Culver Historical Highlights
Volume 34 No. 1 Published by the Culver City Historical Society Winter 2013

HAPPY NEW YEAR ~ 2013!
A “RAINBOW” RISES ABOVE CULVER CITY

COLUMN ONE
CCHS eSHOP

The Culver City Historical Society is delighted to announce that the CCHS online merchandise shop – eShop – will become live at the beginning of 2013.

The blankets, notecards, umbrellas and license plate frames that are such fixtures behind the desk at the ARC, and are staples in our own gift-giving, are now available for purchase via the web!

There will also be a link to the store from our website: www.culvercityhistoricalsociety.org.

Please share this information with friends and family who have possibly moved out of the city, state, country, etc., and are not able to visit the ARC on the first and third Saturdays of the month. Soon they can buy pieces of Culver City history wherever they may be.

Special thanks go to the team that worked so hard to make this a reality: Winston Gieseke, Adrienne Bernardin and Michele Cerra Lachoff (from the Ways and Means Subcommittee); Cheryl Bernardin, Matt Bernardin, and Kevin Lachoff (from the sub-Subcommittee); Joy Jacobs, Julie Lugo Cerra, and Louise Coffey-Webb (from the focus group); and the friendly staff at GoDaddy.com.

SONY PICTURES UNVEILS CULVER CITY LANDMARK “RAINBOW”
New Public Art Installation Soars Above Historic Lot

Sony Pictures Studios and the city of Culver City unveiled “Rainbow,” a public art installation by American sculptor Tony Tasset.

Soaring 94 feet high, just beyond the Madison Street entrance to Studio’s historic lot, “Rainbow” is a multi-colored steel arc 188 feet across.

For the concept of “Rainbow,” Tasset was inspired by multiple factors including rainbows as a symbol for imagination and optimism. The work references “The Wizard of Oz” film, which was shot on the former MGM lot (now Sony Pictures Studios) in Culver City in the late 1930s.

“As part of our commitment to this “community and Culver City’s ‘1% for Arts’ requirement, we are proud to bring Tony’s work to life on our lot,” remarked Michael Lynton, CEO of Sony Entertainment, Inc. Sony Pictures Co-Chairman Amy Pascal added, “Rainbow is big and fun; it makes you smile. We’re thrilled to celebrate the incredible history of entertainment, this city and our lot.”

January 16th General Membership Meeting

Please note: Frank Billecci’s lecture “Irene’s MGM Years” has been postponed. Instead, we have a very special event:

Special Guest: Jerome “Jerry” Ackerman, Noted Artist of Mid-Century Design

The Culver City Historical Society Winter General Membership Meeting will be held on Wednesday, January 16th 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 Culver City designer Jerome Ackerman who will discuss his life with his late wife and collaborator, Evelyn Ackerman, in conversation with gallery director Gerard O’Brien of Reform Gallery. (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,

This Fall we enjoyed a fascinating presentation at our October General Meeting by Jim Lamm, President of the Ballona Creek Renaissance, who discussed the natural history of our communal "backyard" as well as the wonderful improvements to the "human" portion of the Creek, which is now quite the destination for hikers and cyclists.

Also in October, Costume Chair Sharon Shore and I had fun at the 7th Annual Los Angeles Archives Bazaar. We saw many friends, old and new, and were fascinated by the number of interesting groups dedicated to preserving all manner of local Southern California phenomena. It was held in the stunningly beautiful Doheny Library on the USC campus. I recommend attending next year for sure.

Our Reel Culver City columnist Marc Wanamaker said goodbye to his sweet 96-year old mother, Edith, in December, and we all wish him well as he gathers back his own life again.

Culver City also lost a significant artist, Evelyn Ackerman, a long-time resident known to many in the Society, and a colleague from my LACMA days. It is fitting and special that her husband, Jerry Ackerman, will be our featured guest during our January 16th annual business meeting. We look forward to seeing you then, if not before.

