"SNEAK PREVIEW" SHOWS PUBLIC WHAT'S TO COME

On Saturday, November 18, 2000, the Culver City Historical Society was proud to present "Sneak Preview of the Culver City Heritage Museum" at the Veterans Memorial Building.

This was a one-day Expo/Performance event designed to introduce the public and potential supporters to the Capital Campaign of the Culver City Heritage Museum. Along with video screenings, panel discussions and the special evening event, "Nightlife in Culver City" (see adjacent article), the focus of the event was the many displays and booths of a myriad of historic, social and cultural memorabilia of the history of Culver City.

The exhibit design layout was the work of Vince Carden of VC Studio. Vince also designed the "Sneak Preview" poster and oversaw the publication of the Souvenir Journal which was printed by B & B Printing.

Highlighting four major periods of the City's history - The History of the Native Indians, The History of the Early Settlers, The History of the City of Culver City, and The History of the Entertainment Industry - the Rotunda at the Vets was filled with many wonderfully depictive photos and artifacts of our heritage.

The exhibits included the Gabrieleno/Tongva Indians display, a panoramic photo display of the "Founding Fathers," and displays on the City's Rose Parade floats, the Ballona Creek Renaissance Program and the Helms Bakery Museum. Also included were displays of Culver City's Human Services, Parks & Recreation, and the Western Hemisphere Marathon. (Cont'd on page 6)

"NIGHTLIFE IN CULVER CITY" A MUSICAL MEMORY TRIBUTE

Perhaps the highlight of the day-long "Sneak Preview" event was the evening segment, "Nightlife in Culver City," where guests entered a candle-lit room of rich reds and sparkle.

Actor/producer/writer Robert Sacchi was a perfect host for "Nightlife," a musical tribute to the nightclubs that held court in Culver City from the 1920s through the end of World War II, primarily along Washington Blvd., the "Sunset Strip" of Culver City.

Mr. Sacchi, best known for his portrayal of The Man With Bogart's Face, performed the lively emcee duties at the Society's "Café Culver." He interviewed special guests Chuck

L-R: Ross Hawkins, Robert Sacchi & Marc Wanamaker

Cecil of the popular, long-running radio program, The Swingin' Years, historian Marc Wanamaker and legendary drummer, Gordon "Specks" Powell, (Cont'd on page 6)

JANUARY 16TH ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

- Spotlight on the History of the Culver City Fire Department -

The next Annual Membership Meeting of the Culver City Historical Society will be held on Tuesday, January 16th at 7:00 pm in the Lethbridge Garden Room at the Veterans Memorial Building, 4117 Overland Avenue, Culver City. Important Society business will discussed.

The Society is pleased to have as guest speaker, firefighter and paramedic, Bill Heins, who will present the history of the Culver City Fire Department. Bill has inherited the historic memorabilia collection of retired Assistant Fire Chief Charles Liedtke and has continued to add and augment this collection with his own personal research. He will speak on the development of the Fire Department since it was established in 1927 and discuss the changes and challenges it has faced through the years. Many historic photos will be displayed.

This promises to be a very informative evening and the public is invited to enjoy the free program. Students are encouraged to attend. Refreshments will be served following the program.

For more information, please call Cathy Zermeno at (310) 839-7688.
CULVER HIGH'S FIRST GRADUATES

Did you know that 50 years ago, Culver High opened as a three-year high school? Next door, the Junior High accommodated students from 7th-9th grades in the first year. The secondary schools began in 1949, when we became a "Sunrise" in the district that now has two of its number, Culver City. This will make a great gift to give for the holiday season. It is not only rare but unique, and we hope it will raise funds for the Culver City Heritage Museum. We're very proud to make this offer, and I urge you all to consider giving one or more of these "gifts" as gifts and contribute to our fundraising efforts.

We have had exciting series of excellent programs this past year raising the awareness of the history of Culver City, and we have an equally exciting series planned for 2001. I call upon each member of our custodians to support the Culver Board of Directors as we continue to fulfill our goals of preserving and promoting the wonderful history of Culver City. Happy Holidays to everyone!
A MUSEUM ODYSSEY BEGINS...

