CC HISTORICAL SOCIETY ADOPTS NEW LOGO
CULVER CITY & CCHS HIGHLIGHTED IN PBS PROGRAM

KCET’S HUELL HOWSER “VISITS” CULVER CITY & THE ARC

Doug Newton, CCHS VP, Ways & Means & the Manager of the Culver Hotel, finally got Huell Howser to “visit” Culver City!

In July, Mr. Howser, host of the popular PBS series, “Visiting…With Huell Howser,” visited the Culver Hotel, and the Society benefitted from his visit to the Veterans Memorial Building, where he ended his filming at our CC Historical Society Archives and Resource Center (ARC) – where Costumes Chair, Louise Coffey-Webb, showed off a few of the prized M-G-M Costumes.

CCHS UNVEILS NEW LOGO AT ANNUAL PICNIC

by Stephen M. Fry, VP for Programs

One of the Society’s most exciting projects – and one that has been in review for some time – is its newly created logo.

In Board meeting discussions about how the Society might develop an appropriate logo, several avenues were open, including having Society members contribute designs, hiring a professional designer, holding a competition, or choosing a ready-made logo. The Board decided that local artists, especially design students at local schools and institutions, should have an opportunity and be encouraged to participate.

The competition was publicized in local newspapers and other media with this notice: “The Culver City Historical Society is seeking an appropriate logo to represent its unique function, location, and community role. The design art should be suitable for use on the Society’s literature, stationery, website, plaques and other materials, and should incorporate a local building, site or other historical reference.”

We created a design brief and a set of competition rules and guidelines, with a deadline for participants of May 31, 2010. The subsequent submissions included many diverse and original ideas featuring local buildings, art, and the film industry (i.e. “Culver City: The Heart of Screenland”).

Our winning logo, by unanimous vote at the July, 2010 Board meeting, was created by Robert Wolfe, a local artist and long-time Culver City resident. His

~ OCTOBER 20, 2010: GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING ~
Special Guest: Bob Wayne of Sunburst Recording Studio

The Culver City Historical Society’s Fall General Membership Meeting will be held on Wednesday, October 20th 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.

Our special guest will be Bob Wayne, the long-time owner and director of Sunburst Recording Studio who will offer an historic overview of his Culver City studio, the premiere recording studio in the West Los Angeles area. Over the last several decades, Bob has recorded works from a Who's Who of spoken word and music performers in radio, TV and film. (See Bob's profile on pg. 7.) Following Bob’s presentation will be a screening of Katherine Maxwell’s Girl Scout “Gold Award” 10-min. film on local history featuring several CCHS members.

The public is invited to enjoy the free program and students are encouraged to attend. The CCHS Archives & Resource Center (ARC) will be briefly opened following the meeting. Light refreshments will be served following the program (but remember: NO FOOD in the ARC!). For more information, please call the Society at (310) 253-6941 or email us at info@CulverCityHistoricalSociety.org. Also, visit our new website: www.culvercityhistoricalsociety.org for updates.
PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE  

In our last newsletter, I mentioned that we have acquired many of the wonderful Our Gang comedies as well as numerous “Laurel & Hardy” comedies on DVDs for screening at the CCHS Archives & Resource Center. We have now added another 80 Our Gang DVDs and we are presently trying to obtain the entire “Laurel & Hardy” collection. You owe it to yourselves to come by the Archives and enjoy these wonderful, timeless comedies.

Remember, these classic films were made in Culver City at the Hal Roach Studios – the “Laugh Factory to the World” which existed from 1919 to 1963 – and on locations shot around the city. The Sons of the Desert placed a marker in the parkette at National and Washington Boulevards to commemorate this “bastion of family entertainment.”

We have made some wonderful improvements at the ARC that I’m sure you’ll enjoy. If you haven’t been by recently, please come visit and see the ever-changing displays and new items of Culver City’s multi-faceted history.

