Culver Historical Highlights

Volume 28 No. 2

Published by the Culver City Historical Society

Spring 2007

CCHS Archives & Resource Center ~ A Reality!

THE SOCIETY SALUTES MAY AS PRESERVATION MONTH

MAY IS "PRESERVATION MONTH"

Once again, the historical preservation community salutes all the wonderful work being done locally and nationally to keep our multi-heritages alive and in good form for future generations. (Note: The Culver City Historical Society was founded in May, 1980.)

The month of celebration starts off with the 32nd Annual California Preservation Conference entitled "Preservation Goes Hollywood!" and will be held from May 3-6, 2007 at the historic Roosevelt Hotel in Hollywood, CA.

There will be many discussions and presentations as well as workshops such as "Preserving 20th Century Fox for the 21st Century Study Tour."

Among the multitude of sponsors are the California Office of Historic Preservation, Historic Resources Group, National Trust for Historic Preservation Western Office, Paramount Pictures, Academy of Motion Pictures Arts & Sciences, American Cinematheque, Discover Hollywood Magazine, Ralph M. Parsons Foundation, Structural Focus, Southwest Airlines, Women's Club of Hollywood and Yamashiro Restaurant.

More information about this conference with links to other activities and sites can be found at:

http://www.californiapreservation.org/calendar.html.



The Veterans Memorial Building: New Home of the CCHS "ARC"

CC HISTORICAL SOCIETY ARCHIVES & RESOURCE CENTER (ARC)

by Julie Lugo Cerra

We now officially have a Culver City Historical Society Archives and Resource Center (ARC)! It is located off the parking lot side of the Veterans Memorial Building, 4117 Overland Avenue. What a victory!

City Manager Jerry Fulwood worked with the Society to find a place to house our collection and become a more accessible resource to the city and the community. Parks and Recreation Director Bill LaPointe offered the room in the VMB which had a history as a temporary Teen Center. Since the Teen Center moved into larger quarters, this space experienced minimal use.

We had to obtain the approval of the City Council for a long term lease, which occurred September 25, 2006. At that time, the concept was approved, along with the lease for a minimum of five years,

(cont'd. pg.7)

~ APRIL 18TH GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING ~ CC Historical Society's By-Laws Vote ♦ Discussion of Costume Collection

The Culver City Historical Society's Spring General Membership Meeting will be held on Wednesday, April 18th at 7:00 pm in the Lethbridge Garden Room at the Veterans Memorial Building, 4117 Overland Avenue.

All members are urged to attend to review and vote on the revised CC Historical Society's By-Laws (see copy insert). Also, Costume Committee Chair Louise Coffey-Webb will talk about the fabulous collection of MGM costumes and Fiesta dresses that the Society will now be able to display after so long in storage, as well as updates on the progress Robin Turner and her committee have made. And plans for celebrating Culver City's 90th Birthday in September will discussed.

The public is invited to enjoy the free program and students are encouraged to attend. Refreshments will be served following the program. For more information, please call Marty Nicholson at (310) 253-6662 or email at Martynic99@aol.com.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by Cathy Zermeno



By the time you receive this newsletter, we will have moved into our new Archives and Resource Center (ARC). It only took 26 years, but we did it!

A hearty thanks to Julie Lugo Cerra – the Society's Governmental Relations Representative, a past Society President and Culver City's "City Historian" – whose dedication and perseverance helped to keep us all going and led to this notable day!

And grateful thanks also to Robin Turner, the Society's 2nd Vice President (Museum), and her fabulous committee chairs: Stan Abrams

and Sam Cerra. They and their fellow CCHS members have worked long and hard to bring this dream to fruition. Sam took care of obtaining the proper permits while Stan began designing the space to make full use of the entire area. The ARC has been prepared and our memorabilia and wonderful historic treasures have been moved from storage to this new display and research area.

The MGM costumes are now in our care, and their condition will be evaluated with a full report to follow. We are getting everything organized and, in a few short months, we will be ready for business!

