CC COUNCIL PROCLAMATION RECOGNIZES MAY AS “HISTORIC PRESERVATION MONTH” & CCHS 30TH ANNIVERSARY

CULVER CITY COUNCIL PRESENTS THE CCHS WITH A PROCLAMATION RECOGNIZING MAY AS HISTORICAL PRESERVATION MONTH AND THE SOCIETY’S 30TH ANNIVERSARY

At the May 3rd meeting of the Culver City Council, the CC Historical Society was presented with a Proclamation in honor of May being “Historic Preservation Month,” and for the Society’s continued work in this area.

It was significant too that the presentation ceremony also honored the Society’s 30th Anniversary.

CCHS HISTORIC SITE #12: CULVER CITY’S FIRST PARK

by Julie Lugo Cerra

The unveiling of the marker at our first park in Culver City was supported by the attendance of more than 100 locals, including local officials, members, neighbors and city staff.

Mrs. Lois Carlson Bridges, the widow of Dr. Paul Carlson, made the trip from her home in the San Diego area, and gave the invocation, which certainly enhanced the ceremony. She was accompanied by David and Polly Brown. David, a 1961 Culver High graduate, had suggested the marking of the park some time ago, so people would know about the man for whom it was renamed in 1964.

Since the Society has traditionally told the story of each site from early times, we wanted to make sure we had as much information as possible. The research, mostly done within our ranks, was supplemented by Lois and David as well.

(Cont’d. pg. 4)

CCHS Annual “Picnic in the Park”

- JULY 21ST GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING -

This year’s annual CCHS meeting and picnic will be catered on-site by Culver City’s own Santa Maria BBQ restaurant. Jim Rodrigues himself, owner of the Santa Maria BBQ, will be doing the barbequing. And the Razzmatazz Dixieland jazz ensemble will provide some great entertainment! (See the “Picnic” insert for reservations information.)

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. AND, there will be the announcement of the winner of the Society’s logo competition!

The ARC will be open for brief tours after dining (remember: no food allowed in the ARC). The public is invited and students are encouraged to attend. For more information, please call the Society at (310) 253-6941 or email us at info@CulverCityHistoricalSociety.org SEE YOU THERE!

Left photo: Mrs. Lois Carlson Bridges and CC Mayor Christopher Armenta stand by the “Dr. Paul Carlson Memorial Park” sign with the unveiled marker beneath.

Right photo: Dr. Paul Carlson on the cover of Time Magazine (1964).
Notes from Your City Historian
by Julie Lugo Cerra

RESEARCH DEMANDS ACCURACY

There are so many avenues to travel while gathering information. Accuracy is paramount, but not so easy to achieve. This is why we use multiple sources of information. In earlier times, we had publications, public records – and people. Library visits were made in person.....

WHEN MEMORIES DIFFER....

One of my first jobs in the Society was to write a tour of the city. I began my research in printed material, plotted points, and then went on to interviews. One day, I remember taking two lovely ladies – grand dames of Culver City – on a ride to “pick their brains.” Both were living in Culver City in the 1920s, so they offered a wealth of colorful information. But when we got to a particular block in downtown, their memories of a dairy were just a little “off” and I was ever so grateful one was seated in the front seat and the other in the back seat. These mild-mannered octogenarians almost came to blows! In the long run their invaluable memories pointed my search to old directories which pinpointed that dairy!

MICROFILM STILL VALUABLE!

Our ARC Saturdays (and by appointment) provide some great fun for researchers. The bound copies of the Evening Star News, for example, promote “life and times” discussions about “the olden days.”

While researching one issue, you can almost count on finding the answer to another question. In addition, we have additional newspapers on microfilm, but our reader has been a little adjuster. That brought viewing “into focus.” Bill Hahn recently used the catalogued microfilm to supplement his bound newspaper searches.

Editor’s Column

It’s been a wonderfully busy time for the Society! The work accomplished by our terrific volunteers, guided by a committed and encouraging Board and Committee Chairs, has proven to be a revelation. Going through decades-old newspapers methodously and painstakingly has turned up wonderful facts that heretofore have been largely unknown and/or given little light.