I would like to personally thank everyone who came to our annual July Picnic at Vets Park. It was the best-attended event that we have ever had and it was clear that everyone really enjoyed themselves. Thanks go to our VP of Programs, Steve Fry, and his Dixieland Band, and to Jim Rodrigues who served up his excellent Santa Maria BBQ.

Thank you all for your continued support. Your Board, Committee Chairs and I sincerely appreciate it. See you at the ARC!

Sincerely,

Stu Freeman

Notes from Your City Historian  

by Julie Lugo Cerra

30 YEARS AND STILL EVOLVING!

After 30 years, it is still gratifying to see our CC Historic Society continue to grow and become more of a resource. Our physical site and collections are always improving, and we now have our own website, thanks to Winston Gieseke, VP, Museum/ARC. We will be linking to museum sites, such as the Sony Pictures’ virtual museum and other pertinent resources, including the City and the Chamber of Commerce, who will be linking to us!

SONY SHOWS OFF THE CITY & ITS FILM HISTORY

You might remember that when Sony Pictures Entertainment took over the historic first major studio in our city, the studio’s property department was depleted, having been sold at auction in the early 1970s by MGM.

Since Sony Pictures was just beginning its history in Culver City, they established a web-based museum, and they also created a space in Sony Pictures Plaza, to showcase their archives. It is open to the public, and in addition to changing displays, they have a kiosk for visitors to access the online museum. (Note the article on their award-winning website on pg. 5.)

CCHS HOSTS A VARIETY OF VISITORS

This summer, we took a group of “Brandeis Ladies” on a tour of the Archives and also walked them around Downtown. Special thanks to Joy Jacobs and Fred Yglesias for their assistance and to the Brandeis ladies for their donation.

We also enjoyed a visit in late August from thirty marvelous young people from the Parks and Rec. summer Camp, “Just4Kids.” The nine and ten-year-olds were amazingly aware of local history and full of questions – and answers!

LOCAL HISTORY THROUGH INTERVIEWS & ON FILM

Katherine Maxwell, who is now a senior at Culver City High School, has been busy working on her Girl Scout “Gold Award.” Katherine, who attends Culver High’s Academy of Visual and Performing Arts (AVPA), has interviewed a number of locals with a history for this project. These include Martha and Sol Sigall, Bill Wynn, Howard Zager, and myself, along with some “newcomers.” The end product is a ten-minute film entitled History is Gold, which contains numerous historic photos integrated into the story of our city. You will have an opportunity to see this film at special showings in the Archives.

(continued on pg. 3)
LAUREL AND HARDY ON LOCATION IN CULVER CITY

EARLY FILMING USED CULVER CITY AS “BACKGROUND”

Before filmmaking became a big industry in Culver City, early film companies used the area as backgrounds for a variety of geographical areas.

STUDIOS FIRST USE CITY STREETS & OPEN AREAS, THEN “BACKLOTS”

When producer/director Thomas Ince first sent a unit to the Culver City area around 1913, they used the La Ballona Creek as a location. Others used the open fields and hills for various settings.

By 1920, the newly acquired Thomas Ince/Triangle Studio by the Goldwyn Film Company was expanded to add a backlot with settings that would represent the "world."

When Ince built a new studio on Washington Blvd. to the east of the first one he built, he added his own backlot. And when famed producer Cecil B. DeMille later took over this Ince Studio, another new backlot was developed, later to be called the “40 Acres,” situated at the end of what is now Ince Boulevard, along the La Ballona Creek.

CULVER CITY FOLKS SEE FILMING ON LOCAL STREETS

By 1925, there were five motion picture studios in the Culver City vicinity and all of them used the area in and around Culver City as a background augmenting their own backlots – and since Culver City was founded with the motion picture industry as its economic base, filming on the streets of the little town was commonplace.

As the town grew in population due to the growth of the studios and its workforce, neighborhoods expanded with businesses and civic buildings creating a “downtown” center around Main Street, Washington and Culver Boulevards with the Culver Hotel at its heart.

