



Historical Highlights

Volume 34 No.3 Published by the Culver City Historical Society Summer 2013

HISTORICAL SOCIETY TO CELEBRATE 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF HARRY CULVER'S DREAM SPEECH

COLUMN ONE

MICHELLE BERNARDIN TAKES THE REINS OF THE SOCIETY

Culver City native Michelle Bernardin has been named president of the Culver City Historical Society upon the resignation of former president Louise Coffey-Webb.



Bernardin's roots in Culver City go back to her father, Roger, whose family moved from Santa Monica to the west side of Culver City in 1956. She attended St. Augustine's School and then to

(cont'd. pg. 4)

JULY 1913 SPEECH AT CALIFORNIA CLUB PREVIEWS A NEW CITY

On July 22, 1913, Harry H. Culver, then a young real estate developer, made an important announcement at the original California Club in Downtown, Los Angeles. He presented his vision for a new city before directors, stockholders and friends of the newly formed Culver Investment Company with such enthusiasm that the enthralled group named it "Culver City" by acclamation.

The Culver City Historical Society will present Culver's exact dream speech, re-enacted by Councilman Jim Clarke, Saturday, July 20, 2013, from 10 am to 1 pm at the exclusive California Club, 538 South Flower



Street, Downtown, Los Angeles, 90071.
(cont'd. pg. 4)

Culver City Historical Society's ANNUAL "PICNIC IN THE PARK" AND GATHERING

The Culver City Historical Society invites its members and the community to its annual picnic at Veterans Park on Wednesday, July 17, 2013. Festivities will begin at 5:30 pm with soft drinks and conversation in the picnic area. Dinner will be served from 6:30 -7:30 pm.

Bring your appetites and come watch Jim Rodrigues from Santa Maria BBQ do his magic catering at the barbeque on-site. Choice Grade tri-tips and plump Grade A chickens will go on the grill at 5 pm. Dinner also will include tasty chili beans, potato salad, green salad, garlic bread, Santa Maria's special barbeque sauce, homemade-cookies and soft drinks.

Enjoy this mid-summer night of fun and be serenaded by the famous local Razzmatazz Dixieland ensemble playing festive barbeque music. Local celebrities and VIPs, free gifts, free door prizes, will add fun and glamour to this joyful event. The CCHS Board will hold a brief public meeting after dinner.

The price for everything is \$25 per person (checks sent in advance) or \$30 the night of the picnic. Please RSVP by July 15. Checks should be sent to the Culver City Historical Society, P.O. Box 3428, Culver City, CA 90231-3428. Please include the names of all guests. Tickets will be held at the picnic site.

The Archives and Resource Center (ARC) will be open after dinner, and visitors will be able to view special summer exhibits. For additional information, call 310-253-6941 or send a message to info@CulverCityHistoricalSociety.org or visit our Web page at <http://www.CulverCityHistoricalSociety.org>.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by Michelle Bernardin

Dear Historical Society Members,

At the May 15, 2013 Historical Society board meeting, Louise Coffey-Webb submitted and distributed a letter of resignation for her position as President, effective immediately, citing family health issues and an immediate need to leave the country to attend to this situation.

As outlined in the Society bylaws (ratified in January 2013), the Vice President for Development is the next in line for the Presidency, and I accepted the responsibility for the remainder of her term ending January 2014.

On behalf of the Culver City Historical Society Executive Board and the Committees, we wish Louise and her family all the very best at this difficult time. You will find her parting message as former president on page 3.

Moving ahead, I look forward to seeing you at our upcoming picnic on July 17 and our fundraiser on July 20, celebrating the 100th Anniversary of Harry Culver's speech to the California Club, outlining his dream of a city between "Here and Here."

With all my best wishes,

~ Michelle

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Historical
Society
while you shop!

Clockwise from top left:
Blanket, Notecards, Umbrella
License Plate Frame, Books

Just released!
Culver City Chronicles

Historical Highlights

Web: www.CulverCityHistoricalSociety.org
PO Box 3428 · Culver City, CA · 90231-3428

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 Society Newsletter is published quarterly.
Editor & Publisher.....Judy Stangler
Contributing Writers..... Julie Lugo Cerra,
Marc Wanamaker, Sharon Shore

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Sharon Shore Costumes Chair
Winston Gieseke Webmaster
Kevin Lachoff Photographer

Editor's Column

Your Historical Society has been hard at work to revamp our newsletter and make it easier to read and enjoy.