"SNEAK PREVIEW" OF THE
CULVER CITY HERITAGE MUSEUM
GIVES A GLIMPSE OF THINGS TO COME.

HISTORY OF THE NATIVE INDIANS

Gabrielino Village.

HISTORY OF THE EARLY SETTLERS

Fred Machado & Lupe Smith
with "Founding Fathers" exhibit.

Realty Board of Culver City 1926

Cameras were everywhere!

Ballona Creek murals

HISTORY OF THE CITY OF CULVER CITY

Ralph Larkin & his
Pacific Electric exhibit

Helms Bakery / Disneyland
Rose Bowl float 1955

HISTORY OF THE ENTERTAINMENT INDUSTRY

Marty Harris & Café Culver All-Stars band.

Judy Stangler
& "Specks" Powell

Bob Sacchi
& Sandy Burton.

L-R: John Meade & Paul Pitti
with the "Saddle"

Mim & Hank Shapiro

We could have
danced all night!

L-R: Carl Pitti, Paul Pitti
& Karla Johnson

Virgie Eskridge helps sets up Expo
"SNEAK PREVIEW" *(Cont’d from page 1): Augmenting the Pacific Electric Railroad Line exhibit was the screening of The Last Ride of the Red Car, a short film by Ralph Larkin about the demise of the T & FE. Mr. Larkin was on hand to discuss the film which was made possible by the generous support of Dentinna.

We are very grateful to all the exhibitors who brought so many wonderful items and memorabilia. These included Turner Entertainment Co. and its collection of MGM Westerns, The American Film Collection, whose houses the Helms Bakery Museum, the Fred Harman Comic Art Collection, Ben Caree’s collection, Buxon Archives ‘The History of the Culver City studios collection, and the estate of famed film art director, Ben Caree’.

Also exhibiting were The Marvin Paige Film Collection, The Wizard of Oz collection, the Martha & Sol Sigall Animation collection, and Alliana, Inc., producer of the popular TV show, "The Andy Griffith Show," which sponsored the "Cowboy Heroes of Culver City" display (see related article in Red Culver City, pg. 3).

We thank the following exhibitors who worked so hard to make "Sneak Preview" such a success: June Caldwell, Bider, Sandy Burton, Julie Lugo Cera, Rodney Goff, Sylvia Krensel, Jim Lamm, Ralph & Edna Larkin, Fred Machado, Marvin Paige and Pam Robinson. Our thanks also go to Carl & Paul Pitt, Karl & John Johnson, Sol & Martha Sigall, Lupe Smith, Martha & Woody Tolkoff, Mani Waranakar, Kit Weber, Cathy Zemeno and John Meode.

The Society is indebted to the following sponsors: Platinum Circle: John Felix and Piazza Studios. Gold Circle: Sagebrush Canton and Silver Circle: Gordon & Janet Cunningham, Linda Anderson/State at screw, The Goldwater Law Firm, Property Management, Paul & Joy Jacobs and Kit Weber. A special thanks goes to George Jolles, president of the Culver City Property Management Corporation for his assistance with the "Helms Bakery Museum" seeping, to Sanjo Investments, Lu Herrera and Alandale’s men’s furnishings for their support.

As Vice President, Museum and Manager, I would like to thank my Event Chair Judy Stangler, Stu Freeman who oversaw the raffles and Souvenir Program, Rosamund Chiaverini of UCLA International Overseas Programs for her continued support, and Mark Morris who worked so tirelessly in all areas.

I also want to thank the committee members: Karen Coyce, Damien Gerald Curran, Virgie Eskridge, Charlie Halstead, Jay Handelsman, Asia Kowal, Celia Martin, Paine Paige, Jocelle Smith, Efrem & Beverly Violin, Roba Yadens, Cathy Zemeno and Vellye Collins.

CCHS MEMBERS VIST GREYSTONE MANSION

By Sandy Burton

On October 14, the Beverly Hills Historical Society hosted a tour of the Greystone Mansion for its sister historical societies. Over a buffet lunch, the groups told of their programs and future plans, and discussed ideas on maintaining interest in preserving history and the current trends of fundraising.

