

Culver Historical Highlights

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CITY COUNCIL HONORS LU HERRERA AND THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY FOR COMMUNITY CONTRIBUTIONS

GALA INSTALLATION DINNER A MIXTURE OF POMP AND FUN

By Julie Lugo Cerra

The Society's 20th Anniversary and Installation dinner was celebrated on Wednesday, January 19th by 90 Culver City Historical Society buffs. The vintage photos of Culver City which line the walls at the Sagebrush Cantina were a fitting setting for the occasion. During the early part of the evening, one could catch glimpses of Fred Machado's *Mi Familia* and the 1989 *Celebration of the Movies* videos.



Albert Vera swears in Pres. Don Rogers
(photo: Sandy Burton)

After the buffet dinner, Machado descendant Richard Trevino introduced his talented wife, Mary Frances Trevino, who entertained with authentic songs of the early settlers. Mary Frances delighted our Madrina Clarita Young as she sang "Paloma Blanca."

Lupe Smith presented Lu Herrera with a wooden clock, a token of thanks from the Society for her time as President.

CCRA Chair Albert Vera declared "the offices vacant" and proceeded to install the new officers.

(Cont'd on page 3)

COMMENDATION MARKS SOCIETY'S 20TH ANNIVERSARY

At the February 28th Culver City Council meeting, two important items were on the agenda.



Pres. Don Rogers & Board at CC Council Meeting (photo: Sandy Burton)

The first was a "Presentation of a Commendation to Lu Herrera for Her Tenure as President and Her Long Time Commitment to the Culver City Historical Society." The second was a "Presentation of a Commendation to the Culver City Historical Society in Honor of Their 20th Anniversary and Their Contributions to This Community."

Both presentations were unanimously approved and certificates were presented to outgoing President Lu Herrera and to current President Don Rogers on behalf of the Historical Society.

In issuing the commendation to Lu, Councilman Albert Vera stated that the former elected City Treasurer "has been a continuing source of support and leadership for the Culver City Historical Society," and has been "proactive in beginning the fundraising campaign for a Culver City [Heritage] Museum." Further, Lu

has worked "to find a way to house the Society's collection in a way that will benefit the entire community and visitors," as well as being "an overall active member in our community."

Honoring its 20th Anniversary, Councilman David Hauptman recounted that the "Culver

City Historical Society was formed to preserve the history of the local area," and "since its incorporation in 1980, they have dedicated

(Cont'd on page 3)



Lu Herrera and City Councilmen (photo: Sandy Burton)

APRIL 18TH GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING MACHADO FAMILY HERITAGE TO BE HIGHLIGHTED

The CCHS General Membership Meeting will be held on Tuesday, April 18, 2000 at 7:00 pm in the Lethbridge Garden Room at the Veterans Building, 4117 Overland Avenue.

Come hear the fascinating history of the Machado Family of Rancho La Ballona as told by Fred Machado, Jr. Machado's great-great-great-grandfather, Jose Manuel Machado, served the King of Spain as a "Soldado de Cuerva" of the Rivera Expedition which traveled overland from Los Alamos, New Spain [Sonora, Mexico] to the California frontier in 1781. A 38-minute video, *Mi Familia* [My Family], which follows the Machado lineage from Jose Manuel Machado to the present time will be screened along with a display of historic photos.

Refreshments will be served and the public is invited to enjoy the free program. Students are encouraged to attend. For more information, please call Cathy Zermeno at (310) 839-7688.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE by Don Rogers



This new year got off to a great start with the recognition of outgoing President Lu Herrera and her Board for the outstanding job they did over the past two years with one of the largest attended installations in recent memory.

As we begin to move into the year 2000, the Historical Society is faced with many interesting and exciting challenges. One of the goals ahead is to increase the membership of the Society. A second goal is to lay a firm foundation for the development of the Culver City Heritage Museum. And a third goal is to remind the whole community of the City's rich history and vital legacy.