With sincere regrets, I have accepted the resignation of Susan Deen, 3rd Vice President (Ways & Means), who has given years of service on our Board of Directors. While we know she will still be an active member, we wish her the best of everything as she devotes more time to her own work and family. The term of this position will end on December 31, 2007, and if any member has an interest in filling it til then, please contact me.

I look forward to seeing you all at our April 18th General Meeting. It's especially important as the revised Society By-Laws will be reviewed and voted on. What wonderful things are ahead for the community and the Culver City Historical Society¹

Best,

Cathy Zermeno

Notes from Your City Historian

by Julie Lugo Cerra



CCHS & TRADER JOE'S

Look for historic Culver City photos at Trader Joe's soon. We provided the photos at a nominal charge – another way to sustain our ongoing preservation efforts.

THE HULL BUILDING UNDERGOES RESTORATION

The Society's second marking of an historic site was the Hull Building at 9543 Culver Boulevard. Built by Dr. Foster Hull in 1925, this Neo-Classical wedge-shaped structure functioned as the first hospital in town. Hull lost the property during the Depression, but Louis Freeman purchased the landmark building which is now owned by the third generation of the family – longtime CCHS member, Stu Freeman.

For those of us with a history in Culver City, we might remember it housing any one of the following businesses: Freeman Furniture, Sunset Drug, Tinger's Culver City Flowers, Sada's Flowers, the Bank of Orange County, Riccardo's, Bella Pasta, or San Gennaro restaurants.

The building has undergone a few changes over the years. When the Bank of Orange County took over, they reinforced it for earthquake safety. The

1994 Northridge quake shook some bricks free, but they were replaced by some saved by Sony from one of their structures.

In January of this year, after learning that a restaurant/bakery would become the new tenant, the Society took a position in favor of restoring the building to its original configuration. That basically means that the corner entry will be restored.



Stu Freeman points to the restoration work which will become the home of a new restaurant and bakery soon.

Photo by Julie Lugo Cerra.

The building's historical importance was first recognized by the Culver City Historical Society, and after the city adopted our Historic Preservation ordinance in 1991, the structure was given Landmark status, which is the highest category. I think it is important that as an historical society, we appreciate building owners like the Freeman family and their tenants who take a leadership role in historic preservation.

Culber Historical Highlights

PO Box 3428 • Culver City, CA • 90231-3428 (310) 839 - 7688

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.

Editor & Publisher.....Judy Stangler
Contributing Writers...Julie Lugo Cerra
Marc Wanamaker, Sandy Burton, Steve Newton
Printed by.....Mr. Printer

Officers and Committee Chairs

Cathy Zermeno	President
Steven J.Rose	Past President
Marty Nicholson	1 st VP. Program
Robin Turner	2 nd VP, Museum
(position currently vacant)	3rd VP, Ways & Means
Mary Gibson	Secretary
Lynn Baril	Treasurer
(position currently vacant)	Parliamentarian
Reba Yudess	
Jozelle Smith	Public Relations
Sandy Burton	Press Relations
Judy Stangler	
Sam Cerra	
Julie Lugo Cerra	
Anita Shapiro	

Editor's Column

Echoing our President, our Museum Chair and our City Historian, here's one more note of jubilation at the accomplishments of our members along with the wonderful support and cooperation given us by the City. We've turned a major corner – and we expect the Culver City Historical Society Archives & Resource Center (ARC) to become a household word within the historical preservation community! It is especially sweet to celebrate now as May is observed as "Preservation Month."

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

PUBLIC ART TO "WAVE"

And did you know it is a *banner* year? Public Art in Culver City has taken many shapes and forms. It is a real positive when we have artwork that also reflects our history.

Take a look at the new banners along Washington Boulevard. This is the first phase of an installation by artist Kyungmi Shin which will help welcome people entering Culver City from the west end. The banners are color-coded to reflect different areas – like Native American History, the Entertainment industry, etc. – and mixed in, are poetic thoughts to make you stop and think. Christine Byers, of the Cultural Affairs Staff, graciously attended our January annual meeting to give us a preview. (For more information, check the city website at www.culvercity.org.)