It's been renamed "Historical Highlights" along with a major focus on our great logo. We're using a more reader-friendly font and enlarging the photos as much as possible.

It will always remain our goal to give you interesting and informative stories and columns, and we continue to invite you to ask questions and offer additional information.

Also, please note that often more information on a particular subject or historical piece can be found on our website.

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

RENEW YOUR SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP

by Tami Eskridge,
VP, Development and 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 Culver-ites in distant areas!
(see form on pg.8)

REEL CULVER CITY



by Marc Wanamaker

MEMORIES OF A VISIT TO CULVER CITY'S FAMOUS "40-ACRES" BACKLOT IN 1972



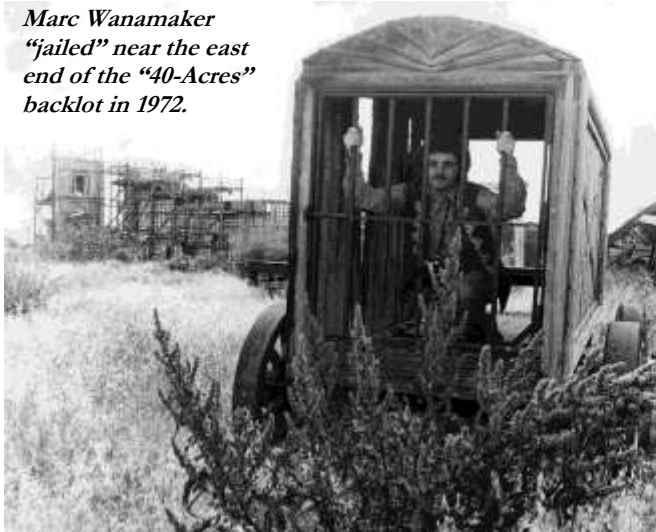
AFI REQUESTS DOCUMENTING OF FAMED STUDIO SITE

In the summer of 1972 while working at the American Film Institute in Beverly Hills, I was asked by an AFI writer to be the photographer on a field trip to the famous "40 Acres" backlot in Culver City. The writer was engaged to write a small book or documentary on the history of the sets and films that were shot on this famous backlot and we were granted access to this legendary filming site. This visit began my lifelong project to write an encyclopedia of the American Film Studios of which I'm still engaged.

THE STUDIO AND BACKLOT HAVE A CELEBRATED HISTORY

This backlot was first created by producer/director Thomas Ince when he built his own studio on Washington Blvd. in 1918. The original backlot consisted of a small village and some shacks near the La Ballona Creek.

Marc Wanamaker
"jailed" near the east
end of the "40-Acres"
backlot in 1972.



After Ince's death in 1924, the studio and backlot were sold to Ince's friend, Cecil B. DeMille, and the studio became known as the DeMille Studio. The "40 Acres" backlot was used for many DeMille directed or produced films such as *The King of Kings* (1927).

By 1929, DeMille turned the studio over to his partners, Pathé America and the studio became the Pathé Culver City Studio. With the merger of Pathé and RKO in the same year, the new name of the lots was the RKO-Pathé Studio. Classic films such as *King Kong* were shot on all the RKO lots with the "40 Acres" backlot filling in for 'Skull Island' along with the famous colossal wall containing King Kong.

In 1935, David O. Selznick signed a long-term lease of both properties and produced among other films, *Gone With The Wind*, burning down the former *King Kong* jungle wall to make way for the Atlanta Railway Station. With the success of *Gone With The Wind*, the Selznick International entire RKO Studios assets were sold to Desilu, the company owned by stars Lucille Ball and Desi Arnaz.

The Desilu Culver Studios became the home for many early 1950s television shows such as *Whirly Birds*, *The Untouchables*, *Lassie*, *Hogan's Heroes*, the *Andy Griffith Show* among others.

In 1962, director George Stevens produced *The Greatest Story Ever Told* at the studio using the same stages and the "40 Acres" backlot used by Cecil B. DeMille thirty-five years earlier.

By 1967, Desilu sold out all their assets to Paramount and the studio became known as the Paramount Culver Studios. Paramount used the "40 Acres" and the main lot for a couple of years before they sold the entire lot to the Perfect Film & Chemical Company

FAREWELL FROM YOUR FORMER PRESIDENT

Dear Members,

I am writing this from my family home in Berkhamsted, England, where I've returned to



care for my mother, Joan. She has been very ill these past six months, and I needed to be here to help her, without a definite return date.

