

Culver Historical Highlights

Volume 29 No. 4

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Fall 2008

CCHS ARC BUSY CATALOGUING, HOSTING EVENTS, GUESTS VOLUNTEERS KEEP ACTIVE SCHEDULE ~ UPCOMING: "HOME MOVIE DAY"

COLUMN ONE

"HOME MOVIE DAY" AT THE MAYME A. CLAYTON LIBRARY & MUSEUM OCTOBER 18TH

On Saturday, October 18, 2008, the Sixth Annual "Home Movie Day" will be held locally at the Mayme A. Clayton Library & Museum (MCLM) here in Culver City, with the support and participation of the Culver City Historical Society.

CCHS President Stu Freeman will be on hand along with other CCHS volunteers to work with the MCLM staff to help visitors better understand and appreciate this important part of America's cultural history. Because these are local events, "Home Movie Day" screenings can focus on family and community histories in a meaningful way.

HMD A WORLDWIDE EVENT

Started in 2002 by a group of film archivists concerned about what would happen to all the home movies shot on film during the 20th century, "Home Movie Day" has grown into a

(cont'd. pg. 7)

"ARC HAPPENINGS"

Since it first officially opened in the Spring of 2007, the Culver City Historical Society's Archives and Resource Center (ARC) has been growing and becoming a wonderful display of the Society's many treasures. The hard work of organizing and cataloguing the collection is being appreciated by scholars and students alike.

DESTINATION FOR VISITORS

The ARC has also become a popular destination for visitors who know Culver City well and enjoy walking back into our history, as well as for those who are just learning about how fascinating our story is. Guests who come to Culver City – some for the renaissance in fine dining that has been written up around the country – are also discovering that there is a wealth of information to be found at the ARC.

(cont'd. pg. 5)



July 5, 2008: Sister City visitors from Lethbridge, Canada, toured the ARC as part of their city-wide excursion.

~ OCTOBER 15TH GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING ~

Special Guest: Avery Clayton

President & CEO of the Mayme A. Clayton Library & Museum

The Culver City Historical Society's Fall General Membership Meeting will be held on Wednesday, October 15th at 7:00 pm in the Multi-Purpose Room at the Veterans Memorial Building, 4117 Overland Avenue. Please park and enter from the rear of the building, and a brief tour of the CCHS ARC will be offered following the meeting.

Our guest speaker will be Avery Clayton who serves as President and Chief Executive Officer of the Mayme A. Clayton Library & Museum (MCLM). The MCLM is not only a sister organization, but a Culver City neighbor which is located at 4130 Overland Avenue, directly across from the Vets (*see Column One story above*).

The public is invited to enjoy the free program and students are encouraged to attend. Refreshments will be served following the program (*remember: no food allowed in the ARC*). For more information, please call the Society at (310) 253-6941 or email us at info@CulverCityHistoricalSociety.org.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by Stu Freeman



Can you believe it! Summer is officially OVER! I hope that it was a good one for you. It was a very good one for your CCHS – and we were very busy!

After the May 2nd celebration of Historic Preservation Month which was kicked off with a great party at the Culver Hotel, many of our members went right to work preparing the ARC for its next event: hosting a conference for the Associated Historical Societies of Los Angeles County. It went very well and our presence is becoming

more widely known among our many sister organizations.

Most recently, we celebrated the La Ballona Fiesta with a tremendous turnout of visitors and wonderful participation by our members. *Thanks to you all!*

We also introduced our new historic umbrella at the Fiesta. It features pictures of eight of our historic sites and is very good looking (a great item for gift-giving at \$40 each – and don't forget our popular throws!).

On October 18th, we will be participating with our neighbor, The Mayme A. Clayton Library and Museum (located across the street from the Vets and the ARC) in presenting "Home Movie Day." This is an annual worldwide event where you may show your 8mm, Super8 or 16mm home movies and have them evaluated for preservation. For more information, visit www.homemovieday.com or call 323.669.0431. You may also contact the Society at info@CulverCityHistoricalSociety.org or call 310.253.6941.

