

# Culver Historical Highlights

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SUMMER 1999

## ROGER L. MAYER TO RECEIVE FIRST "HEART OF SCREENLAND STAR" AWARD

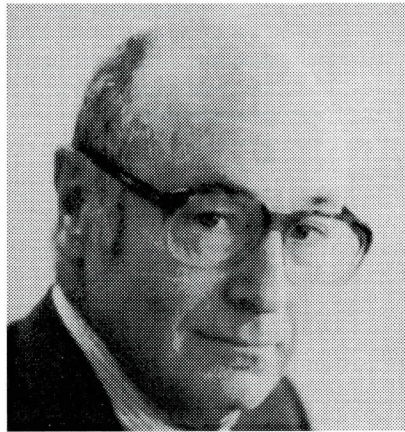
PRESENTATION AT GALA FILM PREMIERE MOVED TO SEPTEMBER 24TH

### "WIZARD OF OZ" 60TH ANNIVERSARY TRIBUTE RECALLS SWEET MEMORIES

Dorothy and Toto narrowly escaped the Wicked Witch - again - and each told their "side" of the story to the delighted crowd who attended the *Wizard of Oz* 60th Anniversary Tribute held on Sunday, June 6 at the Sagebrush Cantina in downtown Culver City to benefit the Culver City Historical Museum.

While the beloved film classic will be celebrated throughout the world during 1999, none will be more appropriate than this tribute held in Culver City, the "Heart of Screenland"- the city where the film was created in 1939.

It was an afternoon dedicated to the spirit and joy of L. Frank Baum's immortal tale, with families and friends sharing in the fun of costume contests, raffle prizes, silent auctions and the chance to meet "Dorothy" and the "Wicked Witch" in person. Both Elaine Horn, who is nationally known as (Cont'd page 3)



### TURNER ENTERTAINMENT COO FIRST RECIPIENT OF SOCIETY'S AWARD

The Board of the Culver City Historical Society has named Roger L. Mayer as the first recipient of the "Heart of Screenland Star" Award for his long career and personal interest in the art of film and its preservation, and for his support of community organizations such as the Culver City Historical Society.

The Society has created the "Heart of Screenland Star Award" to honor and thank those individuals who have contributed to the Culver City community and the Culver City Historical Society in a significant way through their work and support to further the preservation of the history of Culver City. This award will be bestowed on civic and business leaders, filmmakers, artisans, and prominent volunteers, among others.

Mr. Mayer has been President and Chief Operating Officer of Turner Entertainment Company since August, 1986. Before joining TEC, he began a twenty-five year career with Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, progressing from Assistant General Manager of the studio (Cont'd page 3)

### "CULVER CITY: THE REEL HOLLYWOOD" PREMIERE TO BENEFIT MUSEUM CAMPAIGN

by Marc Wanamaker

Many years have gone into the making of *Culver City: The Reel Hollywood*. In this four-part documentary, Producer-Director Ross Hawkins, with dedication and perseverance, has filmed wonderful interviews and obtained rare historical information, footage and photographs to tell the important story of the nearly 85-year history of the entertainment industry in the "Heart of Screenland."

On Friday, September 24th, Part I, "Visions of Grandeur," will have its public premiere at the Veterans Memorial Building in Culver City. This will be an old-fashioned gala premiere with stars, klieg lights and well-dressed "first-nighters" attending to benefit the Culver City Historical Museum Campaign.

Hawkins' quest led to many Culver City residents, young and old, who told him personal stories and historical accounts that he used in the body of the film. With the expertise of Culver City and motion picture historians, a picture of the City's growth and development comes to life, giving the viewer a sense of the City's history as well as the people who created it and made it prosper over the years.

### Harry Culver creates a new city

Culver City's history begins with real estate entrepreneur Harry Culver beginning to develop the area with the help of the early motion picture industry in Los Angeles as its economic base. The most prominent of these film industry personalities was Thomas H. Ince who built the first major motion picture studio in the "new" Culver City in 1915 at 10202 W. Washington Blvd. (Cont'd page 3)



"Wicked Witch" & "Dorothy" with PR Dir. Judy Stangler

## ANNUAL "PICNIC IN THE PARK"

It's Summer again and time for the annual Culver City Historical Society Picnic where young and old alike come out for an evening of family fun and good food!

