CCHS CELEBRATES THE CITY’S 90TH IN GRAND STYLE!

OCTOBER GENERAL MEETING: ELECTIONS!

THE LANDMARK CULVER HOTEL HOSTED THE CITY’S PARTY!

On Thursday, September 20, 2007, a gala 90th Anniversary of Incorporation Party was held at the historic Culver Hotel in downtown Culver City. And what a party it was!

Staged as an “Open House” free to the public, the event was sponsored by the Culver City Historical Society joined by the Screenland A’s, the Culver City Homeowners Association and Corporate Sponsor, Sony Pictures Entertainment.

Festivities began at 5:30 pm with smooth strains from the West Los Angeles College Jazz Ensemble performing in Town Plaza amid Screenland A’s restored classic automobiles (including a ’30s Culver City police car!).

The Historical Society conducted tours of the hotel which was built in 1924 by city founder Harry H. Culver – first named the Hotel Hunt and, with the name change to the Culver Hotel, it was said to be the “latest monument to his vision,” referring to Harry Culver himself! In March, 2006, a delightful bronze statue of Harry with his family was dedicated outside the front entrance of the hotel. It is particularly fitting that Harry is reading the Culver City Call’s September 21, 1917 issue headlining Culver City’s incorporation. Listed on the National Register of Historic Places, the Culver Hotel retains its historical prestige and nostalgic memories of days long past as displayed by several photo exhibits.

As guests moved inside for complimentary appetizers from prominent Culver City restaurants, including Grand Casino, Howdy’s, Bottle Rock, Geo. Petrelli’s, Novecento, Ugos, Double Dutch and Trader Joe’s, they were further entertained by Razzmatazz soft jazz in Duke’s Hideaway Bar and Lounge until “closing” at 9:30 pm. An auction and raffle drawings added to the fun with all proceeds benefiting the CC Historical Society.

October 17th General Membership Meeting: ELECTIONS!

Wally Marks, Jr. to discuss “Helm’s Bakery Through the Years”

The Culver City Historical Society’s Fall General Membership Meeting will be held on Wednesday, October 17th at 7:00 pm in the Yanky-Iksan Room at the Veterans Memorial Building, 4117 Overland Avenue.

This is “Election Night” to choose the Society’s next slate of officers and we ask the entire membership to come out to support and vote for the next Board which will take the reins for the next two years.

Our special guest speaker will be Walter N. Marks III (Wally), the third generation owner of the Helms Building, who will share with us the history, current use and the future of this famed structure. Helms Bakery, which straddles the border of Culver City and Los Angeles, rose to prominence for its “Olympic Bread” baked for the 1932 Los Angeles Olympics. The Marks Family has owned and managed the building since the early 1970s.

The public is invited to enjoy the free program and students are encouraged to attend. For more information, please call Cathy Zermen at (310) 839-7688.

~~ ELECTION INFORMATION: SEE PAGE 7 ~~
Notes from Your City Historian
by Julie Lugo Cerra

24th ANNUAL MACHADO REUNION!

The 24th Annual Machado Reunion will take place at Chevron Park on October 6, 2007. If you are a Machado, or have an interest in participating, call Ronnie Mendez, at (310) 548-1818. It is a great family picnic at minimal cost, with entertainment, lots of food, music and memorabilia. Our own Fred Machado is a prime mover in this effort.

SONY SUPPORTS THE CC HISTORICAL SOCIETY

I am so pleased that the Historical Society, with a grant from Sony Pictures Entertainment was able to spearhead “the great party” for the city’s 90th. Sony’s ongoing support demonstrates its commitment to preserving Culver City’s history.

EARLY CULVER CITY ADS -- A REAL FIND!

To share one of the “finds” we have recently made, take a look at an early Harry Culver ad. Talk about HISTORY! The book containing these early ads, prior to Culver City’s incorporation, is on display at the ARC. (see photo)

A PERSONAL THANK-YOU

On a very personal note, I want to thank all the folks who have sent such kind notes and generous donations in memory of my Sam. Although his quality of life was not optimum these past four years, being on a “short leash” with that oxygen tank did not keep him from being mobile and productive.

He was very happy to see the marking of Camp Latham finally happen, and to see the opening of the ARC! He sat with me the day before the Fiesta Exhibit opened, and kept me company while I set photos in the display cases and ironed the ribbons.

And in going through his things, we have saved what may be the beginning a special exhibit – Culver City “logo” memorabilia. (This is a slight hint to go through your closets.) Sam even had a tie imprinted with a city seal!

Your donations will enable the society to buy a display case that will carry his name. A very nice tribute. Our family is truly touched.