Looking forward to seeing you at the ARC soon!

Sincerely,

Notes from Your City Historian

by Julie Lugo Cerra



"Culver City is rated as having the lowest city tax rate in California..... Eight blocks of business..... \$100,000 free Grammar School..... Beautiful Parks and children's playgrounds and 1500 shade trees...."

CULVER CITY TURNS 91!

Culver City just turned 91 this past month, on September 20th. I was going through some of the early printed material and guess what they advertised? First, *location*, of course – between Los Angeles and the beach city of Venice.

Some of the verbiage is fun to read, like, "Culver City is the hub of a wheel with fourteen spokes – each representing an artery of travel..... It is the logical business and residential center between Los Angeles and the Pacific Ocean....."

"The beautiful Baldwin Hills form a picturesque background for the entire Culver district..... The most cosmopolitan thoroughfare in the United States – Washington Boulevard – passes through the center of Culver City. The tourists of the United States and of the WORLD travel over the Boulevard, through Culver City en route to Los Angeles' Beaches....."



"Culver City water ranks among the best in California..... Complete telephone installation..... Many miles of paving, curbs, sidewalks, sewer system, gas, water, and electricity installed.... A public market. A Picture Theatre..... Two substantial Banks..... A first class newspaper..... A County Library. Two excellent Hotels..... Five churches –

Culver Historical Highlights

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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 CCHS Newsletter is published quarterly.

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Marc Wanamaker, Louise Coffey-Webb

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Editor's Column

As you will read throughout this issue of *Culver Historical Highlights*, it's indeed been a very busy time for the Society.

Of particular importance is the new computer program set up by our techno-savvy volunteer, Winston Gieseke. It is a marvel – each entry gives the full description, source information, photos if needed, and actual physical location of every item in the ARC! Everything will be documented and evaluated – the full collection of memorabilia, costumes, photos and library. We are truly indebted to Winston!

Having had visitors to the ARC from all over, we are now in a "hosting" mode and our invaluable volunteers are learning ways to share and illuminate the many pieces that make up the history of Culver City. Even the intrepid Harry Culver would surely be overwhelmed by the dedication and efforts of so many to document and preserve this special bit of land we all so love!

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

representative of various religious denominations."

There are other phrases that would probably not be used today as positives, like "250,000 pass through Culver City every week in automobiles; an average of 5000 motor cars pass daily....."

RETURNING TO TODAY....

City history is unfolding in the Culver City Historical Society Archives (see pg. 6)

REEL



CULVER CITY

by Marc Wanamaker

CULVER CITY TO BE CALLED "HOLLYWOOD?"

The unthinkable happened in June of 1937 when the Culver City Chamber of Commerce sent out petitions to call for an election on the question of the city changing its name from Culver City to *Hollywood*!