Built in 1927, the Gothic-styled mansion is located on 415 acres of land in the midst of the Bel Air Country Club. Originally, the grounds surrounding the home included a lake, sailing booms and a koi pond on the lake. Now owned by the City of Beverly Hills, Greystone has been the locale for numerous film and television programs, and is often used for private weddings.

While we are grateful and we all appreciated the valuable opportunity to tour one another, and are encouraged to continue this type of interchange in the future.

NIGHTLIFE *(Cont’d from page 1):* who shared personal anecdotes and participated in the evening’s recreation of what the nightclub scene was like.

Adding to the ambiance was the ‘Café Culver All-Stars’ band. Popular jazz pianist Marty Harris led a group of internationally known jazz artists which included “Jerry Harrington on sax, Bill Berry on trumpet, Paul Kreiher on drums and Paul Gomboll on bass. No one could sit still to listening to their fabulous music and many were energized to dance.

A wonderful display recreating a portion of this well-known establishment from the infamous Frank Sebastian’s Cotton Club, the Greek Cafeteria and film comic Fatty Arbuckle’s The Plantation Cafe was presented by Mani Waranakar, whose internationally renowned Buxon Archives has an extraordinary photo collection of these nightspots.

Adding to the evening was a terrific surprise provided by Charlie Halstead and the Sagebrush Cantina – especially his hambone’s that got great reviews!

REMEMBRAND:

Come visit the Helms Bakery Museum at The Antique Guild in the historic Helms Building at 3225 Helms Ave., between Venice & Washington Blvds.

ST. AUGUSTINE CHURCH HISTORY EXHIBITED

by Ross Hawkins

Paul Pitti, who was so instrumental in setting up the "Cowboy Heroes of Culver City" exhibit for the "Sneak Preview" Expo, also put together a display commemorating St. Augustine Catholic Church (also see "Historic Sightings") and one of its most beloved priests, Monsignor D'Oonnell, pastor of the church from 1923 until 1958.

In 1883, Senior J. Francisco Figueroa donated acreage to the Roman Catholic Church of Los Angeles on which the first church was built in 1887. Built as a mission church to serve the people of the present Roman Catholic parish of St. Augustine is a Mediterranean Gothic structure, set near some 1,200 people. It has served the City and the Western City and the western area for over 75 years with a parish that includes some 2,000 families. St. Augustine Church today.

The Historic Site Committee has the honor of being designated City landmarks as worthy of public recognition. All nominations are invited; the site must be of at least 50 years old and it must be deemed of historical significance. The second was specifically designed to allow a certain amount of leeway when making such selections as a myriad of considerations come into play when considering a site for designation.

We encourage open dialogue with our readers and welcome recommendations of people or places for consideration. To participate in researching historic backgrounds, please contact Sandy Burton at (310) 641-5484.

WARNER BROS. MUSEUM TOUR

On October 18, Society members and their guests were treated to a private tour of the Warner Bros. Museum in Burbank. Wonderful film artifacts and memorabilia from the City of Culver and personal mementos from the likes of Errol Flynn and Ronald Reagan are on display. We thank Sol and Martha Sigall, who are donors with the Museum, for arranging this special tour for the Society.

CCHS BEQUEST BENEFITS MUSEUM ENDOWMENT

Consider remembering the Historical Society in your will with a bequest of monies and/or memorabilia. Your gifts will help us build the Culver City Heritage Museum and secure its future and the legacy of our City. For more information on how you can help, call the Society at (310) 838-1073.

POST-TRAVEL REPORT

By Ross Hawkins

We were at St. Augustine. Msgr. D’Oonnell developed a close personal relationship with the community, themgul who ran MGM, and served as technical director on films made at the studio when the Catholic Church was involved. Many of the school children at St. Augustine worked as extras in MGM films.