This year's picnic will be held at Carlson Park in Culver City (at Braddock Drive, between Motor and Le Bourget Avenues) on Wednesday evening, July 28, beginning at 5:00 pm. The picnic is potluck and guests are asked to bring a main dish, salad or dessert for six people plus themselves. Plates, utensils and soft drinks will be provided by the Society.

The picnic is open to the public and members are encouraged to bring family and friends. For more information, or if you would like to help with the picnic planning, please call Ross Hawkins at 310.839.5725.



# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE by Lu Herrera



On behalf of the entire Board of the Culver City Historical Society, I am proud to announce our choice for the first presentation of the "Heart of Screenland Star" Award: Mr. Roger L. Mayer.

Mr. Mayer who is President and COO of Turner Entertainment Company has long supported the preservation and archival work of the Society and its four-part documentary project, Culver City: The Reel Hollywood. He has given us his time and counsel, contributing to the authenticating of materials that are part of the painstaking elements that go into making such an

important film history.

With so many various and sundry awards around, one might ask why another? The Historical Society depends on the support of many volunteers, organizations and businesses to continue its mission of collecting, preserving and exhibiting the history of Culver City and its cultural and civic accomplishments for future generations. As a non-profit organization, we determined that we might best thank these many individuals by honoring them with a token of our appreciation and gratitude.

Thus, the "Heart of Screenland Star" Award was created to acknowledge the contributions made to the Culver City community and to the Historical Society by civic and business leaders, filmmakers, artisans and prominent volunteers, among others.

It is a great honor for the Society to present this, the first "Heart of Screenland Star" Award to Roger L. Mayer who has demonstrated his commitment to film preservation on an international scale and his support to the activities of our local community and to the Culver City Historical Society. I urge you all to mark your calendars for Friday, September 24th and plan to join us in honoring Mr. Mayer and in helping to build the Culver City Historical Museum.

Remember, it is your Historical Society - I'm always available and can be reached at 310.838.1073.

*Lu Herrera*

## Notes from Your City Historian

by Julie Lugo Cerra



As the Honorary City Historian, I have a voicemail for historic inquiries. Please refer all inquiries to 310.253.6059. I will be checking it often.

In the spirit of sharing information:

- Did you know there was a tile manufacturer called the Valencia Spanish Tile Corp. on Elenda Street, just below Washington Boulevard in the 1930s? That teaser may become a future newsletter article by a tile historian who just purchased one of their tiles over the internet -- especially if we uncover more information to help him with his research.
- Do you remember a winery at Braddock and Elenda? It was called De Bartolo Winery. Must be the land -- Agustin Machado, the founder of Rancho La Ballona, was well-known for his white wine made from grapes in his vineyards.
- During the first week of September in 1781, 44 persons in 11 families with four soldiers proceeded the nine miles down what became the Los Angeles River from the San Gabriel Mission to establish the "Pueblo of Los Angeles." Descendants of those founders formed the "Los Pobladores 200" for the 200th birthday of the pueblo, and they make an annual trek to commem-

orate this walk by the early settlers. This year's event will take place on Saturday, Sept. 4, the city's actual founding date. The "pueblo" will mark its 218th birthday and the mission will turn 228!

- The Machado Reunion will be held on October 9 this year. If you are a descendent, you would really enjoy this event which is an incredible resource and social gathering. The descendants of Agustin and Ygnacio Machado and their friends bring the total beyond 300. In the spirit of the early settlers, there is traditional live music, dancing, and of course food and activities for the entire family.
- Fred Machado arranged for an original linen partition map, which defined land of Agustin Machado's descendants, to be donated to Loyola Marymount University. Although it is available for research there, Fred has made reproductions, with a written narrative about Rancho La Ballona. The map proceeds will go toward a marker for Agustin Machado's grave. The remains of Machado, his wife, Ramona and two of his sons, were moved from the little cemetery in Downtown Los Angeles to Calvary Cemetery in Whittier. The unmarked grave is now located at the Bernard family plot.

