

Hollywood Heritage is a non-profit organization dedicated to preservation of the historic built environment in Hollywood and to education about the early film industry and the role its pioneers played in shaping Hollywood's history.

Hollywood Heritage Celebrates Community Partners At 25th Anniversary Gala



by Kay Tornborg

Perhaps our Honorees had been celebrated before but...*had they actually been thanked??* Think about what Hollywood might look like if they hadn't restored and/or renovated their sites. (Those of you who are thinking: PARKING LOTS!!! can go to your room; we'd love 'em, too, but not on historic sites). The legendary Hollywood lives on today largely because of these fantastical, imagination-laden, sites to which people flock from around the world, in the hope that *just by looking at them* they will learn something about the fabled events and people that once made up Hollywood's daily life before it morphed into the stuff of legends.

Nearly 250 of our members and friends gathered at the Music Box on Sunday, November 13th to celebrate the founding of Hollywood Heritage

25 years ago and to applaud those who had done so much since then to make Hollywood special: Bar-

bara Zicka Smith from Grauman's Egyptian Theatre/American Cinematheque; Ed Collins from the El

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Preservation Update

Florentine Gardens Saved

After two years of negotiations and a near lawsuit, this 1938 landmark (as cited in the 1985 Hollywood Redevelopment Plan) has been saved from demolition through the efforts of Hollywood Heritage and Councilman Eric Garcetti. The site at 5951-55 Hollywood Boulevard and the lot adjacent to the west were chosen for a new fire station after various unsuccessful attempts elsewhere.

The city had originally planned to purchase the lots and demolish the structures, including the Florentine

Gardens, despite the fact that there was no need to as enough land was being acquired to meet the requirements of the fire station, leave the Florentine Gardens intact, and still have several thousand square feet of land left over. Hollywood Heritage made this argument (see our web site for our response to the negative declaration for the Station No. 82, April 20, 2005) several times to the fire department, Councilman Garcetti, the neighborhood, and the project consultants.

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President's Message

25 Years? Seems Like Only Yesterday

by Fran Offenhauser

25 years of Hollywood Heritage! Can you believe it? Maybe this is a fitting closure. I have stepped off the stage as your President while Hollywood Heritage is celebrating a quarter century of preservation and accomplishments. 25 years ago I stepped on that stage by founding Hollywood Heritage—with Marian Gibbons, Mildred Heredeem, Christy McAvoy, and Susan St. Francis.

We had such energy, enthusiasm, vision, and zeal! We thought we were starting a “historical society”. But instead we plunged headlong into the minefields of preservation, convinced that once everyone saw the gems of architecture, streetscape, and history that were here in Hollywood, opposition would melt away. Instead we were writing checks, moving landmarks, pouring concrete, and bailing roof water on real buildings, not just encouraging our fellow citizens to do it! And we were running for political office on the Redevelopment Agency Committee, getting arrested at illegal demolition sites, calling press conferences, holding symposia, filing lawsuits.

Our “historical society” collided with reality.

You all know that this has been an amazing ride. Its hard to think back to the 1980's—remember before computers and web sites? The Chamber of Commerce was touting a “Hollywood of the 21st Century” that was sparkling faceless boxes of steel and glass with every old building bulldozed.

Well, it is the 21st century. We have seen the greatest collection of landmark theaters in the country restored to their former glory. We have made friends with many of the people we fought with. We have

achieved Cultural Heritage listings, a National Register District in Hollywood, Redevelopment Plan protections for historic buildings. We have seen the marvelous restorations of major and minor buildings help make Hollywood a place that people and investment are now flocking to.

At our 25th anniversary celebration we honored a select number of the people and organizations who stepped in and did those marvelous restorations in Hollywood. What an extraordinary heritage, and what a group of gutsy folks! What an honor to know and have worked with these people—and what a gift to Hollywood.

