May is Historic Preservation Month
The CCHS Continues Over 30 Years of Preserving Local History

COLUMN ONE

The Society Congratulates CCHS Members Honored

Steven J. Rose

CC Chamber of Commerce President Steven J. Rose has been honored with the 2012 Russell E. Pettit Memorial Excellence in Chamber Leadership Award.

According to an official release the award "is given annually to a chamber executive in the West in recognition for a career of assisting those in the chamber business to attain higher professional standards and capabilities."

Julie Lugo Cerra

Thirty-two Women community leaders from throughout Los Angeles were awarded California State Senator Curren Price’s 7th Annual “Tribute to SHeroes” Awards. Among these exceptional women was our own Julie Lugo Cerra.

A “SHero” is a woman who has demonstrated leadership, pride, volunteerism, and commitment to her community in a meaningful and enduring manner.

The Historical Society Has Marked 13 Historic Sites from the 1928 City Hall to the Veterans Memorial Building

May is always a special month for the Culver City Historical Society as it has been designated as the national Historic Preservation Month.

The Society began preserving local history at our incorporation in 1980. Within a year, we established our Historic Sites program, under founding president Cathy Zermeno, along with 5th generation local, Charles Reyes Lugo at the helm.

Our first marked site was the 1928 City Hall. Although that structure is long gone, the marker remains on the corner of Duquesne Ave. and Culver Blvd. acknowledging its importance; and the 1995 new City Hall was designed with a ¾ façade entry which replicated the front of the previous city hall on that site.

From the beginning, the Society made it an important element to tell the story of each site on bronze plaques prominently placed at each historic venue. We should feel gratified to note that the walking public tends to stop at our markers and read the story of the site. Painless education – what could be better!

(Cont’d. on pg. 4)

April 17th General Membership Meeting

Special Program: The Culver Ice Arena – A Culver City Landmark

The Culver City Historical Society Spring General Membership Meeting will be held on Wednesday, April 17th 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 John Jackson, owner and manager of the Culver City Ice Arena, who will tell of the arena’s history including the many Olympians who trained there. (See accompanying story on pg. 5.)

The CCHS Board will hold a brief public meeting to discuss upcoming programs and projects, as well as updates on the many activities at the ARC. The CCHS Archives & Resource Center (ARC) will be briefly opened following the meeting.

The public is invited to enjoy the free program and refreshments, and students are encouraged to attend. For more information, please call the Society at (310) 253-6941 or email us at info@CulverCityHistoricalSociety.org. Also, visit our website: www.CulverCityHistoricalSociety.org for updates.
Dear Members,

Welcome Spring (and about time too)! . . .
And welcome to all our new and renewing members!

Just in case we’re not ready to say “goodbye” to cold weather, our next public program will be on the frosty theme of Ice Skating in Culver City, which has quite an illustrious history here. Please read more about that on our front page and the story on page 5.

The Society’s big news this February was the addition of a new Secretary to our Board: the wonderful Donie Nelson. Donie (which rhymes with “pony”) comes to us with copious experience in the world of film and television development for many local production companies, as well as being both a founding and board member of the Genealogical Society of Hispanic America, Southern California Chapter. Donie is also a professional entertainment industry speaker and has already brought her professionalism and cheery manner to our meetings. We’re so happy to have her on board!

We have just applied for a grant through the California Preservation Assessment Project. So keep your fingers crossed! Also this March, Julie Lugo Cerra is beginning her new Docent Training, preparing member volunteers to enlighten our visitors. Do give us a call or email if you’re interested in joining the group.

I look forward to seeing you all on April 17th at our program, if not before during our open hours at the ARC.

All best,

~ Louise

GIVE THE “GIFT OF HISTORY!”
Consider giving the “Gift of History” to your family and friends for any occasion – and use our CCHS online shop now: www.cchsstore.com.