HAL ROACH OFTEN “CO-STARS” THE CITY IN HIS FILMS

It seems that the Hal Roach Studio at National and Washington Boulevards used the downtown Culver City center most often, “co-starring” the city with its Roach stars.

One of the early Roach films, Putting the Pants on Philip (1927), starred the wonderful comic team of Stan Laurel and Oliver Hardy. The storyline has Oliver Hardy showing his Scottish relative (Stan Laurel) around the town. The relative is wearing the traditional Scottish kilt and hat and draws a lot of unwanted attention from the townspeople. Most of the action takes place on Main Street and Culver Boulevard in front of the Culver Hotel. Scenes like these made Culver City world-famous not only as a studio town but also as a film background location.

The photograph pictured above shows Laurel and Hardy on location on Culver Boulevard in front of the Culver City Hall for the film, County Hospital (MGM, 1932). The Roach company used the City Hall building as “The County Hospital” with Culver Boulevard seen in the background. Here we see director James Parrott and his crew getting ready to shoot a scene in front of the Culver City Hall.

Basically, the plot follows Hardy going into the hospital after hurting his leg (which is bandaged). Stan comes to pick him up at the hospital to take him home. After Hardy is in the car, Stan proceeds to drive through Culver City causing accidents and other mayhem putting Hardy and his leg in more jeopardy!

During the filming on the city’s streets, there were uniformed police officers guarding the production and keeping the public at a safe distance. It was a big event for Culver residents to see their favorite star(s) on location – not unlike today’s fans who still get excited when they see stars working on the streets around the city.

“Historian” (cont’d.)

It is always nice to see our Society members "out on the circuit." I enjoyed visiting the Venice Historical Society meeting recently, when our shared member, Bill Hahn, presented some of his memories of Venice and Mar Vista!

Isn’t it great to see increasing interest in Culver City? “One Square Mile” is Assoc. Professor Andrew (Sandy) Tolan’s project for his second-year grad students at the USC Annenberg School for Communication.

The project is co-sponsored with the new “Culver City Patch.” The CCHS hosted the students at the ARC on August 27, 2010. The Chamber of Commerce provided maps (It is HARD to find any square mile in our city!) and Steve Rose and I offered a bit of background information so the students could focus on which areas might offer the best study opportunities.

Go to CulverCity.Patch.com and you will see what they are doing! 

~ 3 ~
Jim Rodrigues, owner of Culver City’s Santa Maria Barbeque restaurant (9552 Washington Blvd), prepared a genuine Santa Maria style barbeque for this year’s Annual CCHS Picnic which was held at the Vets Park picnic area, on Wednesday evening, July 21st.

Jim himself oversaw the barbequing which included tender Choice-Grade tri-tip beef and plump Grade A chickens, his special chili beans, potato salad, green salad, garlic bread, Santa Maria’s special BBQ sauce (if you really have to have sauce), home made-cookies and soft drinks.

A special treat this year was the performance of The Razzmatazz Dixieland jazz ensemble which performed festive music throughout the event.

The highlight of the evening was the announcement of the winner of the Society’s logo competition. Robert Wolfe, a local artist and long-time Culver City resident won the honors (see story on pg.1)
CELEBRATING ITS 30TH ANNIVERSARY!

More “Picnic” Fun:

(Above) Santa Maria BBQ Truck that hauled all the delicious food!

New members at picnic, Catherine and Mary Yanda (in foreground).

“Logo” (cont’d.)
design incorporated stylized visions of the historic Culver Hotel along with the film sculpture – “Filmstrip USA” by noted sculptress Natalie Krol – which stands in front of the Veterans Memorial Building.

Most gratifying is the fact that Mr. Wolfe is 83 years old. He received an award of $300, and was the Guest of Honor at the Society’s annual picnic on July 21st, where the new logo was unveiled.

Local artists Brenda Cook and Susan Diviak earned Honorable Mentions for their creative designs. And the Society thanks all who submitted entries for this very important mission.