Twenty years ago, I left the Board as the By-Laws dictated. I came back to Hollywood Heritage at the request of the membership as the historic architect to rebuild the Barn after its arson fire. I stepped back in to find new faces, new enthusiasm—and new lawsuits! The struggle seems interminable, as the vision of a vibrant Hollywood built in concert with its magnificent heritage still runs up against the “steel and glass” folly. I discovered a new generation of totally dedicated people in Hollywood Heritage—please look at their names on the masthead.

Now I am leaving again in accordance with the By-Laws. This is my last message as your President—do I hear squeals of joy? I have to tell you that I did not achieve the goals I set at the outset of my Presidency. Half way through my term I got strong-armed by your past President Kay Tornborg to save the Toberman House, threatened with demolition. Once again I ended up writing checks (my own—and lots of them!); pouring concrete; and bailing roof water. I wish I could have

attended better to the needs of the organization, but you must know that Kay has carried this load selflessly for the whole time.

I will continue to help and support Hollywood Heritage. Just like Robert Nudelman, although the By-Laws put Board members out to pasture, they don't go away!

I see our landmarks threatened today more actively than 25 years ago. Developers from elsewhere are pouring into Hollywood to pay inflated prices for land, arguing they have to tear down our landmarks to recover their money. Speculators who kept their properties poorly here for years were just waiting for the current boom, and now they are trying to cash in. Billboard interests have steamrolled over our City Council, and are actively disfiguring Hollywood in a free-for-all which no other U. S. city has experienced. Your organization has some heavy-duty preservation action ahead of it.

Our Wattles Mansion is in a steady state, and each year a new crop of restoration projects made possible by its bookings helps refresh and upgrade the property. Our Barn (Hollywood Heritage Museum) is also steady—it is open regularly, through the continuing largesse of our docents. In time it may move to the next level. I believe I leave the organization in good shape.

I share your love of Hollywood and its Heritage.



Preservation News

Vogue, Ambassador, Los Feliz Brown Derby Top Hollywood Preservation Issues

by Robert W. Nudelman

Vogue Theater

During the late spring of 2004 a battle started over the fate of this 1935 S. Charles Lee designed movie theater, which had been closed for over 10 years. The theater was one of Lee's famed Streamline Moderne projects, but had been modernized in 1968, covering, but not removing most of its original design. It was also listed as a contributing building to Hollywood Boulevard's National Register Historic District.



A new owner had leased the 700 seat theater with plans to convert it into a large nightclub. A number of variances were required for this and the applicant, who had never operated a nightclub, was given a long list of conditions by the zoning hearing officer, Daniel Greene. The main problems were that there was no parking available (other surrounding nightclubs had already secured it) and Hollywood Boulevard already had more liquor licenses than any other location in the United States according to the city's hearing officer at a prior hearing on another club.

Well in excess of the city's limits on such licenses by a factor of almost four and with a crime rate substantially higher than the city average, according to the documents presented, other problems included major modifications to the interior and a smoking area to be built on the roof.

The ongoing conversion of Hollywood Boulevard retail space has resulted in a nightclub capacity of over 14,000 people on or within one block of the boulevard in the historic district. It has resulted in large areas of the boulevard's storefronts only being open after 9:00 pm or later, leaving a closed-up streetscape during the daytime hours. As such, the area loses the ability to successfully function as a retail core.

Since the highly touted opening of the Hollywood and Highland Center in November 2001, almost no new retail has come to the boulevard, despite the much vaunted talk of "spillover" from the new center. The center's retail has also suffered from Hollywood's inability to regain its position as a place to shop. While many nightclubs, bars, and tattoo parlors have opened since then, other retail has failed to appear, except for two recently opened stores by American Apparel and the used clothing stores, Iguana, and American Vintage. A couple of restaurants have recently opened and all will hopefully succeed.