Editor’s Column
Cheers to all at the beginning of this wonderful season – Spring!
I thought I’d share a couple of quotes that might lead us forward with smiles while applying to our goals for the Society;

“Spring is the time of plans and projects.” ~ Leo Tolstoy

“The farther backward you can look, the farther forward you are likely to see.” ~ Winston Churchill

“Study the past if you would define the future.” ~ Confucius

“There’s an old saying about those who forget history. I don’t remember it, but it’s good.” ~ Stephen Colbert

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

Renew Your CCHS Membership
by Tami Eskridge, Membership Chair

We hope you have renewed your membership and continue to enjoy the many new and exciting things coming up.

Your membership dues support the Society’s diverse efforts to keep Culver City’s wonderful history alive for future generations, as well as preserving memorabilia and maintaining our Archives & Resource Center (ARC). And, remember, a CC Historical Society membership makes a wonderful gift – especially for Culverites in distant areas! (see form on pg.8)
CULVER CITY RENEWAL IN THE 1980s

The 1980s was a time for renewal in Culver City and the resident studios were already beginning to remodel and modernize their lots for the future of film and television production. It was also a time when the Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Studio was in turmoil, with takeovers, and stock manipulations resulting in the former MGM Studio lot being taken over by Lorimar Pictures, eventually becoming MGM/UA.

In 1984, developer Bruce Mallen and his wife Carol envisioned Culver City growing to be an important center for film and television production in the future. Using international financing, the Mallens went ahead and entertained the idea of building a major landmark building that would house entertainment businesses and support services.

After securing the design and architectural plans for the construction of this “Dream” project, the Culver City Council and Chamber of Commerce embraced the idea. Such a landmark building would bring businesses and more jobs to the city.

1984 GROUNDBREAKING OF FILMLAND CORPORATE CENTER

Groundbreaking launched the construction of the Filmland Corporate Center with representatives of the owner, Filmland Development Inc., and architect Maxwell Starkman Associates in attendance. Chief Executive Officer Bruce Mallen and Carol Mallen, Executive Vice President, announced to the press that the property located on Washington Boulevard adjacent to the MGM/UA studio lot would be the new “heart” of the Culver City entertainment industry.

The 820,000-square foot facility was slated for a December, 1985 opening. The horseshoe-shaped eight story building would be the largest building in Culver City’s history. The new building was designed to specialize in the area of support services to film and television companies and individuals engaged in the development, financing and production of motion pictures, television, video and other entertainment-related activities.

In January of 1985, the steel skeletal structure of the Film Corp development was pictured in the Culver City News with a caption reading: “Set to open this fall, the building provides an interestingly geometric, almost art deco look to the Culver City skyline.”

By May, press reports said the building was still under construction and it was reported to be “The Cornerstone of Redevelopment of Culver City.”

CONTROVERSY GIVES WAY TO A NEW FILM & TELEVISION PRODUCTION CENTER

There was controversy in the city during this construction period. Some said the building was too large and dwarfed the small town of Culver City. Others liked the building and said that this is what Culver City needed to recover its status as a film and television production center.

Pink granite was installed on the terraced front of the building while Executive VP Carol Mallen announced that the building would include a health club, a restaurant and screening rooms, as well as commercial outlets on the ground floor. Architect Shree Mate, the principle designer of Filmland, said he wanted the building to “recall the golden age of Hollywood.”

By July, it was reported that “MGM/UA Leases Whole Floor of Filmland Center.” A lease was signed for 20 years for a total of 50,000 square feet of the third floor. The space would house the headquarters of MGM/UA’s motion picture marketing and distribution divisions when they moved in the following year.

The center was also looking for moviemakers and television production companies as tenants as well as those that service the industry, such as lawyers, accountants and agents.

GRAND LOBBY AND LANDSCAPED ATRIUM COVERED BY A CANOPY OF GLASS

The Filmland Corporate Center building design included a front entrance contour that surrounds the motorcourt where valet, taxi and limousine services are available. Beneath the street level lie three floors of secured parking for up to 1200 automobiles.