With this change in my situation, it was necessary for me to resign from my position as President of the Culver City Historical Society.

According to our By-laws, our "next in command" is the Vice-President of Development, Michelle Bernardin. I am very confident that she will make an excellent president until our next election at the end of this year.

This past year and a half of my presidency has been extremely rewarding as I have witnessed renewed energy in the Society, great programs, and interesting displays in our ARC. As always, there is still much work to do, and dedicated volunteers will always be appreciated.

I do hope you will attend our summer events – the Annual Picnic on July 17, and our fundraiser, "Harry Culver's Dream," on July 20.

I thank all of our Board and Committee members and our tireless volunteers who have done so much, along with our wonderful membership. I also want to thank the many Culver City employees and Council members who have supported the Society with such enthusiasm. *Culver City is indeed a special city!*

All the best, *Louise*

who changed the name yet again to The Culver City Studios in 1969. In 1981, the studio was sold again, this time to the Laird International Studios who operated it as a rental lot. Sadly, "40 Acres" was sold to a developer who demolished what was left of the famous sets still existing and created an industrial park, as it is today.

CULVER CITY HISTORICAL SOCIETY ~ ~ ~

JULY 20TH CELEBRATION OF HARRY CULVER'S "DREAM SPEECH" (cont'd. from pg. 1)

This fundraising event, the unofficial kick-off to the centennial in 2017 of Culver City's incorporation, will include breakfast and valet parking, raffle, and a no-host bar. The public is invited to attend. Tickets are \$50 for Culver City Historical Society members; \$60 for non-members. Please RSVP by July 15. Checks should be sent to the Culver City Historical Society, P.O. Box 3428, Culver City, CA 90231-3428. Please include the names of all guests. Tickets will be held at the door.

All proceeds from this event will benefit the Culver City Historical Society, a non-profit membership organization created in 1980 for the purpose of collecting, preserving and exhibiting the history of Culver City and its cultural and civic accomplishments.

For additional information, call (310) 253-6941 or send a message to info@CulverCityHistoricalSociety.org or visit our Web page www.CulverCityHistoricalSociety.org. To read Culver's speech in full, go to www.CulverCity.org/Visitors/CulverCityHistory/CulverSpeech.aspx.



L: Invitation for "Harry's Dream Speech" celebration.

Above: CC Councilman Jim Clarke who will deliver the 1913 speech.

MICHELLE BERNARDIN (cont'd. from pg. 1)

Culver City High School. She is a Bruin, studied art history at UCLA, and continued her graduate work in art history and museum studies at Tufts University in Massachusetts.

She has been at Loyola Marymount University for the last three years as Associate Director of Development of Women and Philanthropy, and the program director of the LMU Women's Leadership Council. Prior to that, she spent ten years at the Museum of Contemporary Art, managing the museum's two volunteer support councils and the internal logistics for the annual fundraising events.

For the past three years, she has been a member of the Cultural Affairs Commission for Culver City.

She is an avid foodie, enjoys baking in the kitchen, and loves sharing the exploits of both on social media!

~ ~ ~ PRESERVING HISTORY FOR OVER 30 YEARS !

~ THE SOCIETY'S HISTORIC SITES NEED SPECIAL ATTENTION AND CARE ~

One of the Society's work projects is the cleaning and maintenance of the thirteen Historical Sites which the Society has marked around the city. On Saturday, May 25, Jeanne Conklin, Historic Sites Chair of the Culver City Historical Society organized the first official "Marker Cleaning Day" for the Historic Preservation Month of May.

The participants ranged from 6 weeks old to full *adulthood*. It's always more fun to come together with rags and soap and water in hand – and meet local residents and visitors along the way.



Above L: Nicholas Lachoff and Fred Yglesias work on Historic Site Marker #4, The Citizen Building.

Left: Close-up of Historic Site Marker #4.



**Above R: "Crew" working on Historic Site #6, Main Street:
L-R: Owner Stu Freeman, Fred Yglesias, Jeanne Conklin,
CC Councilman Jim Clarke, Nicholas Lachoff and Tami
Eskridge.**



**Left: L-R: Stu Freeman, Tami Eskridge, Michele Lachoff (with
baby carriage), Julie Lugo Cerra, CC Councilman Jim Clarke,
Jeanne Conklin and Fred Yglesias at The Culver Studios,
Historic Site #7.**

HISTORY OF CULVER ICE ARENA PRESENTED BY OWNER/MANAGER JOHN JACKSON AND FRIENDS AT APRIL GENERAL MEETING



Above: John Jackson.

