

Culver Historical Highlights

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LU HERRERA INSTALLED AS CCHS PRESIDENT

Former City Treasurer Becomes Society's 8th Leader

At the General Meeting on Wednesday, February 25, Lu Herrera was installed as the eighth CCHS President. The former City Treasurer graciously accepted the leadership spot upon the resignation of elected President, Ted Hatfield, who had to bow out when he accepted a position with, Regal Theaters, in Knoxville, TN.

Also installed were Ross Hawkins, 1st VP, Program; Kirk MacArthur Judy, 2nd VP, Museum; Stu Freeman, 3rd VP, Ways and Means; Edith Prager, Secretary; Virgie Eskridge, Treasurer; and Edna Larkin, Parliamentarian.

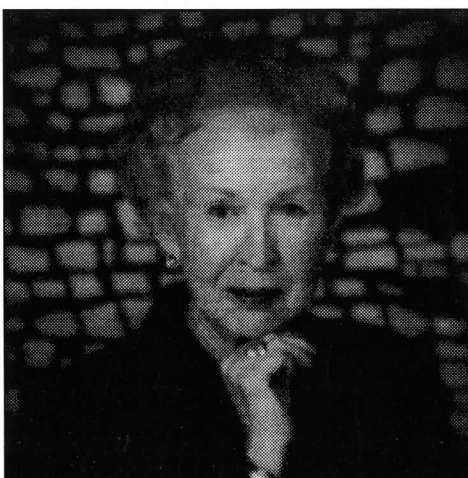
Appointed as committee chairs: Linda Edell and Lupe Smith, Membership Co-Chairs; Judy Stangler, Publicity/Newsletter Chair; Sam Cerra, Historic Sites Chair; and Susan Berg, Governmental Relations Chair.

A City Servant

Lu grew up and married in Alabama, moving to the Los Angeles area in 1945 upon her husband Sammy's military discharge. Both began working in Culver City in 1948 and bought their first home on Culver Crest in 1954.

While working in a bank, Lu was approached by the City Clerk and offered a job at City Hall. Within a few years, she was promoted to the position of Deputy City Treasurer. In 1964, she successfully campaigned for City Treasurer, defeating the incumbent and two other candidates.

During her long and illustrious civic career, Lu was appointed the Business Tax Collector, Accountant and Treasurer for the Culver City Redevelopment Agency. She has held several offices, including president, of



Lu Herrera

the California Municipal Treasurers Association and Municipal Treasurers Association of the U. S. and Canada. She retired from professional life in 1988.

Active in the Community

Lu's community activities extend far beyond her professional accomplishments. She is a member of many organizations and has held the presidency of the Soroptimist Club, the Sister City Committee and Business and Professional Womens' Club. She was a founding member of the CC Guidance Clinic Guild and acted as Regional Chairman of the Christmas Seal campaign for three years.

Lu was honored as Woman of the Year by the Women's Division of the Chamber of Commerce, the Women's Chapter D.A.V. #123, and the Soroptimist Club.

We are very fortunate to have Lu at the helm!

THE GABRIELINOS

(Part 2)

by Lupe Smith

The Ballona area (Sa-Angna) was an ideal site for the Gabrielinos (Tongvas) to set up their villages. Here, the creek provided water - important not only for drinking, but for bathing as daily bathing was part of their religion. The hunting was good and the ocean provided them with seafood and the shells they used for trading.

Numerous sites have been located by archeologists and builders in the area from Blair Hills to the area below Loyola Marymount University, along Ballona Creek and Playa Del Rey. Many locals have told of finding and collecting artifacts, which is further proof of the existence of these sites.

The Baldwin Hills, including Blair Hills, was part of the land given to one of our ancestors, Jose Antonio Valenzuela, but was later lost, as was most of the land the Indians were given.

Descendants of the Tongvas who lived in the Ballona area when Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo landed on Catalina in 1542 still survive in widely scattered areas. Their population in the Los Angeles area is estimated at 5000 and in the Southern California at about 20,000. We are actively researching and learning information about our lost culture and will share the knowledge we acquire.

MAY 27th GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

The CCHS General Membership Meeting will be held on Wednesday, May 27 at 7:00 pm in the Lethbridge Garden Room at the Veterans Memorial Building, 4117 Overland Avenue.

Our new President, Lu Herrera, will take the helm and outline several of the upcoming events and projects the CCHS is working on.

The evening will also feature guest speaker, Tom Ray (see related story in *Reel Life in Culver City*, page 3), who will recall his sixty-one years as an animator, with clips from his work. Refreshments will be served and the public is invited. For more information call (310)838-1073.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by Lu Herrea

Culver Historical Highlights

PO BOX 3428 • CULVER CITY, CA • 90231-3428
(310) 838-1073



First, may I say how honored I am to be the new President of the Culver City Historical Society. This new challenge and my love for this wonderful city have "reactivated" me from retirement.