The terraced façade is heightened by a landscaped atrium covered by a soaring ninety-foot canopy of glass. The Grand Lobby level provides access to many retail shops and services, including a gift shop, video store, newstand, office supplies store and a financial institution. The Grand Atrium is capable of serving as a banquet facility which can seat up to 700 or it can be transformed into a reception lobby accommodating 1200 guests. Attached to the Atrium is the Garden Restaurant and the Producer’s Club. The building has six cutting-edge screening rooms and a fitness center.

At this time, the Executive Operating Officer was N. P. Popich (financial partner) and Bruce Mallen as Chief Executive. The General Contractor for the project was the Turner Construction Company and the interior design firms included Integrated Design Associates and Depiero Associates.

HISTORIC 50- TON “LEO THE LION” SIGN TOPS THE FILMLAND CENTER

In March of 1986, MGM/UA moved into the Filmland Corporate Center. By July, more tenants were occupying the building including The Motion Picture Export Association of America and the American Film Market Association.

SONY PICTURES ENTERTAINMENT RENAMES COMPLEX SONY PICTURES PLAZA

At this time, after several years of negotiations, Lorimar Telepictures purchased the MGM Studio in Culver City. By the end of the year, MGM/UA moved out of their former studio lot and opened their new corporate headquarters in the Filmland Corporate Center.

By March of 1987, most of the MGM/UA personnel had moved off the MGM lot. About the same time, the historic MGM 15-ton sign that was once on the top of the tallest stage at the MGM studios was moved to the top of the Filmland Corporate Center building, and was relit in a ceremony with hosts Gene Kelly and “Leo the Lion.”

In 1992, MGM Studio moved from the Filmland Center to Santa Monica. The 15-ton MGM sign was taken off the Filmland building and put into storage on November 14th, 1992. With the coming of the new year 1993, Sony Pictures Entertainment took over the Filmland Center Building and renamed the complex, Sony Pictures Plaza.
MAY IS HISTORIC PRESERVATION MONTH  (cont’d. from pg. 1)

THREE LEVELS OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION

In the mid-1980s, the city authorized an historic structures survey, which went to the City Council in 1991. By action of the City Council, it acknowledged three levels of historic importance: Landmark, Significant and Recognition.

It was not until the formation of the Cultural Affairs Commission, which folded Historic Preservation and Art in Public Places together into one commission, that protected historic structures received their markers, beginning in 2004.

There is much talk about the cost of preservation, but maybe the thought should transition into the cost of NOT preserving our history! It is clear that historic preservation can be a benefit. Examples? Look at the Culver Hotel, now a four-star hotel. The Hull Building, originally the city’s first hospital, now hosts the popular AKAHA restaurant, while the Helms Building has transitioned into a popular furniture district that is growing to include other historic structures such as the Beacon Laundry building. Among others included, are the Ivy Substation, home of the famed Actors Gang theatre group, and the Washington Building, centered in the middle of downtown. The Citizen Building, through renewal under Josetta Sbeglia, continues to serve clientele that appreciate this historic structure. Both of filmmaker Thomas Ince’s studios in Culver City remain recognizable worldwide.

As Historic Preservation Month approaches, bring your family and friends to visit our Archives, and pick up a free walking tour of downtown Culver City. Take the time to walk and note the wonderful history we need to preserve!