**Above R: Power-point presentation
of historic moments at the
Culver Ice Arena.**



~ Photos by Kevin Lachoff

WANTED !

Are you interested in becoming a Board member and helping us continue the good work that the Historical Society started more than 30 years ago?

Our Nominating Committee will be meeting this summer in order to present the general membership with the board slate at the October open meeting.

Board terms are for two years – it goes by fast! And, as you can see, we have a lot of fun!

Let us know what you are interested in: fundraising, development, programming, etc., etc.

Call (310) 253-6941 or email board@CulverCityHistoricalSociety.org

NEWS FROM THE COSTUME CHAIR...

by Sharon Shore
Costumes Chair



"ELEPHANTS" PARADE DOWN OVERLAND AVE. FOR "JUMBO"

Due to its unique history as home to several famous movie studios, Culver City has witnessed many intriguing events.

Heads must have turned in 1962 when a small group of elephants, including Sidney the Elephant, strolled down Overland Avenue on location for the Metro Goldwyn Mayer film musical *Billy Rose's Jumbo*. Unfortunately, our collection doesn't include the custom sized black top hat and magician's cape worn by Sidney in her starring role as "Jumbo" in the film.

We do have the next best thing, however. Our collection includes the complete clown costume worn by Jimmy Durante as Pop Wonder, owner of the traveling circus and Jumbo.

Below: "Pop Wonder's" shoes and hat worn by Jimmy Durante in Billy Rose's Jumbo (1962).



The costume is surprisingly complete and in relatively good, exhibitable condition. It includes a hat, a pair of clown-sized red and white wing tip shoes, cartoon-sized

mitten, a detachable collar, cuffs and bib-like shirt front, a red silk vest with oversized buttons, and plaid pants with matching tail coat! The entire costume will be displayed for the summer season in the ARC museum.

Leopard print leotards worn by Doris Day as Pop's daughter, Kitty, and Martha Raye, as Lulu the fortune teller and Pop's love interest, are also included in the book, display.

The film was directed by Charles Walters and based on a musical play by Ben Hecht and Charles MacArthur. Costumes were designed by Morton Haack.

MORE ABOUT STORING YOUR COSTUMES, KEEPSAKES AND HEIRLOOMS COLLECTION

The challenge of preparing valued collections, including costumes and other types of textiles, for long term storage can be a bit daunting. However, identifying the appropriate wrapping materials such as "buffered" or "un-buffered" paper and special storage containers designed to

house a range of shapes and sizes is important. The choices you make can affect the condition of the items in the stored collection over time.

One way to begin the process is to set aside a few minutes to look through the archival

materials catalogs on file at the ARC. The catalogs are divided into categories for types of art to be stored, such as photos, books, textiles, etc. The products featured

MARK YOUR "2013" CALENDAR

JUL. 13: '73 CENTAURS 40TH REUNION
(ARC OPEN 12-2 PM BY SPECIAL REQUEST)*

JUL. 17: SOCIETY ANNUAL PICNIC
GEN. MEETING

JUL. 20: SOCIETY CELEBRATION OF HARRY CULVER'S
"CALIFORNIA CLUB SPEECH"

AUG. 23-25: FIESTA LA BALLONA
(ARC OPEN 8/24-25, NOON-4 PM)

► **JULIE LUGO CERRA: SIGNING OF NEW BOOK, "CHRONICLES OF CULVER CITY" IN ARC**
(SAT. 2-4 PM)

► **FIESTA "COSTUME COMPETITION"**
(SUN. 10:30 AM)

SEP. 28: '63 CENTAURS 50TH REUNION
(ARC OPEN 1-3PM BY SPECIAL REQUEST)

OCT. 12: "LA AS SUBJECT"
ARCHIVES BAZAAR - USC

2013 ARC Open Dates

Call to confirm dates: (310) 253-6941

► 1st & 3rd **Saturdays**, 1-3 pm ◀

Jul. 6 Jul. 13*

[Jul. 20: closed for "Culver" event]
Aug. 3 Aug. 17

Starting in September:

► 1st & 3rd **Sundays**, 1-3 pm ◀

Sep. 1 Sep. 15 Oct. 6

Oct. 20 Nov. 3 Nov. 17

Dec. 1 Dec. 15

(*Also by appointment)

The CC Cultural Affairs Commission meets on the 2nd Tuesday of the month in the Council Chambers, City Hall.