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REEL
Culver City

by Marc Wanamaker

RARE HISTORICAL NEGATIVES
OF EARLY CULVER CITY FOUND

Recently I purchased a collection of old glass plate negatives from the Bruce Torrence Collection of Hollywood History. The collection was given to Mr. Torrence in the 1960s by Robert Spence of the Spence Aerial Photography Company. Though the Torrence collection is primarily focused on the Hollywood area, Culver City is well represented due to the concentration of motion picture studios within its boundaries beginning in 1915, when Harry Culver prevailed upon producer/director Thomas Ince to build the city’s first film studio in his “new” city (which was incorporated on Sep. 20, 1917).

Spence Air Photos, Inc. was prolific from 1918 to 1971 when the business closed. Spence shot almost everything there was to shoot in the Los Angeles area making the Spence archives one of the most important collections of Los Angeles history anywhere.

These photographs were taken at a variety of latitudes, angles, and directions, making the collection a huge assortment of unique shots. (Most of the Spence collection of historic aerial photographs were given to the UCLA Geography Department in the 1970s; additional information can be found at http://www.geog.ucla.edu/airphoto.php.)

WONDERFUL DISCOVERIES!

Of the more than 50 Culver City-related photographs I have been examining since I received the collection, several discoveries came to light. I have been collecting aerial photographs for over thirty years and some in this collection were wonderful surprises!

One negative discovered is the Pacific Film Company at Durango and Venice Blvds. in 1922. Today this property is a part of a shopping center and is now a part of Los Angeles. But in the early days it was the west coast studio of the Essanay Film Company of Chicago which had several studios in the Los Angeles area from the nineteen-teens into the early 1920s. The Pacific Film Company was one of several which occupied this studio site over the years and by the 1930s it was the Sam Katzman Studio where many ‘B’ pictures were made for Columbia. I have photographs of this studio over the years, but none as rare and clear as the one in this Torrence collection. (see above photo)

Another important discovery in this collection is several shots of the “40 acre” backlot of the former Thomas Ince studios (later to become the DeMille Studios, Pathé Studios, RKO Pathé Studios, and Desilu Studios among others) located at Higuera and Ince Boulevards. This backlot was famous for being where Gone With the Wind (1939) was filmed, and as the photographs show, where Cecil B. DeMille’s King of Kings (1927) was filmed, showing rare views of the sets as they once stood.

The collection of Culver City aerials ranges in date from 1919 to 1937, showing all the major and minor studios in the area. The studios that are included: the Goldwyn Studios (1919-21), Thomas Ince Studios (1919-1922), Romayne Studios (1919-1920), the Pacific Film Co. (1922), Pathé and its “40-acre” backlot (1929-31), the DeMille Studios (1927), the Hal Roach Studios (1920-1937) and general Culver City aerials from 1919-1937 – including the Culver City Speedway when it existed on Culver Blvd. just south of the MGM Studios. These photographs are quite a unique collection of glass negatives that have a very high resolution and clarity that can blow-up to very large sizes and still stay sharp and clear. The aerial images of early Culver City are currently being utilized for research on where and when some of Culver City’s earliest landmarks existed and is a unique record of the area and its development.

CCHS member Marc Wanamaker is a past VP, Museum and owns Bison Archives, which supplies filmmakers and film companies with a rich source of historic photographs and other film-related items.

~ CULVER CITY ~
“The Heart of Screenland”
SEPTEMBER 20, 1917: A CITY BEGINS!

It was Harry H. Culver, from Milford, Nebraska, who dreamed of a balanced city. He started plans for the city that carries his name in 1913, and it became an incorporated entity in 1917.

He established the city in a temperate zone, along a transportation route, alongside railroad tracks, halfway between the growing pueblo of Los Angeles and Abbot Kinney's resort of Venice.

(from “Culver City History,” contributed by Julie Lugo Cerra. See more at http://www.culvercity.org/cityinfo/history/hist_intro.html)

HARRY H. CULVER
C. 1913

The current seal of the City of Culver City was adopted in August of 1936. Prior to that, two "Notary" type seals were used, according to the City Clerk's records.

The first city seal was a circle containing the words INCORPORATE(sic) SEPTEMBER 20, (sic) 1917" on three lines, the word INCORPORATE being uppermost and slightly curved. Around this seal is a rim, with "CULVER CITY" at the top, and "CALIFORNIA" at the bottom. There were two five-point stars between them. The inner rim was beaded, but the outer rim looked like a rope. That seal was used from incorporation until about 1921.

(From “Culver City History,” contributed by Julie Lugo Cerra. See more at http://www.culvercity.org/cityinfo/history/cityseal_hist.html.)