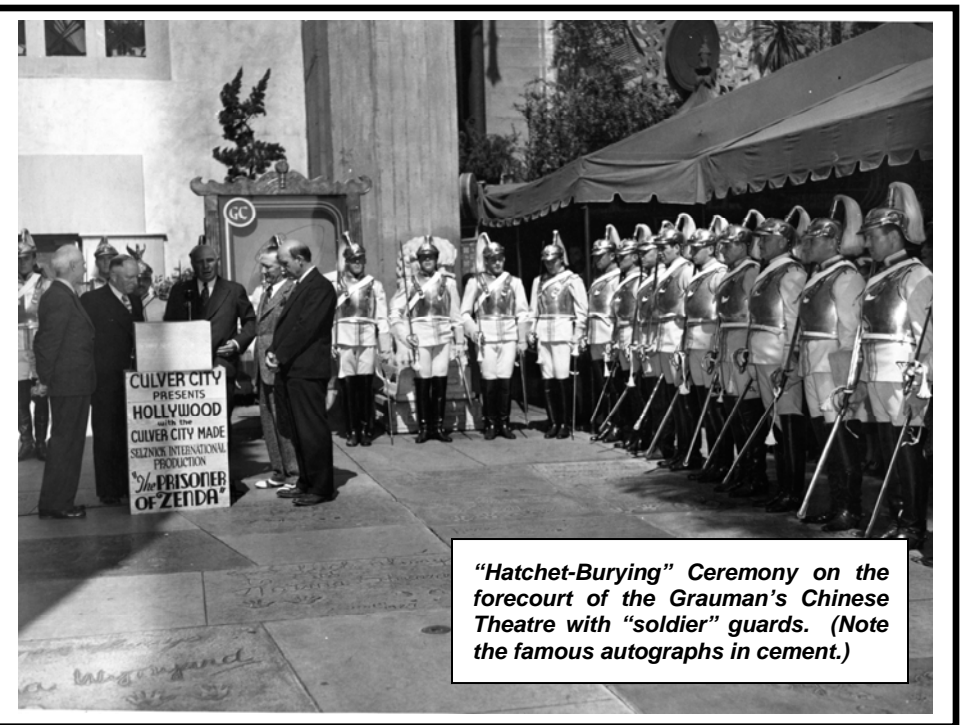
The president of the Culver City Chamber said: "Our board of directors was unanimous in voting to change the name of Culver City to Hollywood. We believe the registered voters of the town will be almost 100 per cent in backing the suggestion. Sixty percent of the motion pictures made in California are made in our city, but we don't get credit for it!" (The studios located in Culver City at that time were MGM, RKO/Pathé-Selznick, Hal Roach, and Victory along with other small production companies.)

THE HOLLYWOOD CHAMBER RESPONDS

When the Hollywood Chamber of Commerce heard of such a plan they were, to say the least, "angry" and "threatened." It just so happened, that at that same time, Carl Bush, secretary of the Hollywood Chamber of Commerce, had led a drive to obtain a "Hollywood" postage postmark for the Los Angeles branch post office there.

A press release immediately went out, stating that Hollywood was the only suburb of Los Angeles, being within that incorporated city since 1910 when it dropped its own government to obtain Los Angeles water supply access.

"We have three plans to thwart the move!" Mr. Bush said. "First to confer with the Culver City Chamber and show them the confusion that would occur. Second is to obtain an injunction in Superior Court pointing out that it would be bad public policy to call the election because of the confusion the name change would create. Third, and this is our real ace in the hole, is to have the U.S. Post Office Department refuse to



"Hatchet-Burying" Ceremony on the forecourt of the Grauman's Chinese Theatre with "soldier" guards. (Note the famous autographs in cement.)

recognize the name change, if made, and still cancel their mail with the 'Culver City' mark."

Of course, the Hollywood Chamber's board was especially angry that the tourist business could be affected by such a change!

For days, newspapers in Los Angeles were *front-paging* the story of the circulation of petitions in Culver City calling for the special election. Both chambers of commerce issued statements deploring the other.

The feud resulted in the possibility that Los Angeles would be brought into this controversy and that the Hollywood studios would secede from Los Angeles if the worst came to be. Screen actors John Boles and Richard Dix formed the "Hollywood – for – the – Hollywoodians" division saying, "It would be a crime to sit idly by and permit Culver City to usurp the name of Hollywood!"

A "HATCHET-BURYING" CEREMONY

By October, 1937, the Culver City Chamber of Commerce gave up on the petition drive due to the incredible pressure that was applied by the studio heads in both Culver City and Hollywood. A "press conference" (which was actually a publicity stunt) was held on October 6th at the famed Grauman's Chinese Theater in Hollywood. A "hatchet-burying" ceremony was held in the forecourt of the theatre, ending the feud between Culver City and Hollywood over the right of Culver City to use the Hollywood name.

The first film to use the "Made in Culver City" caption on the beginning credits was Selznick International's production of *The*

Prisoner of Zenda. The Selznick studio sent a contingent of period uniformed soldier/actors to officiate the "hatchet-burying" ceremonies.