It is nice to see new faces at the Historical Society meetings, including Jim Lamm and Jonathan Weiss. Jim is heading the La Ballona Renaissance Program which offered an informative display at the Fiesta. For the internet alert, take a look at Jonathan's work on the Cheviot Hills website (<<http://www.cheviot hills.org>>).

## 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 BOX

It's hard to believe that we are approaching the Society's 20th Anniversary with the new millenium! From a small core group of dedicated people, an important and valued organization has developed.

While a significant amount of our history has been preserved and chronicled, so much more needs saving for research and exhibition for generations to come. Now, more than ever, the dream of a Culver City Historical Museum must be realized. The Society is doing its part by presenting wonderful community events such as the recent *Wizard of Oz* 60th Anniversary Tribute and the upcoming gala premiere of "Visions of Grandeur" on September 24 to help raise the needed funding for the Museum.

Please show your support by attending Society events and by volunteering your time and energy to one or more of our committees. We need your suggestions and ideas for future activities and events, and your help in making the dream a reality.

For those of you who do not have a copy of W.W. Robinson's 1939 work, which includes stories of Rancho La Ballona and Rincon de los Bueyes, as well as Palms and Culver City, you can download it from the website. A new addition includes work by one of our founding members, Richard Worsfold, who passed away recently. It was nice to see Mrs. Worsfold at the June "Wizard of Oz" fundraiser.



# REEL LIFE IN CULVER CITY

by Ross Hawkins



## GIL PERKINS

On March 28th, my good friend and mentor, Gil Perkins passed away at the Motion Picture and Television Hospital in Woodland Hills. He was 91.

Gil came to this country from Australia in 1929. He began working as an actor at 20th Century Fox and appeared in the 1930 prison comedy, *Up the River*, directed by John Ford with Humphrey Bogart and Spencer Tracy.

In 1931, Gil began his successful career as a stuntman when he was asked to replace actor William Boyd's stunt double on a film being shot in Culver City. After seeing him dart across Culver Blvd. and climb the fire escape of the Culver Hotel during night filming, Boyd was so impressed that he hired Gil to work on his next three films.

He had to turn down the job of doubling for Boyd on the first of the "Hopalong Cassidy" films in 1935 because he was set to sail for Tahiti with the cast and crew for second unit work on *Mutiny on the Bounty*.

Gil became known as the "stuntman's stuntman" for



his wide ranging abilities, and doubled for such stars as Spencer Tracy, Red Skelton, Van Heflin, Danny Kaye, Van Johnson and Gene Hackman. He doubled for Red Skelton on every film Skelton made.

In 1960, Gil helped found the Stuntmen's Association of Motion Pictures, Inc. and also served on the board of the Screen Actors Guild for 27 years.

In 1979, Gil helped to create the SAG Legacy Series in which distinguished actors and actresses are interviewed on videotape for historical documentation. I was fortunate to have worked as Associate Producer on the episodes with Henry Fonda and Eddie Albert. It allowed me to become good friends with Gil and fellow Australian actor, Edward Ashley.

In his retirement, Gil was an active member of the board of the Motion Picture Country Home and The Actors Emergency Relief Fund.

Gil Perkins was a man who lived the full, robust life of a movie stuntman, while maintaining a sweet, kindly nature an interested and interesting gentleman.

## Fiesta La Ballona "Thanks"

by Stu Freeman

This year's annual Fiesta La Ballona was a ball! The Society's tours were as popular as ever, as were the screenings of the documentary, *Historic Culver City*.

The Society would like to thank all the many friends and volunteers who made this such a happy event: Susan Berg, Jeanette and Lou Block, Sandy Burton, Sam Cerra, Ross Hawkins, Lu Herrera, Edna and Ralph Larkin, Sol and Martha Sigall, Judy Stangler, Cathy Zermeno and many others who gave of their time.

Also, we congratulate the winners of the raffle items especially those who won the historic Studio Drive-In "speaker box" and the autographed copy of Culver City Historian Julie Lugo Cerra's wonderful cookbook, "...Fire Burn Cauldron Bubble."