And The Living History Project is alive and well, with high school students going into third and fourth grade classrooms district-wide in March and April.

REEL COLVER CITY

by Marc Wanamaker

HARRY CULVER MET THOMAS INCE AND HISTORY WAS MADE!

After watching silent film producer Thomas Ince film a western on Ballona Creek, Culver City founder Harry Culver was so fascinated with the new medium and its PR possibilities that he convinced Ince to move his Inceville Studios from the beach near Pacific Palisades to Washington Boulevard in Culver City.

In 1915, with Culver's enthusiastic encouragement, Ince built the first of two major motion picture studios in the new town of Culver City. These two studios (now Sony Pictures Entertainment and Culver Studios) dominated the economic, cultural and civic life of Culver City as well as publicizing Culver City internationally – which was exactly what Harry Culver had in mind.

THE MEN





Harry Culver (L) persuaded filmmaker Thomas Ince (R) to relocate in Culver City.

Thomas Harper Ince was one of the most important and influential figures in the history of the American film industry. His combined output as a director, producer and screenwriter extended to thousands of films during the formative years of the film industry. He introduced production procedures and quality of standards that set the model and helped mold the distinct image of Hollywood films to this day.

Harry Culver never met an event that he couldn't duplicate, let alone improve upon! He was well known for his innovative style, bringing busloads of possible new residents to free picnics, awarding proud parents prizes for their "prettiest babies" (and there sure were a lot of them!), he held marathons and many other special events. He put ads in the newspapers that read: "All roads lead to Culver City!" His goal was to create a balanced residential/commercial community — and Thomas Ince became an integral part of this plan.

CULVER CITY HOSTS FILM FESTIVALS

This is a brief early history of how "The Heart of Screenland" first began. It is fitting that over the last 90 years – Culver City celebrates its 90th birthday on September 20, 2007 – not only were thousands of films made within the city limits, but several film festivals have been held here as well.

Currently, the **Agape Peace Film Festival**, sponsored by the Agape International Spiritual Center located in Culver City, was held from March 16-18, 2007. This three-day event is "dedicated to anchoring Peace in our personal lives and on our planet."

Coming in May, the **Sixth Annual Damah Film Festival** will be held at the Culver Studios (once the Ince Studios) from May 4-6, 2007. Damah "encourages an emerging generation of filmmakers from diverse perspectives to voice the spiritual aspect of the human experience through film and provides a forum for these artists to develop, discuss and display their vision."

Most recently, the **Second Annual Backlot Film Festival** was held from January 30 – February 3, 2007, with its Gala Awards event staged at the Veterans Memorial Building. One of its goals is to "pay tribute to the rich motion picture history in Culver City and LA's Westside, often referred to as *The Other Hollywood.*"

Its main award is titled the "Thomas H. Ince Award" and is given to those distinguished persons who had worked in Culver City at one time or another and have contributed to the film industry here.

The first Ince Award honoree was Daniel Selznick, grandson of the legendary Louis B. Mayer.

I had the honor of participating in this year's presentation of the Ince Award to famed writer Budd Schulberg who became famous for his book "What Makes Sammy Run?" about the inner workings of the motion picture studios. Daniel Selznick also spoke about his friend Budd and the

history of the Selznick, Mayer and Schulberg families. The award was presented to Budd by actor Ben Stiller and there was an Opening Night interview with film critic and historian. Leonard Maltin.



Ben Stiller, at right, presents the "Thomas Ince Award" to Budd Shulberg at 2nd Backlot Film Festival. (Photo by Alex Delgado)



Budd Schulberg with Leonard Maltin. (Photo by Dick May)



Marc Wanamaker speaking on the history of Thomas Ince & Culver City (Photo by Alex Delgado)

The artistry of Thomas Ince and the keen eye of Harry Culver has been firmly established, and the Backlot Film Festival will continue their legacy for future filmmakers and filmgoers – heralding the "Heart of Screenland."