Be well and see you soon,

P.S. Please remember to renew your membership for 2013 as your dues help us to continue all our programs - our lectures, tours, meet-and-greets, and more.....

GIVE THE "GIFT OF HISTORY!"
Consider giving the “Gift of History” to your family and friends for any occasion – and use the new CCHS eShop online in the new year: www.cchsstore.com.

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.

The CCHS Newsletter is published quarterly.
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Contributing Writers: Marc Wanamaker, Sharon Stone
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Editor’s Column

Hard to believe that it’s a new year – 2013 !!!

With hosting many visitors from around the country as well as around the world (notably, our Sister City from Kaizuka, Japan); conducting city tours for students and guests (like the “Tiger” Cub Scouts); and providing assistance in many valuable historic research projects – from public officials (for the CC Metro Station) to independent writers and scholars – the Society continues to be an academic and active community center.

But what a “community” we have! I have long told folks wherever I go that Culver City is the “hub of the world,” and, after giving a bit of our unique history, I have made many “believers.”

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

Renew Your CCHS Membership

As January is CCHS Membership Renewal, we hope you will renew now 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)
Harry Culver, the developer of the future Culver City, needed an economic base for his new city he planned. Culver offered Ince land and plenty of space to develop a film industry in the new town. Ince’s parent company, The New York Motion Picture Corporation (NYMPC), put up the money to build a modern studio on Washington Boulevard which opened in 1915. The well-known Colonnade entry is one of Culver City’s designated “Historical Landmarks.” This studio became the Goldwyn Studio in 1919 and by 1924 had become the famous Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer (MGM) Studios.

By 1916, the NYMPC was affiliated with the Triangle Film Corporation, and for two years the company was very successful until it’s principle directors – D. W. Griffith, Thomas Ince and Mack Sennett – left the company.

**CULVER OFFERS INCE LAND IN CULVER CITY**

By 1918 after WWI, Ince was looking for another studio site to be his own studio lot. With the demise of the Triangle, Harry Culver offered another deal with Ince to keep him and his productions in Culver City.

A plot of land was found to the east of the former Ince Studio on Washington Blvd. at what is now Ince Boulevard. A new studio administration building was designed in the classical style reminiscent of Virginia’s Mount Vernon facing Washington Blvd...

Ince came to Los Angeles from New York in 1911 to head up the Bison Film Company that had come to Los Angeles in 1909. It was thesecond film company to build a studio in Los Angeles after the Selig Polyscope Company which had been in Los Angeles as early as 1907.

Selig opened the first permanent studio in Los Angeles in Edendale (on Glendale Blvd. in Echo Park) in 1909. The Bison Company came to Edendale and opened their first studio down the block in 1909 as well.

By 1911, the Bison Company, under the direction of Thomas Ince, moved to Santa Monica to establish “Incerville” where Sunset Blvd. and Pacific Coast Highway intersect.

**INCEVILLE GROWS AND NEEDS MORE SPACE – INCE MEETS HARRY CULVER**

By 1915, Ince had outgrown “Incerville” which had predominantly been a studio producing western and Indian genre films. At this time, Ince was producing war films, dramas and comedies that required a more factory-made production design, needing more space and modern stages and equipment that Incerville did not have available.

• Bronson Avenues, beginning sometime around 1912. He built a beautiful Craftsman style house and compound which included several office buildings, tennis courts and a swimming pool.

Since “Incerville” was so far away from Hollywood, Ince built another house high on a hill overlooking Incerville off of what is now Sunset Blvd. in the Pacific Palisades district.


Ince lived there briefly until his death in 1924, the same year the family moved in. He died in his bed there with his family in attendance. The house was later sold to his first mentor Carl Laemmle, the founder of Universal Pictures Corporation and Ince’s first employer in the film industry.
THE YEAR 2012 IN REVIEW ..... 

WINTER

2012 began with the Installation of new CCHS Officers on January 18 with LOUISE COFFEY-WEBB as the Society’s 12th President, heading the new Board for the 2012 – 2014 term. The dinner event was held at the historic Culver Studios in downtown Culver City.