Shortly thereafter, MGM Studios began to place *Made in Culver City, California* on all their productions. Previously they had been using *Made in Hollywood* on all their major films which seemed to be misplaced to the locals in Hollywood as well as Culver City!

Postscript: Sony Pictures Entertainment has continued the tradition and uses *Made at Sony Pictures Studios, Culver City, CA* on their productions.

Ed. Note: In the Summer issue of *Culver Historical Highlights*, Romaine Studios was misspelled in several instances. Its proper spelling is "Romaine Studios."

GIVE A CCHS MEMBERSHIPS FOR THE HOLIDAYS!

by Lydia Spiegelman, Membership Chair

It's not too early to begin thinking about gift-giving for the holidays. With all the wonderful things that are happening at the CC Historical Society, you and your friends and family will certainly want to be a part of it!

Your membership dues support the Society's diverse efforts to keep Culver City's unique history alive for future generations. The ARC is busy with tours, visitors and events of all kinds, while providing an outstanding research center for scholars and students of all levels. You will also be supporting such community outreach programs as the very popular "Living History Project" for Culver City students.

Please consider becoming a Patron, a Lifetime Member, a Corporate Sponsor or a Benefactor. Being a member of the Culver City Historical Society is more important and rewarding than ever before – and a GREAT GIFT anytime of year! (see form on pg. 8.)

CULVER CITY HISTORICAL SOCIETY ~ ~ ~

CCHS ANNUAL "PICNIC IN THE PARK"

The CCHS Annual "Picnic in the Park" was an annual success! Held again at Veterans Memorial Park, this year members and their guests were given the opportunity to tour the up-and-really-running ARC. So much hard work and wonderful volunteer hours has gone into bringing our center to the attention of not only the local community and visitors, but to our many sister organizations. We're reaping the rewards of years of dedication and persistence by all the CCHS members and boards.

Below is a photo gallery of some of the revelers who enjoyed a "Picnic in the Park"



Above: New councilmember, Andy Weissman (center), his wife Doneil and one of their grandchildren visit with Carlos Lugo (left).



L-R: CCHS members "hard" at work: Sol Sigall, Martha Sigall, Julie Lugo Cerra (hiding in the back), George Zermeno and CCHS President Stu Freeman.

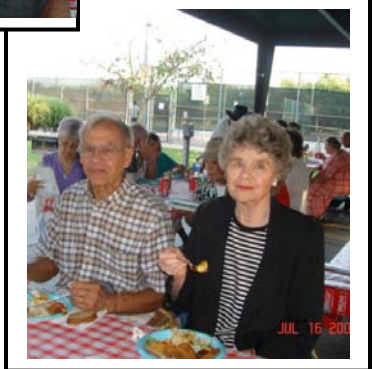
Below: Bill & Madelyn Hahn.



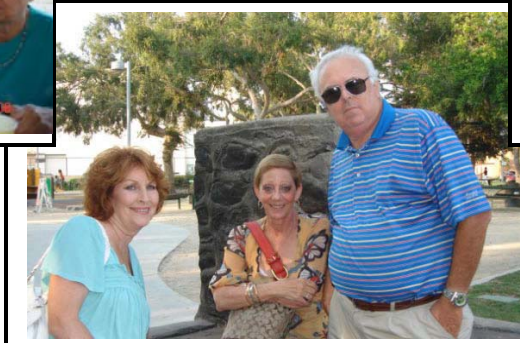
Left: CCHS VP, Programs Fred Yglesias (center with bullhorn) and Pres. Stu Freeman handle a little Society business while enjoying the annual CCHS "Picnic in the Park."



Above: L-R: George Zermeno, Vivian Matheson and Dr. Michael Landau (also Pres. of CC High Alumni Assoc.).



Above: L-R: Bette & Gerald Sallus & Lynn Baril.



Photos by Julie Lugo Cerra, Lydia Spiegelman & Fred Yglesias.



Above: Mim Shapiro & Charles Rozaire.