Thank you all!

## (WIZARD cont'd.)

the *Young Judy Garland* as "Dorothy," and Kurt Steinruck, Master Oz Impressionist, who portrays Margaret Hamilton as the "Wicked Witch," work with professional and community organizations to keep the Baum classic alive for old and young alike. They brought the characters to life with wonderful realism, charming everyone.

Noted author Aljean Harmetz recounted memories and anecdotes of the making of the 1939 film and presented a special screening of her fascinating film, *The Making of the Wizard of Oz*. Retired film technician George Lilly told of how he was part of the team that painted the Yellow Brick Road by hand! Also on hand, were special guests, Ms. Ozma Baum Mantele and Robert Baum, granddaughter and great-grandson of author L. Frank Baum.

Raffle prizes and silent auction items were provided by 26 Beach Café, BookStar, Rosemary Chiaverini/UCLA, Comp USA, Culver City Flower Shop, Culver City Ice Arena, The Culver Hotel, Double Dutch Dinette, Expressions w/Hair, Freeman Properties, George Petrelli's Famous Steak House, Glenn Laiken /Alandale's Men's Store & Hair Salon, Aljean Harmetz, Kinko's Pic'n'Save Plaza, Ocean Avenue Seafood, Renee's Café, Roll & Rye, S & W Café, Sagebrush Cantina Restaurant, San Gennaro Restaurant, Martha & Sol Sigall Artwork, Woody & Martha Tolkien Artwork, The University Restaurant Group/King's Fish House, The Wellness Spa, Westfield Shoppingtown/Fox Hills. A buffet lunch was served and a commemorative souvenir program given to all who attend.

(MAYER cont'd)

through a variety of executive positions, culminating as Senior Vice President of Administration and President of MGM Laboratories, Inc.

Mayer was born in New York City in 1926, and received his B.A. at Yale University and his L.L.B. and J.D. at Yale Law School.

It is in the field of film preservation that Mayer concentrates a good amount of his energies. He is a member of the National Film Preservation Board of the Library of Congress and Chairman of the National Film Preservation Foundation.

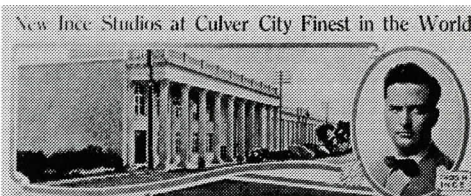
Mayer is Chairman of the Board of the Motion Picture and Television Fund and a Board Member of its Charitable Foundation. He is also on the Board of Governors of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences and on the Board of the Academy Foundation, as well as a member of the Los Angeles County Bar Association and the Los Angeles Copyright Society.

The inaugural "Heart of Screenland Star" Award will be presented to Mr. Mayor on Friday evening, September 24 at the gala premiere of "Visions of Grandeur" to benefit the Culver City Historical Museum campaign.

## (PREMIERE cont'd)

Christened Triangle-Thomas Ince Studios, it was here that several early silent screen stars such as Douglas Fairbanks and William S. Hart made their names.

The film tells how the studio was later taken over by other companies and, in 1924, by the Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer merger. After leaving Triangle, Ince built a second major studio in 1918, just 1/4 mile further east on Washington Blvd. There he produced several successful films and developed the filmmaking process into a highly professional formula, later becoming known as the father of the modern shooting script.



After Ince's death in 1924, Cecil B. DeMille took over his studio in 1925 and made many notable films there including one of his greatest, *The King of Kings*, in 1927. Later on this lot such film classics as *King Kong*, *Gone With the Wind*, and *Citizen Kane* were filmed.

## Preserving the Past for the Future

*Culver City: The Reel Hollywood* is highly informative and entertaining. Above all, it is emotionally involving, especially to many of the City's longtime residents for whom it is a reminder of how rich and rewarding Culver City's heritage is and how much it has affected the history of Los Angeles and the film industry it chronicles. It is most fitting that this premiere should benefit the creation of the Culver City Historical Museum which will preserve and display this heritage for future generations.



### 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

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