I look forward to many accomplishments in the next two years, and my first priority will be to work to secure a permanent space for our Museum. Also, we need to begin immediately to set up volunteer work parties to organize and catalogue displays for our current space in The Antique Guild as well as other opportunities. We have so much interesting history to share, not only with our residents, but with tourists as well. Our collection is extensive in many areas: business and professional memorabilia as well as the personal memories and memoirs of our leading older citizens.

At all future meetings, there will be sign-in sheets for those in attendance to give their comments and suggestions and volunteer availability. I also encourage you to feel free to call me to discuss our projects, your particular interests and how you would like to help the Society accomplish its goals. Some of our volunteer needs include identifying buildings and people in our photo collection, computer classifying, and general cataloguing. Also, the Fiesta La Ballona is just around the corner, May 16 and 17, and the CCHS booth will need volunteers throughout the two days to hand out information, answer questions, sell CCHS items, and have an all around good time.

Please mark your calendar for the next General Meeting which will be held on Wednesday, May 27 at 7:00 pm in the Lethbridge Garden Room at the Vets' Building. And don't forget to call and help man the CCHS Fiesta booth.

I look forward to a wonderful future for the Society and I need your input and assistance will be greatly appreciated. You can reach me at (310) 838-1073.

Notes from Your City Historian

by Julie Lugo Cerra



"DANIEL L. PATACCHIA" CONFERENCE ROOM DEDICATED

"The Daniel L. Patacchia Conference Room" at City Hall was dedicated on Monday, April 6, 1998. The renaming of Conference Room 1A to honor Mayor Emeritus Patacchia was by action of the City Council.

Dan Patacchia, a native of Pennsylvania, arrived in Los Angeles in 1941. He and his wife Lillian moved to Culver City in 1948 where they raised their daughter, Nancy. Dan worked at Lockheed, then chauffeured in the movie industry, working part time in real estate. By 1950, he built his real estate office on Overland Avenue, from which he never completely retired. Dan passed away on February 11, 1994.

Patacchia served on the Culver City Council for eight years (1960-68), acting as mayor for six of those years (1962-68). It was during his tenure that Fox Hills was annexed to Culver City, the City celebrated its 50th Anniversary, and Dan traveled to Uruapan, Mexico as Mayor to formalize our first commitment to the Sister City pro-

gram. He played an active role in the community, in real estate organizations, the Chamber of Commerce, and as a member of the CC Exchange Club.

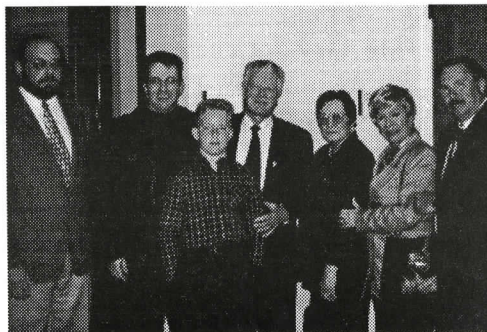
The dedication of the room to Patacchia was conducted by Mayor Albert Vera with the help of Culver City's PIO, Randi Joseph. In his remarks, Councilmember Mike Balkman referred to Patacchia as his mentor, and was pleased that the dedication came prior to his retirement from the elected body this month.

Dan's widow, Lillian Patacchia, daughter Nancy and her husband Bob Cline, grandson Danny Ericsson and great-grandson Jimmy were in attendance, as well as Dan's sister, Ida, her family and numerous old friends, including former City Treasurer Lu Herrera (the new CCHS President), Director of Human Services Syd Kronenthal and members of the Exchange Club.

The story of Culver City is ongoing..... we move forward and learn from the past.....



Dan Patacchia



(L-R) Councilman Mike Balkman, Dan Ericsson, Jimmy Ericsson, Mayor Albert Vera, Mrs. Dan Patacchia, Nancy Patacchia Cline, Bob Cline.

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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Editor.....Judy Stangler
Contributing Editor.....Ross Hawkins
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OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Lu Herrera.....President
Ross Hawkins.....1st VP, Program
Kirk MacArthur Judy.....2nd VP, Museum
Stu Freeman.....3rd VP, Ways & Means
Edith Prager.....Secretary
Virgie Eskridge.....Treasurer
Edna Larkin.....Parliamentarian
Linda Edell & Lupe Smith.....Membership
Judy Stangler.....Pub. Rels./Newsletter
Sam Cerra.....Sites
Susan Berg.....Governmental Relations

EDITOR'S BOX

In this issue we profile our new President, Lu Herrera. Lu is not only a lovely person with a myriad of interests and talents, but she brings a wealth of experience and wisdom to the job. She knows our city like few others, and has many friends "in high places," as they say. Truly a treasure, the Society is very lucky to have her on board and we all wish her much success.

A note of correction: We thank those readers who are eagle-eyed and brought to our attention a technical computer glitz with the photo of the Helms Building Historic Site #9 plaque, rendering it out of sync with many of the words altered and misspelled. We checked the plaque on the building and it is indeed correct.