THE SOCIETY HAS MARKED 13 SITES

Not only is Historic Preservation important, it is in fact, mandated by our municipal code—for good reasons! The Culver City Historical Society has worked hard over the past thirty-plus years to live up to our preservation mandates, marking the following historic sites:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Historic Site # 1</th>
<th>1928 City Hall (on corner of Culver Blvd. at Duquesne Ave.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Historic Site # 2</td>
<td>The Hull Building (the first city hospital, now Akasha restaurant)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historic Site # 3</td>
<td>St. Augustine’s Church (first church in what became Culver City)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historic Site # 4</td>
<td>The Citizen Building (printer/newspaper publisher)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historic Site # 5</td>
<td>The Legion Building (first city club house)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historic Site # 6</td>
<td>Main Street (filled with the county in 1913)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historic Site # 7</td>
<td>The Culver Studios (Thomas Ince’s second studio in town)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historic Site # 8</td>
<td>The Lugo Ranch (last ranch operating locally)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historic Site # 9</td>
<td>The Helms Building (1930s famed bakery/coaches delivering daily to your door)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historic Site # 10</td>
<td>La Ballona School (first school in what became Culver City)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historic Site # 11</td>
<td>Camp Latham (Civil War Campsite, marker on wall at Rotary Plaza at Virginia and Overland Avenues)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Historic Site # 12</td>
<td>Culver City’s First Park, 1927 (Victory Park, renamed for Dr. Paul Carlson in the 1960s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historic Site # 13</td>
<td>Veterans Memorial Building, 1950. (marked on 12/10/2011)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“UNCLE SYD” KRONENTHAL’S BIRTHDAY PARTY

On January 6th, Syd Kronenthal’s extended family and close friends gathered at Ca’ Del Sole in Toluca Lake to wish “Uncle Syd” a warm and loving “Happy Birthday.”

It's been nearly fifteen years since Syd retired as Culver City’s Human Services Director after more than 50 years of dedicated service — so many of us grew up under his direction and support!

In 1946, Syd began his career developing a parks and recreation system that currently includes fourteen parks, youth and senior centers, an Olympic-sized swimming pool, baseball and soccer fields and enriched youth after-school programs. Syd is also one of the founding members of the Culver City Historical Society.

Among the guests who came to celebrate, included friends and family from the entertainment and political worlds — nephews director Paul Brickman and writer/producers Burt Ginsburg with sister Carrie Haffner; and former Culver City Mayors Paul Jacobs and Steve Gourley. From the world of sports Olympic Gold medals winner and close friend Olga Connoly came with her daughter. The CCHS was represented by Communications Chair Joy Jacobs, newsletter editor Judy Stangler and members Ross Hawkins and Mike Cohen.

Joseph Siegman, who founded the Jewish Sports Hall of Fame in 1979, announced that on July 17, Syd will be one of the honorees for his contribution to Jewish youth during his years as Human Services Director in Culver City.
Did you know that Culver City is the home of a world-class ice skating rink and arena?

For almost 50 years, it has been the central facility for thousands of recreational skaters, young and old, and the training residence of scores of Olympic champions, U.S. national skating champions, Ice Capades stars, and professional hockey players.

The present owner and manager of the arena is John Jackson (photo at left), a former Marine Captain, a former football coach at USC, at the University of Nevada at Las Vegas, and at the University of Illinois; and owner/promoter of Forum Boxing, Inc. He was also the Assistant to Jerry Buss, owner of the Lakers basketball team and the Kings.

He will talk about the hockey and figure skating stars and celebrities – including Wayne Gretzky, Scott Hamilton, Dorothy Hamill, and Michele Kwan – who learned or honed their skills at the Arena. He will describe the growth and maturity of local kids, whose enthusiasm and training at the facility led to them skating championships and careers.

Several former local Olympic and professional skating stars, drawn from the teaching staff of the Ice Arena -- including Cathy Machado (Olympic medalist, World Professional Ice Skating Champion, U.S. Figure Skating Hall of Fame), Josselyn Baumgartner (Double National Medalist in figure skating), and Crystalrose Guerra (Five-time National Showcase Champion) – will be at the program to talk about their early experiences as skaters in Culver City and their subsequent careers on and off the ice.

Mr. Jackson will supplement his presentation with historical pictures of the rink and the people associated with it in the past.

**THE SOCIETY HAS A NEW SECRETARY: DONIE NELSON**

The Society is so lucky to have found our new Secretary – Donie Nelson!

Donie has been an active genealogist since 1979, and a founding member of the Genealogical Society of Hispanic America, Southern California Chapter (GSHA-SC), serving on their board for 18 years with six terms as president. She has been a featured speaker at numerous historical societies, bringing a wealth of information and observation to the world of historic preservation.