I would like to take this opportunity to encourage each member of this Society to assist in expanding our membership and to attend our quarterly functions. Exciting plans are being laid for a major fundraising event, and enthusiasm is building rapidly for the many upcoming events planned by your Board of Directors.

Thanks for your continued support and involvement.

Sincerely, *Don Rogers*

Notes from Your City Historian

by Julie Lugo Cerra



Let me pass along some interesting correspondence that arrived recently. E.A. Kral, in Wilber, Nebraska, a former teacher, now an historical researcher, notified me that he included Harry Culver in a new website. Log on to <http://www.nsea.org> and you will find Kral's "Brief Bio-Bibliography" which was his Valentine's gift to fellow Nebraskans. Mr. Kral offers short bios of 300 Nationally Distinguished Nebraskans, and our own Harry Culver is among the impressive group.

For those of you who are doing genealogical research, you may want to check the LDS Family History Center (top of Overland: 310.474.9990). Fred Machado recently led a group to researcher John P. Schmal's class on hispanic research. There are also classes on other ethnic groups as well as on general genealogy research.

I have been getting some pretty interesting questions recently, in general and for my weekly column in the *Culver City News*. I hear from Robert Elliot in Florida regularly. He was a cameraman at Fort Roach during World War II and tells me that his combat photographers group has scheduled a reunion in Las Vegas, at Circus Circus, from December 3-5, 2000. Bob has supplied me with a lot of good information about the use of the Hal Roach Studios during the war. He is now actively researching an incident in February 1942, which was reported as a Japanese submarine firing at an oil refinery, which may have taken place off the coast near El Segundo. If you have any information or can steer me in the right direction, I would appreciate it.

A Reminder: We will again be doing city tours for the Fiesta La Ballona.....join us!!!

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.

IN MEMORIAM

Two very special friends have left us.

Dr. Norman Marback passed away in February, survived by his wife Natalie and their daughters. Norm had a most interesting personal history himself, and is the principal reason that we have a City Historian today.

We also lost George Lillie, Hamilton High alumnus and retired studio painter, and longtime Culver City resident. Ill as he was, George took time to type notes for me on his remembrances of work at MGM, notably his work on the "Yellow Brick Road" in *The Wizard of Oz*.

The community has lost two great gentlemen.

- Julie Lugo Cerra

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.

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EDITOR'S COLUMN

A new year, a new decade and a new Board of Officers and Committee Chairs. It's a most exciting time for us!

Entering our 21st year, the Historical Society has much to be proud of and much work still lies ahead. We need your support and involvement now more than ever to see our dreams realized.

Our new Historic Site Chairman, Sandy Burton, begins an occasional series, "Historic Sitings," and welcomes help in researching possible future sites. Please consider lending her a hand and to one of the other committees as a volunteer to work on archiving and cataloging the Society's files and memorabilia.

We tip our hat to longtime member Martha Sigall who was featured in the *Los Angeles Times'* Calendar section's cover article, "Move Over, Old Men" (3/19/00). In accessing today's world of studio animation, Martha was singled out as one of the pioneers, beginning as a Looney Tune apprentice in 1936, rising to camera assistant during WWII. Martha has often shared her wonderful stories and celebrated artwork with the Society over the years. We're happy to see the Times give her due credit for an enduring career!

We'd love to hear from you about other accomplishments and honors, and welcome your comments and story suggestions.

REEL LIFE IN CULVER CITY



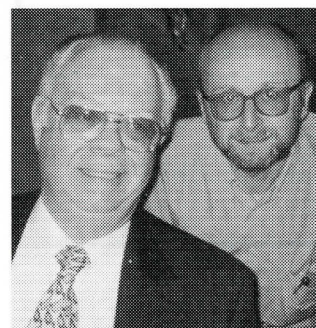
by Ross Hawkins

BELGIUM FILM WRITER VISITS CULVER CITY

In early March, I had the pleasure of hosting Leo Verswijver, a writer and film historian from Belgium.