(Special thanks to City Historian Julie Lugo Cerra for the fine history timeline she authored on the City of Culver City website from which many of the above references are made.)

CULVER CITY HISTORICAL SOCIETY ~~~

LOTS OF HARD WORK & . . .

by Robin Turner, Museum Chair

WOW!!! Have the past few months been busy!

The Historical Society was given two light-based tables (for tracing patterns or maps, or use just as counter space with drawers) by an individual that picked them up during the Getty Museum renovation.

Vice Mayor Alan Corlin found the tables on the internet and sent me the web page. I contacted the owner, Mr. Colin Long, who gave us the tables free of charge! The only problem was that the 8-foot and 16-foot long tables weighed a combined total of about a thousand pounds!

But with great thanks to CCHS member Corlin, Civil Service member Dan Gallagher, John Bertram and Richard Johnson, and with the sharp supervision skills of Council Member and Past CCHS President Steve Rose, we removed the tables from a second story storage facility and into a temporary storage area before our new digs were built. They are now moved into the new facility and we have our first new acquisition for the new digs!

As alluded to in the last sentence, we have moved $\underline{\text{all}}$ of our collections from the Bank of the West building into our new facility at Vets. We are in the process of moving (and checking for wear) the MGM costumes that the City has held for years. We hope to have the new place open for business and for visitors to walk through by the Fiesta La Ballona week.

Mr. Jerry Fulwood (Culver City's new City Manager) and Mr. Bill LaPointe (Director of Recreation and Parks) did an outstanding job of getting us to where we are now. When you see these two individuals, and the City Council, of course, please thank them for their diligence and foresight in providing us a new home for our archives and collections. I especially want to thank Stan Abrams for his diligent work in the construction side of preparing us for our new digs.

Once we get all the boxes in order and get a computer set up, the Board



Deputy City Attorney Heather Iker assists CCHS President Cathy Zermeno in signing the leases for the CCHS ARC at City Hall on December 27, 2006.

will be trained in the proper techniques of archival care so we can start cataloging our collection. At that time, probably within the next two months, we will start opening our doors and have our wonderful and enthusiastic volunteers start working on our collections.



Packing up for the "Move." L-R: Steven Rose, Cathy Zermeno, Stan Abrams, Robin Turner, Lynn Baril.

I will set out a sign-up sheet at the April General Meeting, so if you have a few hours or a day or two a week to help, please sign up and I will contact you. Our plans are to be open one day during the week and one day during the weekend for the volunteers so that a variety of our members can help during the time that suits them the best.

Thanks to the Board for all your help in making the new place a reality. Now the real fun begins....!

See you at the next meeting,

~ Robin



2nd VP Robin Turner with committee members and the new "key" to ARC. L-R: Lynn Baril, Stan Abrams, Steven Rose, Robin and Cathy Zermeno.

ALL PHOTOS COURTESY OF JULIE LUGO CERRA

~ ~ ~ CELEBRATING MORE THAN 25 YEARS!"

A LOT OF PEOPLE TO THANK FOR "ARC"



Four CCHS Presidents: L-R: Current President Cathy Zermeno, Julie Lugo Cerra, Sam Cerra and Steven Rose.



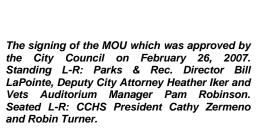
The January 18th General Meeting was the first to be held in our new "digs" – the Culver City Historical Society Archives and Resource Center (ARC) at the Veterans Memorial Bldg.



Costume Chair Louise Coffey-Webb at left, analyzing the MGM costumes and Fiesta dresses, assisted by (L-R): her colleague Mariel McEwan, Cathy Zermeno and Vets Auditorium Manager Pam Robinson.



The costumes are brought down from the Tower!