Much more history lies ahead and we hope you’ll come out and join in the fun of discovery!

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

Culver Historical Highlights
PO Box 3428 * Culver City, CA * 90231-3428
Tel: 310.253-6941 · Fax: 310.253.6942
email: info@CulverCityHistoricalSociety.org

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.
Editor & Publisher…………………………….Judy Stangler
Contributing Writers…………………………….Julie Lugo Cerra
Marc Wanamaker, Steve Newton
Printed by………………………………….Premier Print & Design

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Joy Jacobs ………………………………..Public Relations
Judy Stangler …………………….Newsletter
Julie Lugo Cerra ………………..Historic Sites
Steven J. Rose …………………….Government Liaison
Louise Coffey-Webb ……………………..Costumes
Martha & Sol Sigall ……………………Production Photos
Hope Parrish …………..Projects Research
Fred Yglesias ………………………………..Photographer

Contributing Writers……………..Julie Lugo Cerra
Editor & Publisher……………….Judy Stangler

RESEARCH DEMANDS ACCURACY

Under the guidance of our VP, Museum / ARC, Winston Gieseke, and the help of our great volunteers, we have uncovered many interesting and unique items in our Archives.

I’d like to tell you about a very remarkable document that is currently on display at the ARC: a publication of the Culver City Evening Star News, dated Friday, August 18, 1944, called “The Honor Roll.”

It is a special edition of the newspaper that pictured and listed all of the men and women from Culver City who served in World War II. It lists their addresses, their school affiliations and where and how they were serving.

I urge you all to come see this significant document. If you or a family member or friend are one of these special people, we would very much like to interview you for our oral history project. Or if you know of any friends or family who may be included in “The Honor Roll,” please contact them as well.

“The Honor Roll” as well as the 1928 newspaper with a feature story on Culver City’s “First Park” – which was designated CCHS Historic Site #12 (see story on pg. 1) – will be available for viewing at our Archives on the first and third Saturdays of the month, and by appointment.

And don’t forget our annual picnic on Wednesday, July 21st. This year, it will be catered for the first time — and we will have a great Dixieland band!

Come share the fun with your family and neighbors.

Sincerely, Stu Freeman

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Sincerely, Stu Freeman
CULVER CENTER – 1961

CULVER CENTER STREET TURNED BACK TO 1940s

MGM Studios used the Culver Center shopping district for the political drama, Ada, starring Dean Martin as gubernatorial candidate “Bo Gillis” and Susan Hayward as his supportive wife, “Ada.”

Although the film took place in a small town in the Deep South in the late 1940s (and was loosely based on two-term Louisiana governor, Jimmie Davis), sharp-eyed readers will notice the tell-tale L.A.-based signage for “Culver Center Drugs” (above the “Bo Gillis” banner and below the “Market Basket” sign in the middle of the photo).

A VARIETY OF STORES

The shopping district, located near the intersection of Venice Boulevard and Overland Avenue, opened for business in September of 1949. Some of the new stores at that time included: Wellington Culver Center Drugs at 3839 Culver Center St., J. C. Penney’s department store at 3824 Culver Center St., and Mode O’ Day women’s store at 3847 Culver Center St.

MARKET BASKET EXPANDS

The Market Basket grocery store announced, “With the opening of our new super market in Culver Center, Market Basket enters for the first time in the Western Section of Los Angeles. This new store is one more step in the expansion program of this grocery chain.”

A NEW CONCEPT IN SHOPPING

Throughout the next twelve years, Culver Center lured major stores to Culver City. This was the original idea of many new shopping centers built after World War II. They would be modern, easy to get to with ample parking, advertising large clean stores.

By 1950, the W.T. Grant dime store opened at 3844 Culver Center St., along with some new stores advertising Culver City as a “Shopping Center” on the West Side of Los Angeles.