For more information on any of these events, please contact the Society:
info@CulverCityHistoricalSociety.org
or Tel: (310) 253-6941.
Or visit our web:
www.CulverCityHistoricalSociety.org

Welcome New Society Members

• Mathew Hetz • Craig Owens

in each category are usually illustrated by photographs and have some explanation about their archival qualities and intended use. Most products come in a range of sizes. Although you might decide not to purchase any of the catalog products, the information might be helpful in establishing some practical "dos" and "don'ts" for setting up storage conditions for your collection. The catalogs are available by request to members for use in the ARC.

~ Sharon

An ARC Update

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



THE ARC SERVES LOCALS WITH RESEARCH AND MORE

This last quarter, we have been cataloging and reordering the ARC to better serve you. We have assisted local residents on a number of inquiries, including research on Poinsettia Court, a quaint street off Higuera that was developed in the early 1920s by the Strickle McBain Construction Company. If you have any insights or stories about this street, please contact the Society, online or via phone, please.

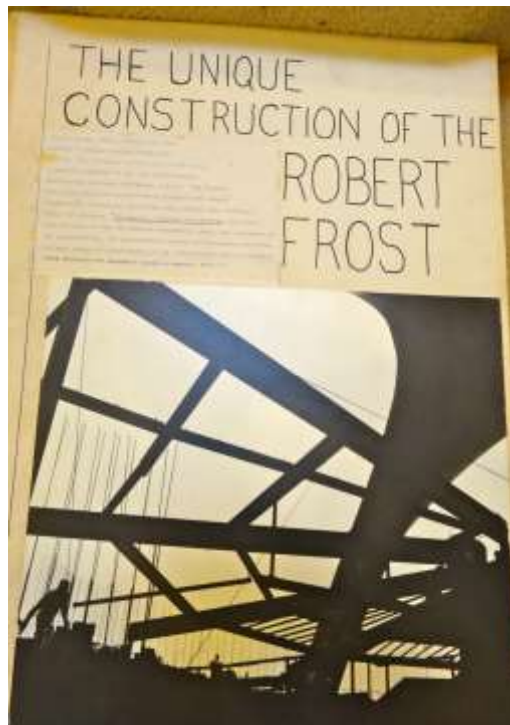
ROBERT FROST AUDITORIUM A LANDMARK SINCE 1964

The Robert Frost Auditorium has held a broad scope of interest since it opened in 1964. In addition to an architect's rendering, the Society is preserving a wonderful student project, completed by members of Culver High's 1963 Olympian Yearbook staff: a photo journal mounted on display boards of the construction of Robert Frost Auditorium at Culver High.

Spearheaded by Tom Sparks, the yearbook photographer at the time, along with other yearbook staff, like John Yant, Jim Alexander and Bonnie Fishman.

RECENT DONATIONS

- Do you remember Airport Village? The Hamburger Handout?



Below: CCHS Members at City Council Meeting receive the May Preservation Month Proclamation



Stop by the Archives to see an oversize photo on canvas that will bring back happy memories!

Special thanks to Jim Solomon who arranged for this new acquisition from the Jim Collins family, who were responsible for

many of our delicious hamburgers and The Sizzler Restaurants!

- We have two Police Benefit books (1927, 1928) that offer a priceless look into 1920s Culver City history.

Special thanks to Bill Barnett and Jody Hall-Esser!

~ Julie

~ ~ ~

Volunteers are the only human beings on the face of the earth who reflect this nation's compassion, unselfish caring, patience, and just plain love for one another.

~ Erma Bombeck

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

NOTE: Starting September 1, the ARC will be open the 1st and 3rd Sundays, 1-3 pm

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



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)
_____ Family Member (\$30)
_____ Youth Member (\$10)

_____ Individual Lifetime Member (\$300)
_____ Family Lifetime Member (\$500)
_____ Patron Member (\$100)
_____ Benefactor (\$1000)

_____ Organization (\$15)
_____ Business Member (\$50)
_____ Corporate Sponsor (\$500)

Name/Company: _____ Contact Person: _____

Mailing Address: (Street) _____ (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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