Left: Barbara Hand with Patrice & Ron Bricker.

“ARC HAPPENINGS”

(cont'd. from pg. 1)

We recently had guests from one of our sister cities, Lethbridge, Canada (see photo on Pg. 1). They thoroughly enjoyed learning more about the “Heart of Screenland” and appreciated the “Lethbridge Garden Room” where many of our events and meetings are held.

On July 12th, the CCHS was privileged to host a mini-conference of the Associated Historical Societies of Los Angeles County at the ARC. CCHS President Stu Freeman welcomed the distinguished guests and City Historian Julie Lugo Cerra spoke to the group on issues of preservation and how the ARC has developed. Danny Munoz, AHSLAC President and a CCHS Life Member, presented the Society with a gift of books for the ARC's reference library.

Introducing our guests to the extensive ARC collection were CCHS VPs, Archives Martha and Sol Sigall, VP. Programs Fred Yglesias, and Costume Chair Louise Coffey-Webb who shared some background on the costume collection.

Fiesta La Ballona 2008 was held on the weekend of August 23-24. The ARC was opened and we had guests who have returned often along with new folks who have only just learned about us through the Fiesta. Our terrific volunteer docents made everyone feel extremely welcomed and proudly displayed our growing collection of memorabilia from earlier Fiestas.

Note: Fiesta La Ballona was originally created in 1951 as a weeklong celebration of the early settlers of the La Ballona Valley as well as the native Gabrielino Indians. With events geared for all segments of the community, the early fiestas served to evoke pride in family heritage for some, and an opportunity to feel like an early settler for others. (For more information on the history of the Fiesta: <http://www.culvercity.org/info/fiesta.asp?sec=>)

In one short year, the ARC has become a focal point for scholarly research and recalling happy memories. Much more is ahead!



(L-R) CCHS President Stu Freeman, Julie Lugo Cerra, Fred Yglesias and AHSLAC President Danny Munoz.



Above: CCHS Membership Chair Lydia Spigelman (center) with friends Mike and Sandy Iberra and their two little ones. Former CCHS Pres. Cathy Zermeno at left (seated), welcoming guests to ARC.



Left: CCHS members Lou and Jeannette Block (seated) took the sign-in duty on Fiesta Saturday. Fabiola Hensley did a little shopping while she was visiting.

NEWS FROM THE COSTUME CHAIR . . .

by Louise Coffey-Webb
Costume Committee Chair

FIESTA TIME!

"Fiesta time" is always so much fun – everyone's in a party mood! It's especially fun to show off Fiesta items from the past at the ARC and this year was no different.

So many visitors enjoyed the Fiesta memorabilia. They all had their own stories and memories to share, especially the "baby boomers" who remember when Fiesta La Ballona was a week-long event with a parade and many related events.

MANNEQUIN WITH A HISTORY!

I want to thank a colleague and Culver City neighbor, Ali Brown, for donating a mannequin for the display of the Fiesta Princess dress shown below. It came from Carnell Kirkeeng, Ali's grandfather who amassed a phenomenal historic fashion collection, reaching back over 100 years. Perhaps in a future column we will tell more about this amazing collection.

This particular Fiesta Princess dress is a Rosalie Utterback original, circa 1951. It is made of a bright yellow rayon with a black lace mantilla. It's a beauty and the craftsmanship is superb.

I invite you all to come visit the ARC and share your memories and ideas on the first and third Saturdays of each month and by appointment (call us at 310.253.6941).

~ LC-W



*Fiesta La Ballona Princess Dress,
c. 1951*

DO SOMETHING HISTORIC!

Take an active role in the Culver City Historical Society: Become a CCHS Docent, conduct a downtown walking tour, be a "Living History" presenter. If you're good at organizing or filing, help at the ARC.

BECOME A CCHS VOLUNTEER!

Below: Founding CCHS member Pat Clapp and husband, Sonny were called into action when they visited from their home in Palm Springs, CA.