Remember to save May 16-17 for fun, games, crafts, city tours and much more at the Fiesta La Ballona - and sign up to work in the CCHS booth. Call Stu Freeman at (310) 839-7593.

We hope to offer different forms of historic information and research. In this issue we are delighted to offer "Aunt Vicenta's Flour Tortillas." Enjoy!

CCHS Looking for Help

Do you have or know people who have film and memorabilia treasures which may be sitting in their garages or attics? The CCHS and "Reel Life in Culver City" are searching for film footage and background documents for this extraordinary film history. Please contact Ross Hawkins for more information or leads at (310) 839-5725.

REEL LIFE IN CULVER CITY

by Ross Hawkins



TOM RAY GUEST SPEAKER

Tom Ray, the guest speaker at the CCHS General Meeting on May 27, has been working as an animator for sixty-one years.

A second generation filmmaker - his father, Al Ray, was a stuntman (doubling for silent star Ramon Navarro in the 1926 version of Ben Hur), a Western artist and inventor - Tom began his career as an "in-betweener" at MGM's cartoon department in 1937.

An "in-betweener" was an artist who drew the cartoon character's movements between the first frame of action and the ending frame. The beginning and ending frames were sketched by the main artist on the cartoon. Working on a cartoon in the early days of animation was slow and tedious. Still, the cartoon factory at Metro employed about three hundred people doing animation and special effects.

In a recent interview, Tom recalled that during World War II, he was drafted into the Army and rode to the induction center in a bus seated beside another MGM employee, James Stewart.

After the war, he returned to work at MGM where he worked as an animator until 1955 when the studio made the decision to close the animation department. While at MGM, Tom worked on the *Tom and Jerry* cartoons, *Droopy*, and the animated sequence in Gene Kelly's often overlooked classic, *Invitation to the Dance*.

In addition to his work at MGM, Tom also worked at Warner Bros. on many of the Looney Tunes classics and several feature films. There, he helped turn Don Knotts' "Mr. Limpet" character into a fish and, for a hazardous diving sequence in *The Deep*, animated actress Jacqueline Bisset.

I had the pleasure of interviewing Tom for the Society's documentary, *Historic Culver City*. The interview was held in the backyard of the house he has lived in for several years and where he has built a replica of a Western movie street scene - from scrap lumber!

FIESTA LA BALLONA MAY 16 - 17 VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

The dates for this year's Fiesta La Ballona will be Saturday, May 16 from 9 am to 6 pm and Sunday, May 17 from 10 am to 5 pm. It has been a long tradition for the CCHS to have a booth at the Fiesta and this year will be no different.

Volunteers are needed to hand out membership applications, help sell CCHS postcards, license plate frames and videotapes of Historic Culver City as well as enjoy themselves at the City's oldest public party! Please call Stu Freeman for more information at (310) 839-7593.

The Society will again conduct its very popular one-hour city tours. For more information, please call Julie Lugo Cerra at (310) 558-3818.

Come out and support YOUR Historical Society!

CAN YOU TELL US THE YEAR OF THIS FIESTA?



Auntie Vicenta's Flour Tortillas

(They were made on the Lugo Ranch on a wood-burning stove)

In a bowl, cut shortening in with fork:

2 c flour

pinch salt

3/8 c crisco (originally lard)

Add warm water mixture a little at a time, mixing into a stiff dough:

7/8 c warm water

1/8 c milk

Knead, then roll pieces into rounds the size of golf balls and place on a towel.

Cover with another towel for 30+ minutes.

Heat griddle.

Roll into nice thin rounds heating on hot griddle, on one side until bubbles form, then flipping.

Stack tortillas on a towel.

Makes 15-20.

Serve warm with butter or use for "roll your own burritos" or "soft tacos."

-Julie Lugo Cerra

"75" -- A LUCKY NUMBER!

The Lions Club of Culver City will celebrate its 75th Anniversary in April - Congratulations!

Upcoming in August, the Culver City Chamber of Commerce will celebrate its 75th Anniversary of incorporation.

1923 was some year!

REMINDER:

Come visit the CCHS memorabilia display at The Antique Guild in the historic Helms Building at 3225 Helms Ave. between Venice & Washington Blvds.

Look for the Red dot on your Address Label!

If you find a red dot on the address label of this newsletter, it means it's time to **RENEW** your membership in the Culver City Historical Society.

We've included a handy tear-off...Just fill it out and mail it along with your check and then we can keep you up-to-date!

We can't do it without you!

☐ I am a new member.

☐ I wish to renew my membership.

Name _____ Phone _____

Address _____ Zip _____

Type of membership, Check one:

☐ Patron Member \$100.00

☐ Business Member \$50.00

☐ Service Group \$20.00

☐ Individual Member \$15.00

☐ Individual Lifetime Member \$250.00

☐ Please contact me to work on a committee.

☐ Lifetime Family Membership \$500.00

Checks are payable to: **The Culver City Historical Society P.O. Box 3428 Culver City, California 90231-3428**

Your contribution may be tax deductible. Please check with your tax advisor

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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Culver City Historical Society

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