Leo, an ardent fan of American films, especially those of "Hollywood's Golden Age," had just come from a wonderful visit with Society member, legendary director George Sidney at his home in Las Vegas.

Upon arriving in Los Angeles, Leo began a whirlwind tour of motion picture landmarks and a spate of interviews with noted film greats, such as directors Stanley Kramer, Andre de Toth and Vincent Sherman, and actress Jane Withers. President Don Rogers, Judy Stangler



Don Rogers & Leo Verswijver

and I shared a delightful luncheon with Leo, regaling him with many anecdotes and recollections of the entertainment industry in Culver City, and I also set up a screening of "Visions of Grandeur," the important first episode of *Culver City: The Reel Hollywood*.

On his return to Belgium, Leo sent back the following letter [excerpts for space] with some of his impressions and observations while visiting us in Culver City for two brief days (and he may become our "foreign correspondent" in Europe!):

Dear Ross:

I've always lived in Belgium, a small European kingdom known primarily for its lace, chocolate, and as the home of Peter Paul Rubens. Not many people know that Audrey Hepburn, Jean-Claude Van Damme and director Jacques Feyder also had their roots in Belgium.

I was born in the mid-1950s, but while the Fab Four from Liverpool dominated the world's pop music in the '60s, I got amazed as a child by the work of the American directors Fred Zinnemann, George Sidney, Edward Dmytryk, and Stanley Kramer. These four directors broadened my horizons and showed me the possibilities of film and what film could do. In later years, I had the pleasure and the honor of meeting and interviewing them in person -- moments I'll treasure always.

When I arrived in Culver City, you were kind enough to arrange for me to take a tour of Sony Pictures Entertainment (what was long ago, Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer), thanks to Sony Tour Director, Lori Kleban. The backlots are gone now, but Sony has done a tremendous job of restoring the main lot, while implanting their own image on the studio.

A young actress, Manuella Huerta, was our tour guide, and I got to see the sound stages where Judy Garland visited the munchkins and followed the

"yellow brick road" to OZ.

Watching the Historical Society's documentary, "Visions of Grandeur," brought back the same intense feelings, the same passion, dedication, that same love for film that I felt as a child. It fully captures the magic of filmmaking and in the meantime it is a highly remarkable achievement on its own; fully documented, extremely well balanced and well paced, historically very detailed and accurate. "Visions of Grandeur" goes right to the heart of those who adore film and who recognize the contribution of Culver City to the motion picture industry.

Pioneers as Thomas Ince, Louis B. Mayer and all the others who paved the way for present-day filmmakers, would be terribly happy to know that they are so fondly remembered for bringing film to life and for not leaving Culver City out of it.

'Hooray for Hollywood'? Absolutely! However, this delightful documentary indicates that a widely applauded 'Hooray for Culver City' is at least equally justified.

My deepest thanks - Leo

IT'S "FIESTA" TIME ! MAY 20 - 21, 2000

For the annual Fiesta La Ballona, the Historical Society will once again conduct its popular bus tours of the city's historical sites. On Saturday, May 20, tours will leave hourly from 11 am to 4 pm. The Society is very grateful to the City of Culver City for donating the tour bus and driver which will be located on Barman, at the south side of Vet's Park.

We also need volunteers to help man the Society's information booth on both Saturday and Sunday, so please come out, have some family fun and support *your* Historical Society.

Call Ross Hawkins at 310.839.5725 for more information.

COMMENDATION (Cont'd from page 1)

countless hours to document local history, place bronze plaques commemorating historical sites, providing walking tours, participating in Fiesta La Ballona and acting as caretakers of the City-owned historic MGM costume collection."

The commendation further stated that the Society "documents, collects and holds memorabilia and artifacts for special exhibits and offers programs to educate others about the rich history of the area, beginning with the Gabrielino Indians, through the Spanish Land Grants, Mexican rule, California Statehood, Harry Culver's dream of a city and the continuing story of the Heart of Screenland."