MARK YOUR CALENDAR

- OCT. 4TH:** **MACHADO FAMILY REUNION**
Chevron Park, El Segundo
- OCT. 7TH:** **CCHS BOOTH** at the
Culver City Farmers Market
- OCT. 15TH:** **CCHS FALL GENERAL MEETING**
- OCT. 18TH:** **"HOME MOVIE DAY"**
Clayton Library & Museum
- OCT. 19TH:** **LACHS LECTURE**
History of Port of San Pedro at Central LA Library
- OCT. 24TH:** **"LA AS SUBJECT"**
Archives Festival at USC
- JAN. 21, 2009:** **CCHS WINTER GENERAL MEETING**

For more information on any of these events, please contact the CCHS:

info@CulverCityHistoricalSociety.org

or Tel: 310.253.6941

ARC Volunteer Dates

1st & 3rd Saturdays, 1-3 pm

Call to confirm dates: 310.253.6941

Oct. 4	Oct. 18	Nov. 1
Nov. 15	Dec. 6	Dec. 20

"Notes" (cont'd.)

and Resource Center (ARC). Stop by and enjoy some of our treasures, including Harry Culver's printed ads from "the olden days" ("Free Excursion" – 1913).

The City of Culver City is proposing a new Historic Preservation ordinance. This is in the process of being discussed by the Cultural Affairs Commission, and then it goes to Council. We will be offering comments to the city.

Thinking ahead, next year is the 70th Anniversary of the release of some very important films like *The Wizard of Oz* and *Gone with the Wind*, classic films which were made by our local studios. There is also a Victor Fleming biography by Michael Sragow due out in December, 2008. We are working on an event/book-signing with Mr. Sragow in January, 2009.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

The Society is continuing to uncover photographs of City officials for the City Hall gallery of official photos. We've recently discovered a photo of Thomas Carroll who was a councilman in the late 1940s to early '50s. We still have a good amount of council members to find, so if anyone should have or know of such photos, please contact us at info@CulverCityHistoricalSociety.org or call 310.253.6941.

VOLUNTEER PROFILE:

WINSTON GIESEKE

We want to thank one of our newest volunteers, Winston Gieseke for his invaluable help in setting up the ARC computer program. Let us tell you a little about Winston:

Born and raised in Normal, Illinois, Winston Gieseke's passion for creative expression led to Los Angeles and a writing degree from CSU Northridge.

His passion for all things historical led to a three-year stint in the 20th Century Fox archives, where he designed an electronic database and personally catalogued & photographed over 6,000 movie props for the studio's collection.



Winston has also enjoyed a brief career writing episodes for television shows like the ABC Family Channel's "Wildfire" and "Hollywood Off-Ramp" for E! Entertainment.

He now works as a Managing Editor for Regent Media, parent company of the here! [sic] television network [as well as national publications like The Advocate and Out.

Winston has been a proud Culver City resident for almost three years.

An ARC Update

by Martha & Sol Sigall
Vice President, Archives

ARC's FIESTA GUESTS

The ARC has been buzzing with activity – especially during Fiesta La Ballona 2008!

Our guests offered lots of positive comments, and we were delighted to see several busy members of the Fiesta Committee stop by. Of course, having our own CCHS VP, Programs, Fred Yglesias stationed at the Beer Garden did not hurt!

We welcomed Fiesta-goers on both days, Saturday and Sunday, August 23-24, and our guest book shows it. Stu's surprise home footage from a very early Fiesta was a wonderful addition – even if his dad cut off his mother's head in a few of the shots! Our Costume Chair, Louise Coffey-Webb, displayed a 1951 Fiesta Princess costume on one of our new mannequins, and two display cases were dedicated to this special Fiesta display. And, we sold numerous CCHS items and took several orders for our new, very well-received umbrella.