A Reminder:

RENEW CCHS MEMBERSHIPS!
by Lydia Spiegelman,
Membership Chair

The CCHS Membership renewals are due at the beginning of the year. This is a great Historical Society, wonderful things are happening and we want you all to be a part of it!

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.

SONY PICTURES ENTERTAINMENT WEBSITE EARN PRESTIGIOUS AWARD

Good news from our friends, and corporate sponsor, Sony Pictures Entertainment:

The Sony Pictures online museum, www.sonypicturesmuseum.com, won multiple awards in three prestigious website competitions in 2010. The museum was selected as an Official Honoree for the Movie and Film category in the 14th Annual Webby Awards, the leading international award honoring excellence on the Internet presented by The International Academy of Digital Arts and Sciences.

As a result of the exceptional quality of submissions this year, the Academy recognized outstanding entries as Official Honorees alongside the Nominees and Winners. The Official Honoree distinction was awarded only to the top 15% of all work entered that exhibited remarkable achievement. With nearly 10,000 entries received from all 50 states and over 60 countries, SPE considered this an outstanding accomplishment for the museum.

The SPE museum garnered further attention by winning Gold and Silver awards in two visual arts competitions presented by the International Academy of Visual Arts, a group of leading professionals in various visual arts mediums. In the categories of Education and Movie/Film, the museum was awarded the two Gold Davey Awards. The museum was also honored in the W3 Awards with a Silver Award for Cultural Institutions.

The museum underwent a significant upgrade of its backend support, design and content. SPE refined the design further to keep the look and feel of the site current with the constantly evolving landscape of the Internet.
**NEWS FROM THE COSTUME CHAIR . . .**  
by Louise Coffey-Webb  
Costume Committee Chair

**PRESERVATION IMPERATIVE FOR COSTUMES … AND PEOPLE TOO!**

Costumes are similar to people in that, from the moment they are created, they begin to deteriorate! In other words, preservation becomes of vital importance.

“**GONE WITH THE WIND” & THE HARRY RANSOM CENTER**

On that note, a happy story appeared in The Hollywood Reporter on September 2, 2010, stating that fans of Gone With The Wind responded to “an appeal for funds to restore gowns from the 1939 movie meeting its target (of $30,000) in three weeks.” [Belinda Goldsmith, Reuters.]

Some costumes from the film were acquired by the Harry Ransom Center at the University of Texas at Austin in the 1980s. The CCHS recently received an email notification from the Ransom Center, referring to their plan to create a traveling exhibition in celebration of the 75th anniversary of Gone With the Wind in 2014.

The folks at the Ransom Center wisely acknowledge that for an exhibition of costumes of this caliber to travel, they will need to be conserved and have custom display supports and traveling boxes made. Now wouldn’t that be a marvelous exhibition – to be able to show those costumes in the very city where the film was created?

“**FIESTA QUEEN’S” COSTUME SHOWN AT FIESTA LA BALLONA**

If any of you were able to visit our Archival Resource Center (ARC) during the Fiesta La Ballona weekend, you would have noticed the Fiesta “Queen” gown on display, together with a photograph of a young lady wearing the very same dress in 1951. (The Fiesta Queen’s dress can also be seen on our new website: www.culvercityhistoricalsociety.org.)

**SPECIAL ITEMS BROUGHT OUT FOR HUELL HOWSER’S “VISIT”**

We’ve added a new display with a circus leotard worn by Doris Day in Billy Rose’s Jumbo from 1962 (and our newsletter editor remembers seeing the elephants walking down Overland Ave. during its filming!). The costumes for were designed by Morton Haack who designed films from 1959 to 1971, including The Unsinkable Molly Brown and Planet of the Apes.

In addition to these costumes, two old favorites are still on display: Gene Kelly’s striking red and white striped jacket from Take Me Out to the Ballgame (this one we put up for Huell Howser to admire!), and a very festive and be-tassled gown from The Kissing Bandit.