But the lure of nightclubs and bars has been colored by the availability of liquor licenses that cannot be obtained elsewhere in the city, as only in Hollywood is the zoning law limitation ignored. Also, they have had the support of the police, who have supported every license, yet they somehow claim the need for more officers. Additionally, these clubs

and bars have to obtain parking agreements, often with two or three clubs booking out the same lot at the same time. This has forced out



residential and theater parking, or caused rates to rise from 50-400%. This harms those buildings without adequate parking, i.e. the older historic structures, endangering their viability, as well as existing retail or theaters. The American Cinematheque at Grauman's Egyptian The-

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Expanded Issue of Newsletter

by John Clifford, Newsletter Editor

As long-time members will be aware, this newsletter has a history of coming out on a highly irregular schedule. However, this year it has been particularly difficult to maintain a schedule as we worked to produce two major events, a book and calendar, attend various hearings and meetings, and deal with the day-to-day running of your organization. We recognize the importance of communication with our membership and hope that this expanded newsletter will bring you up to date on the happenings and issues facing Hollywood's heritage.

We ask your forbearance and hope that this next year will see us returning to a more regular schedule. Thank you..

Museum a Busy Community Asset

by Robert W. Nudelman

The Hollywood Heritage Museum has had a busy year leading up to its 20th anniversary. The 110 year old barn has been a location site for the filming of documentaries on Lucille Ball and character actor Charles Lane, who turned 100 this year. Interviews have included Betty Garrett, Robert Osborne, Jay North (Dennis the Menace), and art director Robert Boyle (*North by Northwest*, *Fiddler on the Roof*, *Mame*, etc.) a long-time Hollywood Heritage supporter who is still going strong at 95.

The Hollywood Hills West Neighborhood Council held four of their monthly board meetings here and in October used it for its annual elections. A radio tour of Brown Derby items and history was done in November for KCSN-FM to help explain the importance of the former site of the Los Feliz Brown Derby, threatened with demolition. Also in November, the American Cinematheque hosted a reception here for screen legend Jane Russell.

Earlier in the year wraparound segments were filmed for the new Harold Lloyd DVD releases. Cinematographer and historian Steve Gainor talked about filming silent movies and even shot part of the wraparound with a 1916 hand cranked Bell and Howell camera, featuring Harold's granddaughter Sue Lloyd. In addition, a British television station filmed sequences here for an upcoming special on religion and film highlighting Cecil B. DeMille's influences. The USC School of Journalism interviewed Robert W. Nudelman here for their IMPACT cable show.

In June, the Theater Historical Society hosted a reception here for their national conclave (Hollywood

Heritage was in charge of the day in Hollywood theater tour of eleven historic venues) and over a year's worth of monthly THS planning meetings were held at the museum. And, this December, the Way Out West chapter of the Laurel and Hardy appreciation society, Sons of the Desert, held their December Christmas program at the museum. All this plus our own series of events keeps the museum an important asset to the community and the entertainment and tourist industries.

In January, the international animation society, ASIFA, will host it's annual day of remembrance for those in the industry who have passed on during the previous year. This will be the eighth year that the museum has been honored to be the site of this ASIFA event. Among the 45 honorees at this year's event will be Joe Grant, Paul Winchell, Thurl Ravenscroft, Hal Seeger, and Card Walker among others.

Annual Meeting

Elections Held November 15

Each year in November, Hollywood Heritage holds its annual meeting of the membership. This meeting is mandatory. The business of the meeting is to elect any board members whose terms of service have expired, or any open seats on the board.

In addition to the election and official business, the meeting includes reports on on-going projects and upcoming events. As a special treat this year, Peter Bosman talked and showed a video about *DeMille's Lost City: The Guadalupe Dunes Dig*.