Paul recalled, "MGM was extremely generous to the parish. When the church would hold its fundraising barbecues, the studio would help with the event, donating large tents and the food." Paul also remembers playing an altar boy along with Fred Machado in MGM’s 1936 version of Romeo & Juliette. ‘We were altar boys for Norma Shearer’s funeral procession which took three days to film and we were paid eleven dollars a day for the work which was good money in 1936," laughed Paul.

St. Augustine Church c. 1920s

The La Ballona Valley, it was small wooden chapel, seating 200 people.

The locals traditionally attended services at the La Ballona Methodist Church in Sawtelle or St. Monica Church in Santa Monica, and the new church was named St. Augustine, for St. Monica’s son. It was the first church in what was later to become Culver City.

The original title of this allotment of Rancho La Ballona was passed to Rita Bolter de Agualar, widow of Macedonio Agualar, in 1871. In 1883, when she made a gift of property to her grandson, Francisco Figueroa, he sold some of the property to E.H. Owen and Albert Rimpaux. However, he kept a portion of the land and gave a portion to the Catholic Church.

In 1919, St. Augustine became an official parish of the Order of the Holy Angels. Diocese. In 1922, the chapel was enlarged to seat 500 people. In 1939, a new church was constructed to seat 700 people. It was dedicated in 1937 and now serves as the parish hall.
**THE LAST PICNIC**
by Margaret Farnum

Emotions have always been evident, but the tighter handshakes or longer hugs, the greater effort to greet EVERYONE, the stories that flowed throughout the gathering of the "family," and the final farewells were more poignant than in years past. But then, there is only one last picnic!

The time was right. August 26, 2000 seemed the appropriate time: It was the 70th Anniversary of the founding of Helms Bakeries; it was the new millennium; and the Olympic Games were about to kick-off in Sydney, Australia. The Anniversary was acknowledged with Culver City Mayor David Huppman and City Councilpersons Alan Corwin, Carol Gross and Steve Rose presenting a scroll to Paul Helms III, his wife Denise and daughters Kristin and Kimberly. Wally Marks and son Wally, Jr., (present owners of Helms Bakery Property, the former Helms Athletic Foundation Bldg. and the old Beacon Laundry facilities) and Lee Bixler, (owner of The Antique Guild which lies within the historic fabric of the Helms Building) were greeting the guests while displaying renovation plans for the historic Beacons building which will incorporate the Helms legacy of baking and athletics. Film producer and Culver City Historical Society Vice President, Museum, Ross Hawkins, was on hand to record the occasion for posterity.

With the Sydney Games about to begin, we all felt it was appropriate that the "last picnic" should be held in an Olympic year as it was the 1932 Olympic Games in Los Angeles that catapulted Paul H. Helms into the athletic limelight. Helms was designated as Olympic Baker for the world's finest athletes. Recipes were secured from the various countries so their team members would have bread from home. And so Helms produced the "Bread of Champions."

Involvement with the Olympics increased Helms' love of athletics, and when Bill Schroeder approached him in 1936 with a vision of a Hall of Fame and awards program for athletes, he was very receptive. The Helms Athletic Foundation was born on October 16, 1936 - the year of the Xth Olympiad.

Approximately 135 attendees answered the Committee's final whistle. During the special ceremonies in tribute to the Helms Family, the long-established "Picnic Committee" was thanked including Charlie Voss of the engineering department, who with Bill Schroeder, Buddy Dyer of the Helms Athletic Foundation and Syd Kronenthal, retired Superintendent of Culver City's Human Resources, served on the Committee since the Bakery closed in 1968. Bill's daughter and son-in-law, Jan and Bruce Iversen, were also on hand.

Having worked at the Helms Athletic Foundation for Bill Schroeder, I was taken into coming aboard the Committee by Buddy, Charlie and Syd in the 1980s, shortly after Bill's death, as did Thora Dyer after Buddy's passing. I clearly remember when the bakery closed. The feeling of kinship among the employees was such that everyone wanted to continue the "company picnic" that had been initiated in the early years by Paul H. Helms, and continued by Paul H. Helms, Jr. Thereafter, the picnics became reunions, with Paul III and his wife and children continuing to help plan these annual events.