FIESTA LA BALLONA

In August of 1953, the Culver City La Ballona Valley Days celebrations and parade route went through Culver Center and one of the parade float winners was the Culver Center Float.

CELEBRATING ITS 12th ANNIVERSARY

By 1961 Martin’s Music opened at 3870 Culver Center St. along with Gallenkamp Shoes store.

On October 8, 1961, Culver Center celebrated its 12th Anniversary (1949-1961). This coincided with the MGM production of Ada, using Culver Center for its “main street.”

[For more information on the history of Culver Center, see http://www.culvercity.org/Visitors/CulverCityHistory/CulverCenter.aspx.]

“Historian ” (cont’d.)

Unfortunately, most researchers will not automatically check the next edition to make sure their subject was not erroneously reported.

The internet is a valuable source of information, but one has to pause and check. Some information is accessible from libraries, but there are other sources of information, like Wickipedia, the free encyclopedia, which includes unsubstantiated information presented like it was researched. It has a lot of erroneous information on Culver City, including the dates movie studios were established. IMDb is the international movie database which also allows people to add to their information, and it reminds me of those ladies and the dairy location – lots of discrepancies……so be careful!
“Historic Site #12 ” (cont’d.)

Marking historic sites was one of our Society’s first programs. This makes an even dozen! How does it happen? Our bylaws read:

Historic Sites Committee [is] “responsible for establishing the historic validity of sites proposed for marking for designating historic sites, and for arranging historical tours.”

Each president appoints a Historic Sites Chair, which is confirmed by a vote of the membership. Members are then asked and volunteer to serve. The president serves in an ad hoc capacity.

The Process:

- Criteria? Site is 50+ years old, with historic significance.
- Site is nominated.
- Research is completed.
- Board approves nomination.
- Property owner gives permission. (The City Manager and Director of Parks and Recreation were our contacts for Historic Site #12.)
- Wording is composed for the bronze plaque.
- Board approves final wording and unveiling date in concert with property owner.
- Budget is set for marker, invitations, postage, programs and other amenities.
- Order is submitted, with deposit, to the monument company, with information on the placement which affects the hardware needs. Sign-off returned draft/bronze is cast.
- Final payment upon possession of the marker.

Traditionally, the Culver City Historical Society’s practice has been to place very informative plaques intended to educate those who view them. We tell more of a story, and we show the name of the site, site number, give the history of the site, and end with the Society’s name and date, or season and year. Cost is a function of the size and number of letters.

The marking is a festive public gathering, attended by locals and their elected officials. The marker is covered after installation generally with plastic or paper until the day of the unveiling.

On the day of the unveiling, the marker is covered in cloth. In the early days, the cover was a handmade California state flag loaned to us by our Madrina, Clarita Marquez Young. Later, depending on the site, plain fabric or in the case of Camp Latham, bunting was used.

Depending on the site, the owner may host a reception, or in the case of the recent park marking, it was an opportunity for everyone to bring a picnic.

Who was involved in the marking of HS #12? Historic Sites Committee: Joy Jacobs, Marion Feingold, Stu Freeman, Bill La Pointe, Pam Robinson and myself. Pre- and post-publicity (Joy Jacobs) were integral to the success. Newsletter Chair/Editor, Judy Stangler, worked on newsletter coverage and the invitations, and Hope Parish broadened the research from her notes in early newspapers. For this event, we wanted to invite the neighbors, so Joy Jacobs, Fred Yglesias and Stu Freeman hand-dropped invitations around the park.

Kemp Monument Company is now in its second generation of ordering our plaques from the foundry. City Departments involved: City Clerk’s office, during the research stage; Parks and Recreation and Public Works were great to work with on the installation. Public Works made the monument and installed the marker in the concrete, and Parks and Rec. took care of the PA, flags, podium, reserving the park and other amenities.

Our official photographer, Fred Yglesias, with help from CCHS members like Kevin Lachoff, made sure we had a photo record of the event so Museum Chair Winston Gieseke could provide photos for post publicity.

