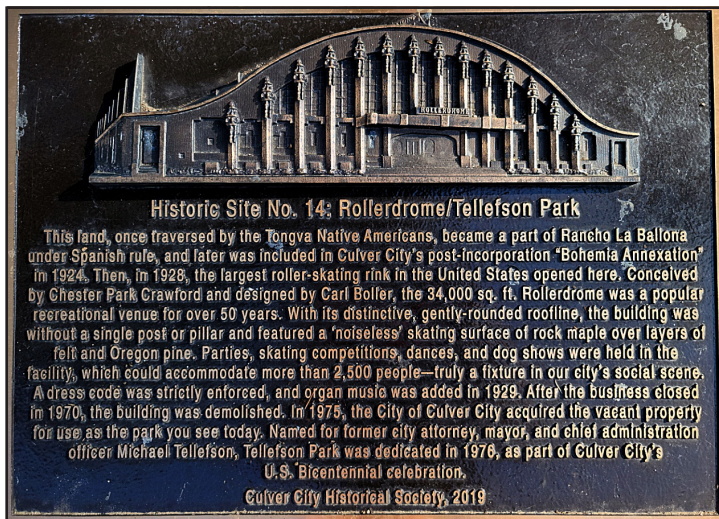


# The Rollerdrome is Marked!

By Michelle Bernardin

Under a Covid veil our historic marker was set in cement. Because of the pandemic it was unveiled with little fanfare. Thankfully, our markers outlast the speeches and applause and have become vital and permanent narratives, communicating our city's history. As has been printed in several articles of this newsletter over the last two years the Rollerdrome was a social and recreational touchpoint in Culver City's history from 1928 to 1970. The Historical Society is thrilled to mark the site at Tellefson Park with our 14th bronze plaque.

We look forward to a time when it is safe to gather as a large group in order to celebrate this marker and share memories of the Rollerdrome. Until then, we encourage you to mask up and take the people in your pod to read the marker at Tellefson. If your pod mates are of the younger set, they will enjoy the brand-new playground equipment.



Culver City Historical Society historic marker #14 at Tellefson Park. (George Bernardin)

Collaboration is crucial and we would not have a bronze plaque, on a cement block, in Tellefson Park were it not for our friends at the City of Culver City Parks, Recreation and Community Services (PRCS) Department and Hillside Memorial Park and Mortuary, with the leadership of our Historic Sites Chair (and City Historian) Julie Lugo Cerra.



## Classic Films Commemorative T-Shirt

By Mark Morris

The city motto of Culver City, California, is "The Heart of Screenland," and this is not hyperbole. During the Golden Age of major movie studios in the 1930s more films were made in Culver City than in Hollywood.

The Historical Society has memorialized this part of our city's heritage by commissioning a tribute to classic movie posters that brings to life four memorable and popular images of the town's history:

The landmark Culver Hotel flatiron building was featured in countless Keystone Cops, Laurel and Hardy, and Little Rascals films. The original *King Kong* was filmed on Culver City's RKO backlot in 1933. The "Spruce Goose," the largest wooden airplane ever built and a pet project of eccentric billionaire Howard Hughes, was built in what's now Playa Vista. Lastly, *The Wizard of Oz* was filmed in 1938 at MGM, the world's largest film studio at the time.

These iconic events were re-envisioned by talented artist Jason Moser of Hudsonville, Michigan. The first use of the colorful artwork is a full-color, high quality t-shirt now available in the Historical Society's online shop.

Go to: [CulverCityHistoricalSociety.org/shop](http://CulverCityHistoricalSociety.org/shop)





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## MARK YOUR CALENDAR

**April 28 – General Meeting and Program**  
Virtual (link forthcoming), 7PM

**May – Historic Preservation Month**  
For more info: [www.savingplaces.org](http://www.savingplaces.org)

**ARC OPEN DATES**  
**Closed to the public until further notice,**  
**or by appointment only.**  
**For questions or inquiry, please email**  
**[info@culvercityhistoricalsociety.org](mailto:info@culvercityhistoricalsociety.org).**

### Business Member Roster

These fine Culver City area businesses support our work to preserve Culver City history for future generations.  
Please show your support by your patronage of their services and products.

#### Supporting Corporate and Non Profit Sponsors

Culver City Exchange Club ..... Dr. Bob Montgomery (310) 499-4840  
Sony Pictures Entertainment ..... Kristin Cavanaugh (310) 244-5368

#### Supporting Business Members

Appletree Music LLC ..... Amy Loftus Penchansky (615) 268-8050  
Catalini's Salerno Beach Restaurant ..... Lisa Schwab (310) 821-0018  
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Göran Eriksson / Techtrans ..... Göran Eriksson (310) 841-2901

Ken Harada, D.D.S. .... Ken Harada (310) 837-5121  
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JLF Appraisals & Estates..... Joel and Linda Forman (310) 837-7455  
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REsource Los Angeles at Keller  
Williams Silicon Beach ..... Baron Bruno (424) 465-3225  
Santa Maria BBQ ..... Jim Rodrigues (310) 559-5709  
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

### 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!

- ☐ 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

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