THE CCHS HISTORICAL COSTUMES COLLECTION

by Louise Coffey-Webb, Costume Committee Chair

March, 2007 saw the transfer of the collection MGM costume from temporary storage, into the new City Culver Historical Society "Archives and Resource Center" (ARC), housed in the Veteran's Memorial Building. My "Spring Break" from teaching and curating at Woodbury University, was spent examining the collection, photographing and re-packing these precious items with archival tissue.

I first heard about the costumes some 15 years ago, and they had remained mythical for me ever since until this past week when they actually materialized! These costumes were originally donated to the city after the famous auction of 1970 held by David Weisz, from the then MGM lot. Many of the costumes are identified by wearer and film. Further research has found the year they were created and the costume designer. When studios had their own full-service wardrobe departments, no expense was spared in quality and design.

So it has been a treat to see the creative expertise exemplified in the construction of many of the costumes. For example, many bodices are boned and lined, with special weights inserted into hems and seams to insure the garment appropriately. There are voluminous attached petticoats, some with lace and frills that were never seen on film. Metallic laces, rhinestones, seguins, pleated mousselline and ruched ribbons adorn these period costumes.

All items are being photographed and records made of their condition, while all previous inventories are being compared. There will be no more "fashion shows" of these garments as their purpose now will be to educate and delight while being preserved for future generations.

Plans for the future include maintaining museum-quality storage standards, and the acquisition of professional display forms and cases so that these marvels can be appreciated when the Culver City Historical Society "ARC" opens to the public.



Robe worn by Margaret O'Brien in Three Wise Fools.



Red fringe dress worn by Doris Day



Black bustle dress was from The Brothers Karamazov.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

APRIL 18: CCHS GENERAL MEETING

MARCH 31: HISTORY CONFERENCE, AUTRY MUSEUM

MAY: HISTORIC PRESERVATION MONTH

MAY 20: HSSC MUSEUMS OF THE ARROYO DAY

JULY 18: CCHS "PICNIC" & GENERAL MEETING

SEP. 20: CULVER CITY TURNS 90!

"THANK YOU" TO

OUR NEW MEMBERS

- George & Judith York of Aurora, CO
- Ruth Paver
- Lee Freehling

AND NEW "PATRON" MEMBERS:

Mim & Hank Shapiro

AND NEW "LIFETIME" MEMBERS:

- Stephen M. Fry
- Louise Coffey-Webb
- THANK YOU to BARRY SULKIN for his donation of a framed piece of old Fiesta La Ballona items.
- THANK YOU to ALAN CORLIN for finding two light tables and to ALAN, DAN GALLAGHER, and JOHN BERTRAM and RICHARD JOHNSON for moving them to our new site!
- THANK YOU to RONALD DAVIS of the FREMONT INVESTMENT & LOAN for their continued support with monetary donations, helping to keep the Society moving ever forward....!
- And sending best wishes for happier health to longtime CCHS members:
 - ~ Jackie McCain
 - ~ Eloise McNerney
 - ~ Jo Ellen Weaver
 - ~ Reba Yudess
 - ~ George Zermeno

"CCHS ARC" (cont'd)

at \$1 per year plus an annual utility fee of \$2000.

The council voted 5-0 to effect this partnership with the proviso for a Memorandum of Understanding to be signed within three months of the lease. At that point, two sub-committees were established under Museum VP Robin Turner.

One, a Design Committee, is chaired by CCHS member Stan Abrams, with assistance from two retired city employees and Society members, Sam Cerra and Steve Newton, who clearly understand city process.

Stan grew up locally, and is worldrenowned primarily for his kitchen and The design restaurant interiors. committee worked with Building Official Craig Johnson, who was very supportive Stan designed the and helpful. improvements to secure the Society's new space, at no charge, which called for a non-bearing wall with new wooden door and associated painting and baseboard work.

Concurrently, the Legal Committee, headed by CCHS Treasurer Lynn Baril who is a paralegal, worked with the city to complete the Lease and MOU. She was assisted by Sol and Martha Sigall, and Julie Lugo Cerra.