ARC's GREAT VOLUNTEERS

Huge "thank yous" to all the volunteers who help at the ARC regularly, attended the computer training class and who work at special events like the Fiesta: Carole Gustin, Lydia Spiegelman, Lou and Jeannette Block, Tami Eskridge, Jeanne Conklin, Cathy Zermeno, Fred Yglesias, Christina Machado-Essex, Stu Freeman, Louise Coffey-Webb, Julie Lugo Cerra, Steve Rose, Steve Newton, Doug Newton, Shana Newton, Vivian Matheson, Joy Jacobs, Karen Coyle and Winston Gieseke.



Our hard-working volunteers at the ARC.....

SPECIAL THANKS

A new volunteer who has proven to be invaluable is Winston Gieseke (see profile on this page). Winston has done a superb job with our new computer software, designing a template just for our purposes, with input from our members. We now have the ability to input all the information on items in our collection, with many fields and up to three pictures for each entry. In addition, Winston taught an introductory class for committee members who are eager to help – and let us know if you have time to join us.

We have a new display case donated by Steve Newton. Thanks, Steve, for all your work in refurbishing the case. It was especially useful for the Fiesta buttons and other items that fit well in a shallow case – something we really needed. Former CCHS Treasurer, Lynn Baril, who has retired and moved to Michigan, donated a number of office items, including a first-aid kit for the ARC before she left. Thanks, Lynn.

Remember, we are open the first and third Saturdays from 1-3 pm and by appointment. Please come in – and bring your friends!

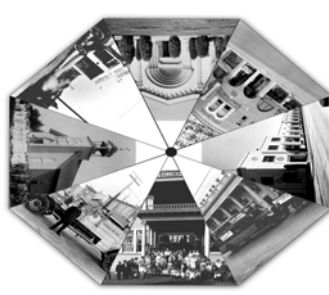
~ Martha & Sol

The Society sends good thoughts to our members who've been a bit under the weather of late:

- ~ Reba Yudess
- ~ Lorraine Henderson
- ~ Maxine Mytar

• Thank You for your donation

- ~ **Winston Gieseke:** TV/Video player
- ~ **Jeanne & Ken Conklin:** DVD/Video player
- ~ **Douglas Newton:** Computer desk
- ~ **Lynn Baril:** Office supplies & "railroad" book
- ~ **George Jones** [CC High '63]: Panoramic photos of Venice & other sites
- ~ **Pat Clapp** [CC High '54]: CC High School Centaur items & memorabilia
- ~ **Mary Lou (Brown) Schatan** [CC High '63]: \$50 for the ARC
- ~ **Stu Freeman:** Video of early Fiesta



top view

A HOLIDAY GIFT REMINDER: The CCHS has designed this fun umbrella with scenes of historic Culver City sites. At \$40 each, these will make wonderful holiday gifts. Pre-order this delightful umbrella and be among the first to be "singin' in the rain!" **AND** the popular CCHS "throws" are being ordered in **green** this year – so be sure you have the new color! Also, we have a few cranberry throws available, along with the "Heart of Screenland" license plates and historic photo postcards & notecards. Call (310) 253-6941 for more information and to place orders.

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

Name/Company: _____ Contact Person: _____

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

Telephone: _____ Fax: _____ 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) 253-6941 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.

Alliance Bank Curtis Reis (310) 410-9281
Brundo Interiors Richard Ross Brundo (310) 391-1888
Byco, Inc. John Byers (949) 645-2251
Cantalini's Salerno Beach Rest. ... Lisa Schwab (310) 821-0018
Cavanaugh Realtors Dannie Cavanaugh (310) 837-7161
Culver Center Flowers Mike Eskridge (310) 839-2344
Culver Hotel, The Douglas Newton (310) 838-7963
Culver Studios, The (310) 202-1234
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Jeffrey S. Penso, M.D. (310) 204-6897
Petrelli's Restaurant George Petrelli (310) 398-9777
Roll 'n Rye Restaurant Rita Zide (310) 390-3497
Santa Maria Barbecue Co. James Rodrigues (310) 842-8169
Carol Schwab, CC City Attorney (310) 253-5660
Sony Pictures Entertainment....Kristin Cavanaugh (310) 244-4000

Culver City Historical Society

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