The Culver Hotel – Then & Now

Bronze statue of Harry Culver reading the Sep. 21, 1917 paper with his wife Lillian and daughter Pat which now stands in front of the Culver Hotel.

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September 20, 2007 marked the 90th Anniversary of Culver City’s Incorporation, and to celebrate this landmark event, the Society put on a gala party – at the historic Culver Hotel!

**Highlights:**

- **Auction items included:**
  - For sports fans – an opportunity to see the LA Galaxy play Toronto at the Home Depot Stadium in Carson on October 13. Tickets for two in a VIP suite, plus a parking pass (donated by the CC Homeowners Assoc.).
  - A beautiful water-color painting of the CC City Hall by award-winning artist, Culver City’s own Vivian Matheson.
  - *Tom & Jerry* animation cel, hand-painted by CCHS member Martha Sigall, along with a copy of her critically-acclaimed book, *Living Life Inside the Lines: Tales from the Golden Age of Animation*.
  - A personal tour for four of the Page Museum by working archeologist & paleontologist Robin Turner, CCHS VP, Museum.

- **Raffles items included:**
  - La Ballona Restaurant (2 free dinner combinations)
  - Radisson Hotel (a one night stay)
  - Santa Maria Barbecue Co. ($65.00 in coupons)
  - Trader Joe’s ($50 in groceries)
  - Jin’s Valero (2 $50 worth of gasoline)
  - Victor Jr.’s Pizza, Culver City (Gift Card - $50)

 outside the Culver Hotel, city staff and elected officials mingled with locals to the music of a big band.

**Cultural Affairs Chair Luther Henderson (standing center) visited with Sony Pictures’ Janice Pober (to his right) in the crowded lobby of celebrants.**

**Photos by Julie Lugo Cerra.**

**Gen. Mgr. Douglas Newton enjoyed visiting with Miss Culver City of 1937, Dorothy Barrett, and Jerry Maren, the “Lollipop Kid” in the *Wizard of Oz*. Jerry and most of the Munchkins stayed in the hotel during its filming.**

**Below:** RAZZMATAZZ with Steve Fry at piano, Jan Abell, Craig Peterson. Joining the trio during the evening were singers Betsy Bogart, Carter Dewberry, Lulee Fisher, Cali Rose, Caroline Waters & Tasha Wenger.

**Below (L-R) CCHS Treas. Lynn Baril welcomes Police Chief Donald Pedersen with Capt. Bixby looking on; and artist Randy Mytar presents a water color painting depicting the Culver Hotel to the Society for our archives.**
An ARC Update .....  
by Robin Turner,  
Vice President, Museum  

THE ARC OPENS FOR THE FIESTA  

WOW!!! What an eventful few months we’ve had at the CC Historical Society ARC (Archive & Research Center) – especially during July and August!  
The Thursday ARC volunteer crew – which included Pat Bumpus, Jeff Sommar, George Garrigues and Fred Yglesias – has concentrated their work on cataloging the extensive Julian Dixon book library which will provide a wealth of research materials.  

Our great ARC volunteers: (above L-R) Fred Yglesis & Jeff Sommar, and (below) Pat Bumpas.  

We gave personal tours of the new exhibit space to over a hundred people that came to visit the ARC during the Fiesta – and it was a real thrill! Many people came in to reminisce and talk about the good memories they had growing up in Culver City. We had historic postcards, history videos, and calendar items for sale, and received a few donations as well.  

We also want to mention that the Society has received donations in memory of our dear Sam Cerra to allow us to name a display case in his honor, something we know would make him very proud and happy.]  

THE CITY’S 90TH ANNIVERSARY  

After the success of the Fiesta tours, we wasted little time in putting together a special exhibit for the 90th Anniversary of Culver City’s Incorporation, which was held at the historic Culver Hotel. Photo displays and memorabilia of the City’s early days were set up both in Harry Culver’s old office on the hotel’s second floor and in our permanent display window at the Pacific Theatre, across from the hotel. 

Over 200 visitors came in to see Harry’s office! I couldn’t believe how many folks have lived in Culver City for over 50 years, and many were second and third generation residents. We especially thank the Culver City Information Technology Dept. team who videotaped many of the oral interviews that local residents shared with us. We plan on screening a copy of the tape at a future Society meeting.  

And remember, we need volunteers for both our Thursday and Saturday morning work groups. If you are available on either of those days, please contact President Cathy Zermeno or myself and we will get you started working on some really fascinating projects!  
See you at the General Meeting on October 17th!  