Society Designates Veterans Memorial Building as CCHS Historic Site #13. The building, located at the SW corner of Culver Blvd. and Overland Ave., is one of the most often-used structures in the city, and has had a vibrant history which is noted on the bronze plaque set in the front of the building.

SPRING

KNX Radio spotlights Culver City on its March 9th broadcast of their “KNX On Your Corner” program. KNX host Chris Sedens broadcasted live from the historic Culver Hotel, after earlier interviews with CCHS members at the ARC and around town, as well as CC Mayor Mehaul O’Leary and other locals.

City Tavern restaurant held a Benefit fundraiser for the CC Historical Society on the occasion of its First Anniversary on April 3. From the Rush Street restaurant guys – Ken Kaufman and Brian Mc Kearney – comes their newest Culver City venue, an “old school” tavern.

April General Membership Meeting hosts “Broadway Melody: The Songs and Stories.” The program, presented by CCHS members, tenor Winston Gieseke and pianist Stephen Fry, featured the history, music, songs and stories from the popular MGM Broadway Melody musical films first produced in 1929 in Culver City – the “Heart of Screenland.”

SUMMER

July General Membership Meeting is Annual “Picnic in the Park” at Veterans Memorial Park Park. Again catered by Culver City’s own Santa Maria BBQ restaurant, owner Jim Rodrigues did his magic at the barbecue grill, and guests were also treated to the Razzmatazz Dixieland jazz ensemble. It was great fun for all!

Founding CCHS President Cathy Zermeno is honored at Fiesta La Ballona. Ms. Zermeno was the first President of the Culver City Historical Society (1980-82), and former chairperson of Fiesta La Ballona (1987). She was honored for her contributions to preserving the history of Culver City and the Fiesta.
Culver City Metro Station opens and is dedicated on June 20. The Expo Line Culver City Station is located in the heart of Culver City at the intersection of Washington and National Blvds. Transportation has always played a key role in our City’s development, as founder Harry Culver stated in his plans for a new city, “All Roads lead to Culver City – the home city!”

Society celebrates Culver City’s 95th Anniversary with a program of “Meet Me in Culver City” at the historic Culver Hotel, with special appearance by legendary actress MARGARET O’BRIEN. On September 23rd, Ms. O’Brien – the biggest child star throughout the 1940s and a number one box office attraction – was presented a Commendation by the City of Culver City for her long and illustrious film career that continues to today.

October General Membership Meeting hosts Jim Lamm, President of the Ballona Creek Renaissance. A CCHS member, Mr. Lamm narrated a virtual tour of the creek and its 130 sq.-mi. watershed from the hills to the bay. Entitled “Connecting Creek and Community, Ballona Creek and its Watershed – Past, Present and Future,” it is a multi-faceted story about people, places and processes that included personal reflections and BCR vignettes.

The Wende Museum of Cold War artifacts to move into the former CC National Guard Armory on Culver Blvd near CCHS and the Mayme Clayton Library, creating an Historical Hub in Culver City. The CCHS has long been a supporter of this move, bringing more history and visitors not only to the Wende Museum, but also to the many local Culver City sites. Executive Director Dr. Justinian Jampol has spoken to the Society about these plans, and has raised wonderful hopes and expectations for future cooperative events and programs.

~ THE ACKERMAN ARTISTRY ~

Jerome “Jerry” and Evelyn Ackerman were a driving force in the Mid-century Modern movement of California.

For 50 years, Los Angeles-based artist/designers 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.

They made utilitarian art for the home, such as tiles, vases, wall hangings, wood panels, hardware, and mosaic tables, and their works have been exhibited most recently in exhibitions at LACMA, the Craft and Folk Art Museum and the Mingei Museum in San Diego. Their ERA Industries Inc. is still a registered business in Culver City where they have lived since 1956.

Among her many accomplishments, Evelyn was one of the founding Arts Committee members, and responsible for placing Gwynn Murrill’s Cougars I and II at Hannum & Slauson.