Special thanks to CC Mayor Christopher Armenta, Councilmembers Jeff Cooper, Scott Malsin and Andy Weissman, who attended along with city commissioners and Pam Robinson and Bill and Kaye LaPointe.

Don’t miss the special exhibit at the ARC of the research and story of Historic Site #12 – the “First Park in Culver City.”
The Culver City Historical Society’s April 21st General Program Meeting was a wonderful musical tribute to the “Heart of Screenland,” with special guest, multi-talented singer/songwriter, Cali Rose. Toes were tapping and many joined in a general sing-along!

(L-R) Cali Rose at her keyboard. Cali giving a wonderfully entertaining musical salute to the “Songs of Culver City.” She playfully reminisced and asked “challenging” questions of the audience as to their memories of the “Heart of Screenland.

(Left photo) Among those enjoying the musical program of special guest, singer Cali Rose, is CCHS member Charles Rozaire (front center) who went to elementary school with past CCHS Treasurer Virgie Eskridge and became a noted archeologist, who headed the Natural History Museum. In the back row left, is the new CC Cultural Affairs Commissioner, Michelle Bernardin.

(Right photo): CCHS Treasurer Tami Eskridge in the background (L) enjoying the music. Seated in front of her (L-R) is Susan Diviak (who grew up with the Society – and has moved back to CC), the new commissioner to the CC Cultural Affairs Commission, Michelle Bernardin (a local CC girl & Culver High grad), and the Lachoff family (Kevin, Michele & Nicholas – our youngest member).

(Left photo) In May, at the request of CCHS member Laura Siegel, the Los Angeles County Bicycle Coalition asked the Society for a guided walking tour of the city which began at the Culver Hotel with Doug Newton (back to camera). Julie Lugo Cerra led the tour of about 30 members with help from Winston Gieseke and John Miraglia.

(Above right) Celebrating May as “Historic Preservation Month,” the walking tour of downtown Culver City included a visit to the Citizen Building (built in 1929). Owner Josetta Sbeglia (center facing forward) took the docent duty at her building to talk about historic preservation.
NEWS FROM THE COSTUME CHAIR . . .
by Louise Coffey-Webb
Costume Committee Chair

TIME TO CLEAN-OUT YOUR CLOSETS & GARAGES!
Summer is upon us and I, for one, am trying to clean out the quantities of “stuff” that seem to multiply mysteriously over the years in my garage. I unpack my summer clothes and look at them once more.

Do they still fit? Are they representative of who I am this year? Even though that garment used to be my absolute favorite – isn’t it a bit shabby after all these years?

All this evaluating got me thinking about the readers of this column and what YOU may have in your garage.

MIGHT THERE BE SOME MGM AUCTION ITEMS AROUND?
Although I moved here from England over three decades ago, I was not here for the legendary MGM auction. I have worked at various museums where donors have come in from time to time with items they purchased at the auction saying “it seemed like a good idea at the time!”

And actually it was, because now those objects have been saved from obscurity (as well as Halloween and the grand kids dress-up!), and will be catalogued, researched and preserved for current and future generations to enjoy.

So I am wondering if any of you have items in your garage that may be of interest to the Culver City Historical Society? We are particularly interested in costumes that were acquired at the MGM auction, or other costumes that you may have held onto, because you mother or grandmother worked in the industry, or perhaps you yourself were an actor and held onto a favorite character you played.

CCHS ARC DONATION POLICY
The policy of the Culver City Historical Society Archives and Resource Center (ARC) states that it “will gratefully accept donations that relate to local history.” However, “the Society reserves the right to decline donations deemed inappropriate to the enhancement of the collection.”

Each donor will receive an official letter of acknowledgement stating the CCHS is a charitable non-profit 501(c)3 organization, with our tax identification number listed along with an inventory or description of the donation.

As it is considered a conflict of interest for the CCHS to appraise your donation, please speak with your accountant about valuing your donation. The IRS often changes such details and sums under which donations need not have an official appraisal, which is why I advise professional advice in such situations.