~ Robin
“Sam Cerra (cont’d)

Sam found his life’s partner with kindred interests in Julie Lugo, a sixth generation Californian, and together they were instrumental in starting the Culver City Historical Society and keeping it growing for over 25 years! He served as President (as did Julie) and was particularly proud of his role as Historic Site Chair and the marking of the CCHS Historic Site #11, Camp Latham, in November, 2006.

A wonderful friend, husband and father, Sam Cerra was the model “Culver City-ite” and he will be greatly missed. The Society sends its warmest regards to his family and friends.

A REMEMBRANCE

JACQUELINE (JACKIE) McCAIN

Jacqueline (Jackie) McCain, a longtime Culver City resident and civic leader died peacefully at home on Tuesday, July 31, 2007 after a prolonged illness.

Jackie was born in Missouri and, after attending teachers college, followed her two cousins to So. California in 1943. When Jackie met her future husband Charles at a dance during WWII, it was the start of a romance that would last a lifetime and mold many aspects of civic life in soon-to-boom, post-war suburban Los Angeles.

Jackie and Charles (who preceded her in death earlier this year) moved to the Culver City area in 1947 where she began her lifelong involvement in community affairs, bringing her zest for education and her zealous advocacy style to many areas of volunteer service in Culver City public schools and a host of public works projects, mentoring many grass roots campaigns for candidates and referenda.

She also served as a Culver City Planning Commissioner in the 1970’s and, over time, gained such a reputation for spotting concerns in the City’s review of Environmental Impact Reports that full copies of new proposals were regularly delivered to her front door for detailed inspection and reply. And, reply she did! Jackie was a regular fixture in Council Chambers and, in 2004, with Charles at her side she was honored by Mayor Steve Rose and members of the City Council for her many years of service.

She was also an enthusiastic member of the CC Historical Society, the Episcopal parish church of St. Mary in Palms and a volunteer at St Josephs’ Center.

The Society sends its deepest regards to the McCain family and its many friends.

CC HISTORICAL SOCIETY ELECTION NOMINATING COMMITTEE REPORT

On Monday, September 10, 2007 at 4:00 pm, Parliamentarian Steven Rose called the CC Historical Society’s Election Nominating Committee to order and gave instructions on the job ahead.

The committee members included Mary Gibson, Mim Shapiro and Julie Lugo Cerra. Following the Society’s rules, the members made inquiry calls to members in good standing and the following members have agreed, if confirmed, to serve two-year terms beginning January 1, 2008. The nomination slate is as follows:

President: Stuart Freeman
VP, Programs: Fred Yglesias
Co-VPs, ARC: Martha & Sol Sigall
VP, Ways/Means: Douglas Newton
Secretary: Jeanne Conklin
Treasurer: Tamara Eskridge

The proposed nomination of officers will be voted on by the full Society membership at the October 17th General Meeting.

~ ◄ ~ ~ ►~

A Reminder:

JANUARY IS MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL MONTH

by Reba Yudess
Membership Chair

January is Membership Renewal Month – and with the many new and exciting things coming up, being a member of the Culver City Historical Society is more important and rewarding than ever.

Your membership dues support the Society’s diverse efforts to keep Culver City’s wonderful history alive for future generations, as well as preserving memorabilia and maintaining our new Archives & Resource Center (ARC).

So please send in your membership renewal and consider becoming a Patron, a Lifetime Member, a Corporate Sponsor or a Benefactor. And, remember, a CC Historical Society membership makes a wonderful gift – especially for Culver-ites in distant areas!

Annual CCHS Picnic – Fun for All!

The well attended annual CC Historical Society Picnic was held at Veterans Memorial Park on Wednesday, July 18th. Though an official General Meeting with a usual business agenda, a light-hearted atmosphere prevailed and old and new friends shared a great summer day!

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~ 7 ~
Become a Member of the Culver City Historical Society Today!
Join others in preserving the history of the “Heart of Screenland” and to support the Culver City Historical Society Archives & Resource Center (ARC).

We can’t do it without YOU!

**TYPES OF MEMBERSHIP**

- _____ Benefactor ($1000)
- _____ Organization ($15)
- _____ Family Member ($25)
- _____ Youth Member ($5)
- _____ Corporate Sponsor ($500)
- _____ Business Member ($50)
- _____ Individual Lifetime Member ($250)
- _____ Family Lifetime Member ($500)
- _____ Patron Member ($100)
- _____ Individual Member ($15)

**MEMBERSHIP FORM**

Name/Company: __________________________ Telephone: __________________________

Contact Person: __________________________ Fax: __________________________

Mailing Address: __________________________ Email: __________________________

Please make checks payable to The Culver City Historical Society and mail to
P.O. Box 3428, Culver City, CA 90231-3428. For further information, call (310) 287-3850 or email: cchistorical@pacbell.com.

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.

**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.

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