Held for many years at the Veteran's Memorial Park, details for the picnic's last hurrah were worked out with Lee Bixler and the Wally Marks family to hold the event within the old Bakery site itself. In the garage area adjoining the Antiquite Guild, the Santa Maria Barbecue Caterers cooked chicken and ribs in a chuckwagon outside the doors. The guests could visit, tour their old stamping grounds, and enjoy "breaking bread" together under the Helms roof.

Olga Connolly, gold medalist in the 1956 Olympics in Melbourne and competitor in four Olympics, was on hand with her son Mark and grandson to thank the Helms Family for the wonderful support the Athletic Foundation gave to struggling athletes through the years, 1936 through 1968. Bowen Stafford, silver medalist in swimming at the Olympics in Helsinki, also expressed his gratitude for his own Helms Award, remarking upon the generosity of Bill Schroeder and the Helms organization in underwriting the honors and programs for athletes here and around the world.

There was 94-year young Lillian Klohs, who met her husband Leonard while working for Helms. Lillian flew in from Oregon with her son and daughter to visit the "shrine" and once more greet co-workers. Other familiar Helms names among the guests were Grant Koch, Al Ondrovcich, and J.C. Garrison from Arizona. Loyal co-workers Don Sterling, Lee Harwell, Marvin Riemath, Jim Williams, Doralee Durst and Jan Sturgeon came from closer to home.

When the speakers finished and the last hugs were shared, the final, bitter sweet moment and all the moments of the past, entered our "Helms Memory Book" to be cherished always.

In a time of impersonal corporate takeovers with very little thought to the worker's well-being, the Helms Bakery is an amazing story of how one man's family started a business during the depression, and attained international success, not only through expertise and hard work, but through the genuine caring and compassion for its workers. An enduring loyalty, respect and gratitude for a meaningful way of living has lasted and lived through its "company picnic."

As someone was heard to say, "The journey through life as a Helmsman, was a wonderful trip!"

***

Ms. Farnum is the Chief Administrative Officer for the Los Angeles Coliseum Commission.
Culver City
"Heart of Screenland"
Custom Throw

The Culver City Historical Society has designed a custom “throw” blanket which will surely become a treasured and collectible keepsake.

The design captures the spirit of Culver City - "The Heart of Screenland" - with the depiction of various historical landmarks and elements unique to this area. It is created from a selection of historical photos chosen to highlight the City’s heritage, and is woven in blue and natural. The Society’s nine designated Historic Sites are pictured, including the City Hall, the Citizen Building, the Hall Building, and the Helms Bakery. Five historic film studios are represented including the famous MGM colonnade on Washington Blvd.

Created by Hudson & Co., these throws are made of 100% cotton, Jacquard woven in the U.S.A., preshrunk, color-fast and machine washable. Measuring approximately 48 x 67 inches and fringed on all four sides, these throws are beautiful, practical and affordable at $40.00 each.

The Society is proud to offer these throws to commemorate our City’s heritage and all surplus proceeds will go to the Culver City Heritage Museum Capital Campaign.

I would like to support the Culver City Historical Society and order [ ] CCHS Throws @ $40.00 each for a total of $ [ ]

Please make checks payable to The Culver City Historical Society and mail to:
The Culver City Historical Society - THROWS
P.O. Box 3428
Culver City, CA 90231-3428

Name: ____________________________
Address: ____________________________
City: __________________ State: __________ Zip: __________
Telephone: __________________________ Email: __________________________

For further information, call Reba Yudess at (310) 391-7031.

The Culver City Historical Society 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 for future generations.
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**

- Benefactor ($1000)
- Family Lifetime Member ($500)
- Patron Member ($100)
- Family Member ($25)
- Individual Member ($15)
- Corporate Sponsor ($500)
- Individual Lifetime Member ($250)
- Business Member ($50)
- Organization ($15)
- Student Member ($5)

Please make checks payable to **The Culver City Historical Society** and mail to P.O. Box 3428, Culver City, CA 90231-3428. For further information, call (310) 838-1073.

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

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**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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**Culver City Historical Society**

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