ACADEMY AWARD WINNER
Here is a photo of a costume that was donated by Ann Bein to the Woodbury Fashion Study Collection, from the MGM auction. It is from the 1962 musical The Wonderful World of the Brothers Grimm starring Laurence Harvey & an all-star cast, and it won a costume Oscar © for Mary Wills.

Again, be reminded that costumes and other film artifacts should be pertinent to the local history of Culver City as well as having connections to our three majors and the minor studios which make us the “Heart of Screenland.”

Now, I wonder what you will discover in your “summer” cleaning…..

~ LC-W

MARK YOUR “2010” CALENDAR

AUG. 27-28: FIESTA LA BALLONA
THE ARC WILL BE OPEN (AUG. 28 & 29)

SEP. 20: CULVER CITY’S 93RD BIRTHDAY

AUG. 13:  ACADEMY AWARD WINNER

OCT. 23: “LA AS SUBJECT” (USC) - CCHS WILL AGAIN HAVE A TABLE

COSTUME CHAIR . . .

THE MAYE A. CLAYTON LIBRARY & MUSEUM
Free screenings of rare and historically significant films by and about African Americans will be presented on the fourth Saturday of every month at 4pm.

For more information: http://visitor.constantcontact.com/email.jsp?m=1103464048521

A Reminder:
RENEW CCHS MEMBERSHIPS!
by Lydia Spiegelman,
Membership Chair

The CCHS Membership renewals are due at the beginning of the year. This is a great Historical Society, wonderful things are happening and we want you all to be a part of it!

Please consider becoming a Patron, a Lifetime Member, a Corporate Sponsor or a Benefactor. Being a member of the Culver City Historical Society is more important and rewarding than ever before.

The 3rd Annual LA Heritage Day was Sunday, April 11, 2010 at the Heritage Square Museum in Pasadena. Once again, the CCHS had a table along with 75 heritage organizations – manned by our special events gurus, Karen Coyle and Fred Iglesias. It was another great outreach opportunity for the Society.

~ 6~
An ARC Update …..
by Winston Gieseke
Vice President, Museum/ARC

PROJECTS COMPLETED FOR SUMMER VISITORS TO ENJOY

Things are shaping up nicely this summer at the Archives & Resource Center (ARC).

Martha & Sol Sigall have recently completed an extensive project organizing the Society’s collection of MGM production photos. Extra special thanks go to Society member David Pelayo for providing an important piece of this puzzle in the form of a list of film titles that corresponded with the studio’s original production numbers.

As part of this project’s second phase, Jeanne Conklin and Tami Eskridge have begun cataloguing these valuable sets into the ARC’s database.

MICROFILM READER STILL USEFUL!

While we have had a microfilm reader for quite a while, it hasn’t been used as we did not have the techno experience til recently. Though it cannot print, we can now go through the film in our archives and see what we have more clearly. Others, like Bill Hahn (see page 2 photo), are looking forward to using this “old fashioned” machine to do their research.

ADDITIONS TO ARC’S COLLECTIONS

In addition to his valuable contribution to the production photos project, David Pelayo has generously donated an enormous 1962 MGM banner created to promote the studio’s remake of Mutiny on the Bounty. We hope to have this item on display at the ARC soon.

Adding to the photo collection of Rufus Harrington, who was in the MGM art dept & also active in the American Legion, his daughter, Nancy Draper, presented additional photos to this wonderful resource (see photo).

SOCIETY WEBSITE COMING SOON

In other news, I’m very pleased to report that we’re moving forward on the Society’s website, which is expected to launch sometime this summer. Look for it at www.culvercityhistoricalsociety.org for important events, updates, and general Society goings-on.

As always, the ARC will be open to the public on the first and third Saturdays of each month as well as by appointment. We look forward to seeing you there. If anyone is interested in volunteering, please drop us an e-mail at info@culvercityhistoricalsociety.org.

~ Winston

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
**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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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) 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.

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**Culver City Historical Society**

PO Box 3428 • Culver City, CA • 90231-3428