Each year the board appoints a nominating committee to select nominees for open board seats. This

year's nominating committee, Kay Tornborg, Aaron Epstein, Robert W. Nudelman, and John Clifford, were tasked with selecting nominees for the ten seats up for election as well as the open seat of Bud Lesser, who passed away this past year. The committee recommended the reelection of current board members Marc Wanamaker, Aaron Epstein, Marian Gibbons, Andrew Schwartz, David Greim, and Richard Rowack. Under the by-laws, no member who has served three consecutive 2-year terms may sit on the board, as a result, board members Fran Offenhauser, Marvin Paige, Natalie Shivers and Robert Birchard, were not able to run for reelection.

The committee recommended to fill those 2-year terms: Valerie Yaros, historian for the Screen Actors Guild; Keith Anderson, owner/operator of Yale Film and Video; Thaddeus Smith, owner/operator of the Music Box Theater; and Randy Haberkamp, former director and director of the Silent Society of Hollywood Heritage and Director of Educational Programs and Special Projects for The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences. In addition, they recommended the nomination of Nick Beck, author, former university professor and close friend of the late Bud Lesser to assume his seat on the board for the remaining 1-year of his term.

With proxies and those in attendance, the recommendations of the nominating committee were chosen by unanimous vote. We welcome back Marc, Aaron, Marian, Andrew, David, and Richard, as well as the too long absent Randy Haberkamp and especially we welcome new board members Anderson, Yaros, Smith, and Beck.

New Officers

New officers, elected at the subsequent board meeting Dec. 20 are: Kay Tornborg, president; Libby Simon, vice president; John Clifford, secretary; and Marian Gibbons, treasurer.

Hollywood Abdicates Entertainment Capital Title

by Robert W. Nudelman

On Friday, August 12 the last radio station left Hollywood when KNX-AM turned off its station and turned on its new one on Wilshire Boulevard, ending an 85 year history in Hollywood. KNX was the oldest station in Los Angeles and had always been in Hollywood. It developed into the CBS flagship station in 1933 and operated as the network's broadcasting headquarters from its Columbia

Montalban Theater (CBS), Henry Fonda/Music Box (CBS), and the Palace/Avalon Theater (NBC). ABC would spin off from NBC and open up across Vine Street, while the Don Lee Mutual System opened two blocks south of Sunset on Vine. This was a tremendous concentration of national importance. During the depression and World War II people listened to their radio as their main source of news and entertainment, and Hollywood was at its center.

(*LA Times* 8/11/05). When these stations broadcast, they proudly said "From our studios in Hollywood," reaffirming Hollywood's position. But now it's from Burbank, Glendale, Studio City, Wilshire Boulevard, Culver City, or somewhere else.

The argument that this exodus occurred because of corporate restructuring and has nothing to do with Hollywood's leadership is balderdash. These stations did not merge into nothing, they went somewhere. But with each merger or corporate change, the opportunity to lure more stations to Hollywood was lost as other locales lobbied, and won, the jewels in Hollywood's crown. I've talked with many of the radio and television station operators, and all said the same thing. They wanted to stay in Hollywood but no effort was made locally to keep them here. Phone calls would not be returned while there would be unsolicited calls of help and support from other communities. They were simply ignored and distant corporate offices just decided to go where their newly acquired stations were most wanted. Hollywood was not abandoned, it made no effort to keep its most valuable asset, the entertainment industry, so it went where it was appreciated (even KTLA has looked at moving to downtown).

When CBS, KNX, etc. announced their plans to leave, almost two years ago, nothing was apparently done by any of our political or civic leaders. Only the *Hollywood Heritage Newsletter* even reported it at the time. The CBS lot was two-thirds empty and could have been easily added to for the station's expansion, but they chose to go where efforts were being made to accommodate them. So these and many other related high-paying jobs left Hollywood, along with our civic pride and history.



Square location (Sunset Boulevard at Gower Street) since 1937, which is now in danger of demolition.

From this studio came the shows of the golden era of radio: *Burns and Allen*, *Jack Benny*, *Art Linkletter*, *Bob Crosby*, *The Andrews Sisters*, *Orson Welles*, and many, many more. By the late 1930s, over 80% of the country's nationally broadcast radio programs originated from Hollywood, primarily from here and at NBC Studios, 2 blocks to the west at Sunset and Vine.