Additionally, she has over 35 years experience in the entertainment industry, where she held executive positions with feature film, television and cable production companies. Her credits are too numerous to cover here, but we invite you to come and meet her in person at the April 17th General Meeting – she has much to share!

**FAMED MID-CENTURY ARTIST JERRY ACKERMAN SHARES ARTISTIC HISTORY**

Long-time Culver City resident Jerome “Jerry” Ackerman, an artist-designer and a driving force in the Mid-Century Modern art movement in California was the featured speaker at the Historical Society’s January 16th General Meeting.

In a conversation with gallery director Gerard O’Brien of Reform Gallery, Jerry recalled remembrances and anecdotes of a 50-year career collaborating with his late wife, Evelyn, often sharing dear memories shared together and with other notable artists of the period.

The Ackermans played a central role in the distinctive aesthetic of California Mid-Century modernism, employing their deep knowledge of fine art, traditional craft and design. The couple created a body of work remarkable for its diversity of styles, techniques and materials. [To learn more, visit their website: http://www.ackermanmodern.com/]

~ Photos by Kevin Lachoff ~
Lana Turner Portrays Career Girl in 1950 Film

In 1950, Lana Turner wore our Spring display costume portraying “Lily James” in the film, A Life of Her Own. George Cukor directed the film which was made at Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Studios in Culver City. In this postwar story about an independent career girl, Lily leaves small town life in Kansas, begins a career as a model in New York City and promptly falls in love with a wealthy, married, business man.

The coat is a version of a classic style known as the “trench coat,” based on a rain coat worn by officers in WWI. The style is worn by both men and women and has come to signify “tough professional life in the big city” which Lily experiences in the film story. It features a notched lapel collar, deep patch pockets and long cuffed sleeves on a loosely fitted long coat. The trench coat also includes a wide belt at the waist.

This version of the coat was designed by famed designer Helen Rose. The gently rounded collar points and softly gathered waist of her design give the coat a slightly femininized look. It’s made of soft peach colored wool fully lined in silk crepe color.

Two-Piece Ensemble from 1948 Film “Words and Music”

Our second costume on display is from the film Words and Music, a musical eulogy to songwriter Larry Hart, as told by his partner Richard Rodgers. The film was released in 1948 by MGM. In it, Ann Sothern, portraying Joyce Harmon, wears a two-piece dress ensemble also designed by Helen Rose.

The top includes long raglan sleeves, a fitted waist and peplum extension to hip length. It is constructed of navy blue crepe silk with an intermittent garden pattern of pale pink flowers and green leaves; the flowers are rather like “lilies of the valley.” However, the best “not-to-be-missed” pattern detail is the matching pink Venus de Milo statue visible at the far end of the garden. The ensemble skirt is navy blue, plain silk crepe in a “straight” style.

The Answer to a Frequent Costume Question…

Many visitors to the ARC ask why all of the costumes in our collection are not on permanent display. They would like to see more of the collection. The answer is that the idea is wonderful but not feasible to implement. And here’s why:

• Most of the costumes in our collection are made of materials which have a kind of “inherent vice.” Silk and wool fabrics will eventually become extremely fragile, no matter how well they are stored and cared for. They are made of proteins, just as we are and have versions of the same aging attributes. (Alas!)

• Also, all of the costumes in our collection were made for performance. Think of all the movement required for dancing, singing and acting in film and theatre productions, often staged over and over again.

Even the Fiesta Ballona Court dresses were subject to performance. All of the costumes show signs of wear such as broken zippers, burst seams and of course, sweat stains just to name a few concerns. Many have unrepaired damage. Often minor conservation repairs must be made before a costume can be safely displayed.

• Display also requires a certain amount of handling which can include surface cleaning, padding out of sleeves, etc. Even the most gentle professional handling adds to the “wear” history of a costume.