Recognizing the "significant contributions that this organization has made to our community," the Council presented the certificate to President Don Rogers who was joined by the Officers and Committee Chairs of the Society. Grateful acknowledgement and acceptance by both Lu and Don concluded the proceedings with photos taken of all with the Council members.

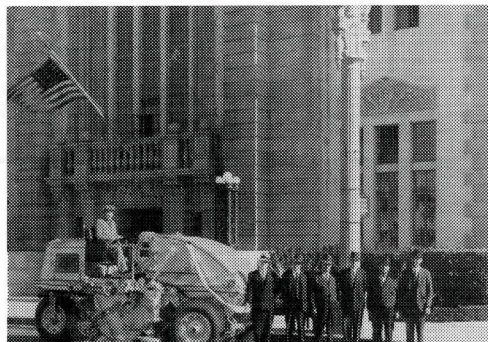
Historic Sightings

by Sandy Burton

With this first article on the Historic Site Committee, we will begin an occasional series highlighting the work already accomplished by the Society and promote discussions of future efforts. We welcome recommendations of possible sites for consideration and encourage participation in researching historic backgrounds.

The Historic Site Committee has the important job of designating City landmarks as worthy of public recognition. Its criteria is twofold: the site must be at least 50 years old and it must be deemed to be of "historic significance." The second criteria was specifically designed to allow a certain amount of leeway when making such selections as a myriad of considerations often come into play when considering a site for designation.

To date, the Society has designated nine sites to be of historic recognition and has placed bronze plaques at each of these sites. In future issues, we will examine each of these sites individually, while continuing an open dialogue with our readers regarding potential additions.



City Hall c.1928

Historical Site #1

The City Hall (9770 Culver Blvd) was dedicated as the first structure built specifically as a City Hall in 1928. The original building, now demolished, has been replaced by a new Civic Center. Prior to 1928, the City Hall was located in structures on Van Buren (still standing, just south of Washington Blvd.), and on the second floor of the local theatre, which was located on the site of what is now the Culver Hotel. The present site was dedicated on June 17, 1995.

INSTALLATION (Cont'd from page 1)

Don Rogers took the helm with his new Cabinet: Vice Presidents Cathy Zermeno, Ross Hawkins and Reba Yudess; Secretary Ken Ruben; and Virgie Eskridge continuing as Treasurer. After Don was installed, he called for the validation of his new appointees with Edna Larkin as Parliamentarian; and Committee Chairs: Carolyn Cole/ Membership; Lee Bixler/Publications, with Judy Stangler continuing as Newsletter Editor; Jozelle Smith/ Public Relations; Sandy Burton/ Historic Sites; and Jim Lamm/ Government Affairs.

It was nice to see so many founding members, Mayor Richard Marcus and many new faces -- like our new Community Development Director Marsha Rood -- in attendance.

Become a member of the Culver City Historical Society Today!

Join others in preserving the history of the "Heart of Screenland" and the efforts to create the Culver City Heritage Museum. ***We can't do it without you!***

TYPES OF MEMBERSHIP

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Benefactor (\$1000) | <input type="checkbox"/> Corporate Sponsor (\$500) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Family Lifetime Member (\$500) | <input type="checkbox"/> Individual Lifetime Member (\$250) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Patron Member (\$100) | <input type="checkbox"/> Business Member (\$50) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Family Member (\$25) | <input type="checkbox"/> Organization (\$15) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Individual Member (\$15) | <input type="checkbox"/> Student Member (\$5) |

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) 838-1073.

Name/Company: _____

Contact Person: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Telephone: _____ Fax: _____ Email: _____

Contributions of both historic and social significance as well as monetary donations are encouraged, and the CCHS IRS tax exempt status may make such contributions tax deductible.

Culver City Historical Society

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