Don’t miss the opportunity to hear Jerry Ackerman talk about this amazing husband and wife collaboration in conversation with Gerard O’Brien, Director of Reform Gallery at the January 16, 2013 General Membership Meeting.
**NEWS FROM THE COSTUME CHAIR . . .**

by Sharon Shore
Costume Committee Chair

**COSTUME IDENTIFICATION OFTEN DIFFICULT**

As some of you might know that clues to the production history of many costumes in our MGM collection can be found in the hand written cloth tags that we find sewn inside. The tags are inscribed in ink with various information such as a film production number, the name of the actor who wore the costume, size measurements, an original inventory number and even a dry cleaning number.

The production number is especially important because it can be referenced in directories of production numbers paired with film titles.

**EMERALD GREEN SILK VELVET GOWN ON DISPLAY NEEDS ID**

Unfortunately, not all of our MGM costumes have any or all of the above tag information. A case in point is the spectacular emerald green silk velvet and ivory taffeta gown featured in this season’s costume display.

The gown is reminiscent of an 1830s era evening dress with fitted velvet “outer” dress including a wide shawl collar ending at the waist in points marked by silver beaded buttons. It is open on the front to reveal an ivory “inner” panel and matching ivory sleeves.

The round puff shaped sleeves, aptly called “beret sleeves”, are supported inside by a clever combination of celluloid ribs and pleated organy. Ruched green taffeta with pinked edges is applied to the cream silk front inset panel and sleeves in a lattice pattern. Rows of ruched and pinked taffeta in fawn color emboss the velvet skirt and collar edge.

A careful examination of voluminous layers of linings reveals tags that tell us only the size, Bust 34, Waist 26 and an inventory number #65. Additional information about the film origin for this very romantic and sumptuous silk gown would be extremely welcome!

**OTHER COSTUME ON DISPLAY HAS IDENTIFICATION**

In contrast, thanks to label tags we have lots of information on the other costume on display. This dance costume with renaissance period details includes a deep blue tunic with short sleeves and “slashed” details and gold metallic embroidered belt.

The tunic is worn over a lilac colored shirt with pointed collar and long sleeves.

The costume not only has a tag identifying Helen Wood as the actor but also a tag with the film production number for *Give a Girl a Break*.

This romantic musical comedy features dance scenes by Marge and Gower Champion, Bob Fosse and Helen Wood and stars Debbie Reynolds. The costumes are by designer Helen Rose.

In the film story Broadway producers vie for their favorite performers, who are showcased in a series of musical and dance scenes, in order to chose a replacement to star in an upcoming Broadway production.

*Give a Girl a Break* was filmed in the Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Studios at 10202 W. Washington Blvd. and truly was “made in Culver City”. It was released on December 3, 1953.

**COSTUME CARE TIP FOR WINTER**

One of the unwanted surprises following those special holiday dinners is discovering drops and dribs of candle wax stuck on your holiday clothing and linens, whether it be a favorite tie, a new silk scarf or heirloom lace tablecloth.

Yes, grandmother did say to apply a hot iron over brown paper to melt and disperse the wax onto the paper. However, all too often the result is a stiff spot of wax residue absorbed into the cloth or worse yet, a burn spot.

Give this method a try instead. Tightly wrap an ice cube in a thin towel and apply it to the wax spots until they are frozen. Then gently off the frozen bits of wax with tweezers.

Give a Girl a Break

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**SMILE POWER**

“There are hundreds of languages in the world, but a smile speaks them all.”

“Smiles are great investments; the more you collect, the better you feel.”