~ Sharon
An ARC Update

by Julie Lugo Cerra
Vice President,
Museum/ARC and
City Historian

POSTCARD CAPTURES THE 1950s

Look at this gem from our collection! The photo is an actual Culver City postcard circa 1960. How about those cars?

On the left, note the Hull Building (now AKASHA Restaurant), one of the early sites marked by our Society. It was our first hospital space, built in the 1920s by former health officer, Dr. Foster Hull. In this postcard, it shows one occupant as Sunset Drug Co.

Do you remember the Wellington brothers, who owned more than one pharmacy in town? Society founding member and Madrina (godmother), Clarita Marquez Young, worked at the fountain in this store.

Down the street a bit further, Lucky Auto Parts is visible, just before the Security Pacific Bank. In those days, stop signs were apparently enough to protect the folks. And parking included lots of angle parking in downtown.

On the right, where Meralta Plaza and Fire Station 1 stand today, note the “Meralta block” which had Standard Floor and Wall on the corner, and the Blaine Walker Building. In those days, you could walk that block and pay your Edison bill, send a telegram at Western Union, stop to see your insurance man, Mayo D. Wright, or visit an attorney named Coombs.

And taking in a movie was possible, too, at the popular Meralta Theatre (which cost 25¢!). The theatre opened in 1922 with the legendary Will Rogers entertaining before the Thomas Ince movie, The Galloping Fish. The only business you can really see in the next block is Mary Evelyn’s Donut shop with the round sign — tasty memories for many!

Harry Culver’s hotel rises above it all, then known as Hotel Culver City. And just beyond, you can barely see the Adams Hotel, now empty as Parcel B. And the railroad tracks are a reminder of the wonderful transportation system at the time (especially the red cars) --- that transversed almost the whole of Los Angeles.

COME AND JOIN US CATALOGUE OTHER SUCH WONDERFUL FINDS

Please feel invited to play a part in the sorting and cataloging of great finds like this postcard to oversize photos, maps and lots of interesting documents and three dimensional items. This is the kind of fun that can be had if you come in to the archives – or volunteer to help catalog wonderful pieces of history like this.

We are reviewing the days that the ARC is open to the public due to parking issues. For now, we will remain open the first and third Saturdays, but closed July 20th. Please watch for special events and come in to see our rotating exhibits. We will also be a part of walking tours beginning in April.

And just a little historic tidbit: July 22, 2013, marks the 100th Anniversary of Harry H. Culver’s speech to the California Club, outlining his plans for his city – half way between downtown Los Angeles and the ocean. Maybe you can catch it being given again this July!

~ Julie

IN MEMORIAM

The Society sends its warmest condolences to our CCHS members on their recent family losses – Steve Newton’s mother, Steve Rose’s niece Jacki, and the Bernardin family’s grandfather.

Our thoughts are with you and your families.

~ ~ ~

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
Tel: (310) 253-6941 • Email: info@culvercityhistoricalsociety.org
Web: www.culvercityhistoricalsociety.org

~ 7 ~
Time to Renew or Become a Member of the Culver City Historical Society Today!
Join others in preserving the history of the “Heart of Screenland” and supporting the Culver City Historical Society Archives & Resource Center (ARC).

We can’t do it without YOU!

**TYPES OF MEMBERSHIP**
- Individual Member ($20)
- Individual Lifetime Member ($300)
- Organization ($15)
- Family Member ($30)
- Family Lifetime Member ($500)
- Business Member ($50)
- Youth Member ($10)
- Patron Member ($100)
- Corporate Sponsor ($500)
- Benefactor ($1000)

Name/Company: ____________________
Contact Person: ____________________
Mailing Address: ____________________ (City) ____________________ (State/Zip) ____________________
Telephone: ____________________ Fax: ____________________ Email: ____________________

Please make checks payable to 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: 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.

**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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Cavanaugh Realtors …….. Dannie Cavanaugh (310) 837-7161
Culver Center Flowers ….. Mike Eskridge (310) 839-2344
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