The lease was signed on December 27, 2006, and the MOU went to council February 26 for approval. It was signed on March 7, the same day our collection was moved from the Bank of the West to its new "digs." Robin Turner coordinated the move along with past president Steven Rose. Robin and CCHS President Cathy Zermeno offered guidance to both subcommittees as ex-officio members.

At this writing, our Costumes Chair, Louise Coffey-Webb, is taking two days of her Spring break to evaluate and document the MGM costumes and the Fiesta dresses. She will be assisted by President Zermeno, who is most familiar with the costumes, having inventoried them in detail before they were put into storage, along with Pam Robinson of the city staff.

The "bones" of the new "ARC" will allow for a display space and a workspace. The initial securing was done by a local contractor, Jim Solomon, for less than the budgeted \$10,000. We are working to design a screen to separate the two areas, and to cost out storage shelving and display cases. Steven Rose assisted in the purchase of chairs and work tables from a local business which were used for our February Board meeting!

We also are checking out computers and small museum-type software. We are taking care of business—our insurance had to be transferred, and we had to secure the space so that it is separate from the city.

Our mailing address will remain the same: the post office box noted in the newsletter.

The Society's "Wish List"

At the January 18th General Meeting, among the many ideas and a "Wish List" for our new "ARC" site at the Veterans Memorial Building, members suggested:

Ideas (for theme exhibits, etc.):

- Display old posters
- Display costumes
- Track lighting
- Moldings (to hang pictures)
- An Audio-Visual (AV) space (for CC students & research)
- Native People exhibit
- Sports-oriented displays
- Timelines (to show connection between the area, state, country, world)
- Signage (different languages including Braille)
- Displays on transportation (the Pacific Electric Railway)
- Military-oriented themes
- Writers (famous, local)
- Racetrack memorabilia
- Old classic cars (20s, 30s, 40s)
- Native plant exhibit
- La Ballona Creek history
- Music memorabilia & early nightclubs, restaurants, etc.

Wish List (needed items):

- Information Kiosks
- Interactive displays
- Shelving for storage
- Display cases
- Archival materials (boxes, folders, office supplies, etc.)
- Window coverings
- Climate-control (storage, displays)
- Computers
- Up-to-date software (for archiving, newsletter, etc.)
- **Docents**
- **VOLUNTEERS!**

Be sure to come with your ideas for the new ARC at the next General Meeting on Wednesday, April 18th. See you there!

GIVE THE GIFT OF HISTORY!

Consider giving a Culver City Historical Society membership as a birthdays. holidavs. anniversaries, any occasion!



What a trooper! Museum VP Robin Turner carries box of covers for the work tables that Steven Rose acquired for the new ARC facility.

Do you recognize anyone in this photo? It's the Culver City USO during WWII. We welcome any photos, memories, etc. about this important part of our history.



RECENTLY SPOTTED ON EBAY:

A CAR WITH A "CULVER CITY" LICENSE PLATE TOPPER* IN SCRIPT (*CCHS MEMBER STEVE NEWTON IS LOOKING FOR ONE!)



Do something *Historic* in 2007

Would you like to be part of our walking tours? Become a Docent? Work as a Living History presenter? An Organizer?

> Please call Julie Lugo Cerra: Tel: (310) 558-3818

Email: julie@CerraEnterprises.com.

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		
	Corporate Sponsor (\$500) Business Member (\$50) Individual Lifetime Member (\$250) Youth Member (\$5)	Patron Member (\$100) Individual Member (\$15) Family Lifetime Member (\$500)
Name/Company:	Telephon	ne:
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.

Alliance Bank	Harold Hanslmair Ins Agcy, Inc
Fox Hills Mall(310) 390-5073	Carol Schwab, CC City Attorney (310) 253-5660
Freeman Properties	Sony Pictures EntertainmentApril Dmytrenko (310) 244-4000 Spartan Supply Co Rick Betts (310) 837-5351 Steve Sylvester (323) 874-4005

Culver City Historical Society

PO Box 3428 • Culver City, CA • 90231-3428

Non-Profit U.S. Postage PAID Permit No. 146 Culver City, CA