Don’t forget to watch the repeat of “Visiting … With Huell Howser” on PBS on October 15th at 7:30pm, where you will see a number of Culver City’s historic sites as well as yours truly proudly showing-off our MGM costumes!

“**MANAGING YOUR COSTUME COLLECTIONS**”

I am currently on sabbatical from Woodbury University and finishing up a book that has been at least four years in “Managing Your Costume Collections.” This book will be helpful to anyone in charge of a collection, be it in a small museum, a rental house, or a personal archive.

As custodians of collections, we are all faced with the same conundrum: how do we preserve our assets while also providing access? The New Zealand Film Archive Project has been doing just that, along with The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences.

Recently, a total of 75 titles were re-discovered in New Zealand, including some Culver City connections: Robson Trail, a travelogue show in British Colombia, and a newsreel, both from Selznick News in 1922; and Smithy, a comedy starring Stan Laurel produced by Hal Roach in 1924. [Note: The ARC has some Hal Roach Studios memorabilia on display in our gorgeous new display bookcases.]

~ LC-W

**“Howser ” (cont’d.)**

The show will appear on KCET at 7:30 pm, Thursday, September 23, with a repeat on Friday, October 15, 2010, also at 7:30 pm.

The hotel and the ARC are bookends……you will have to watch to see third piece of history that made Mr. Howser very curious!!!

###
An ARC Update …..

by Winston Gieseke
Vice President, Museum/ARC

2010: BUSY & PRODUCTIVE

It has been a busy and productive summer at the Archives & Resource Center (ARC), and an exciting one.

We had a terrific turnout at the museum during the Fiesta La Ballona, and I’d like to thank all of those who were able to stop by and check out our new displays as well as all of the volunteers who donated their time to help keep us open for these additional hours.

NEW DISPLAY CASES IN TIME FOR THE FIESTA LA BALLONA

If you weren’t able to make it to the Fiesta or to our annual picnic, or if you haven’t paid a visit to the museum in the last few months, you might not have seen our gorgeous new custom-built display cases.

Beautifully crafted by Culver City’s own Culver Ready For Finish Furniture, the cases allow us to showcase even more of Culver City’s rich history.

Currently on display are items from Congressman Julian Dixon’s office, a scarf that belonged to the legendary actress Greta Garbo, along with many historical books from the Society’s rich collection.

From our costume collection, we have on display a jacket worn by Gene Kelly in the 1948 film Take Me Out To The Ball Game, as well as an original 1950s costume from the Fiesta “Queen” (see photo).

WE NEED YOUR HELP

As a reminder, the museum is made possible in part by generous donations from people like you. If you have anything of historical significance that you’d like to donate to the Society, please bring them to the ARC during open hours.

And please be sure and bring yourself to see the various goings-on at the ARC. As usual, we’re open the first and third Saturday of every month from 1:00 to 3:00 pm. Do check our new website often for updates on programs and events as well as for all kinds of information on the Society and the ARC: www.culvercityhistoricalsociety.org.

~ Winston

Visit Bob’s website to learn more: http://www.sunburstrecording.com/aboutus.htm

In Memoriam

The Society sends our warmest condolences to CCHS members who have recently lost beloved family members…

To Pat Bumpas and her family and friends on the passing of her dear husband, Brian Bumpus.

To the family and friends of Lorraine Henderson.

Sunshine thoughts go out to our good friends for a speedy recovery and to those on the mend:

- The Jakubowski Family
- Mary Ellen Fernandez
- Martha Sigall

CCHS ARCHIVES & RESOURCE CENTER (ARC)
Veterans Memorial Building • 4117 Overland Ave., Culver City, CA

Open 1st and 3rd Saturdays, 1-3 pm, and by appointment
Free admission. (Enter from parking lot behind the VMB.)
Mail: PO Box 3428, Culver City, CA 90231-3428
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P.O. Box 3428, Culver City, CA 90231-3428. For further information, call (310) 253-6941 or email: info@CulverCityHistoricalSociety.org.

*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.*

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