~ ~ ~

**MARK YOUR “2013” CALENDAR**

| DEC. 29: “MADE IN CULVER CITY” EVENT |
| JAN. 12: SISTER CITIES 50TH ANNIV. |
| JAN. 16: CCHS WINTER GEN. MEETING |

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 CCHS: info@CulverCityHistoricalSociety.org or Tel: 310.253.6941. Or visit our web: www.culvercityhistoricalsociety.org

**2013 ARC Open Dates**

1st & 3rd Saturdays, 1-3 pm

Call to confirm dates: 310.253.6941

Jan. 5 Jan. 27 Jan. 19
Feb. 2 Feb. 16 Mar. 2
Mar. 16 Apr. 6 Apr. 20

(Also by appointment)

**Welcome New CCHS Members**

- Denice Renteria
- Regina Klein
- Bob Wayne
- Alex King

**Sunshine Wishes**

Warm wishes go out to Stan Abrams and Hope Parrish – be well soon!

**Please Note:**

The revision of the By-laws of the Culver City Historical Society will be available for review at the ARC and at the CCHS website: www.culvercityhistoricalsociety.org

A vote to approve the By-laws will be held at the January 16 meeting.

Left: Unidentified Emerald Green Silk Velvet Gown currently on display at the ARC.
An ARC Update

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

Research Projects for Students and a Popular TV Show

We have enjoyed assisting student researchers, from elementary through grad school, on a variety of topics. Special thanks to members Jean Barker, June Caldwell, and Maxine Mytar, whose movie industry background was invaluable to numerous film students. Movie studio strikes was the primary subject.

Also, staff from the Ricki Lake Show, which films at the Culver Studios, visited the ARC for background work on their HalLOWEEN show.

Sister City Guests from Kaizuka Japan

Joy Jacobs and I were delighted to show off some early Sister City documents in October for the visiting Mayor of Kaizuka, our sister city in Japan. And we look forward to a special open Saturday on January 12, 2013, to help celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Culver City Sister City program. Join us from 1-3pm.

Thomas Ince Biographer Brian Taves Speaks at ARC

The ARC opened on December 6th for a “Meet and Greet” for Ince biographer, Brian Taves, who grew up in the southland, but has been working for the Library of Congress for many years. We were able to give Brian a tour around Culver City, which included a trip to Sony Pictures and The Culver Studios. (Special thanks to both.) Thomas Ince was instrumental in building those studios, both of which are still standing.

“Tiger” Cub Scouts Enjoy Downtown City Tour

It was a real pleasure to take local “Tiger” Cub Scouts for a historic walk around downtown Culver City on Sunday, November 11th. Special thanks to the Culver Hotel for letting us drop in and show off the historic hotel built by our city founder. The boys posed for a photo at the bronze sculpture, “A Moment in Time” in front of the Culver Hotel.

“Made in Culver City” Set for December 29 at Vets

A selection of our oversize movie photos are on permanent loan to the City of Culver City. They are up in time for the December 29th “Made in Culver City” screening, to be held in the Veterans Memorial Auditorium, which honors the City’s 95th Anniversary.

The ARC will open that afternoon from 1-3pm before the screening.

ARC Projects Moving Forward

Our cataloging is a slow process but we are making good progress filling the flat files thanks to Bill Barnett.

Our Living History Committee is working with the CCUSD Ass’t. Supt., Educational Services, Eileen Carroll, to pull together some support for our local schools, like Living History and other options.

Displays in the ARC have been well received, especially the dress from Meet Me in St. Louis and the photos from Margaret O’Brien’s private collection. The invitations, designed by Kevin Lachoff were a nice background for the exhibit.

A new exhibit will be in place for the January annual meeting. Think Harry Culver’s birthday and … just come and see for yourselves!!!

A Call for Docents

We are beginning docent training. If you are interested in leading walking tours in the downtown area, or ARC tours, please contact Julie Lugo Cerra, with convenient days and times for practice. (310 558-3818). We need you!

~ Julie

CCHS Archives & Resource Center (ARC)
Veterans Memorial Building • 4117 Overland Ave., Culver City, CA
Open 1st and 3rd Saturdays, 1-3 pm, 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

Above top: John Williams & Regina Klein, newest Cultural Affairs Commissioners.
Above bottom: Oversize movie photo of the Wizard of Oz.
**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!*

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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.

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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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