Radio in many ways built Hollywood. The Brown Derby, Nick-odell's, Mike Lyman's and several other class restaurants were where the many stars of radio dined. Radio opened additional studios in the

Movie production had spread out by the 1930s, although Columbia Pictures was still at Sunset and Gower across from CBS. Had radio not centered on the area surrounding Sunset and Vine, Hollywood would have been a very different place then and today.

Now, thanks to the (non)efforts of the many six-figure salaried people in charge, Hollywood can try to go without radio. Television will leave the KNX Studio next fall as KCBS and KCAL move to Studio City. This will leave only KTLA within Hollywood (KCET-TV is several miles east). Hollywood once really was the entertainment capital as it had 9 television stations and had been the home of 68 radio stations

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Is Any Landmark in Hollywood Safe?

by Robert W. Nudelman,
Director of Preservation Issues

At the corner of Yucca St. and McCadden Ave. was the Villa Capri Restaurant, just across the street from another demolished landmark, Don the Beachcomber's Restaurant (a parking lot for the last 20 years). This 1957 structure had housed the Villa Capri Restaurant from its opening until its closing in 1982. Co-owned by famed restaurateur Patsy D'Amore and the legendary Frank Sinatra, it was a hub of social and business activities for Sinatra and many others in the Hollywood entertainment scene (see an extensive history of the restaurant on our web site).

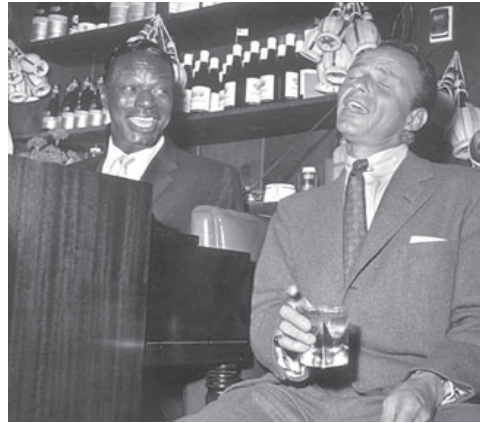
It was sold last year as the site for a condominium project and the environmental review started in secret. Hollywood Heritage only found out by accident and challenged the findings. This was not easy as the historic review mandated by state law was removed as part of the review process.

The city's planning department had led the review, not the Community Redevelopment Agency's Hollywood Project office, which for the past 19 years had reviewed all projects. Changes to the process were made, we were told, by the Los Angeles City Attorney's office which refused to return calls to Hollywood Heritage about the project. When the planning department admitted to their "error" in removing the section of the environmental review on the project impact on historic resources, they refused to refile the notification, despite being required to do so by state law (the California Environmental Quality Act or CEQA) and several promises that they would refile.

The CEQA documents then used by the Los Angeles Planning Department and city attorney were therefore fraudulent, having purposefully been stripped of any abil-

ity by the public to respond to historic preservation issues (the CEQA Negative Declaration form had to be altered to actually remove the section from the middle of a page, it could not have been accidentally left out).

Hollywood Heritage still responded in writing to the plan and the subsequent historic assessment report, which was prepared *after*



Nat "King" Cole and co-owner Frank Sinatra share a song at the now demolished Villa Capri, a victim of Hollywood's out-of-control redevelopment process.

the Negative Declaration (Neg Dec) comment period had ended. An historic assessment is to be prepared first, so as to ascertain if a Neg Dec can even be used, and then is to be included as the evidence for such a decision. In this case, the historic assessment was only written *after* Hollywood Heritage protested the Neg Dec's validity, and therefore had no legal bearing on the Neg Dec.

Even so, the assessment was incomplete and inaccurate as the Hollywood Heritage response proved. A public hearing was held in February and Hollywood Heritage again gave its protest to illegalities with the assessment. Despite our written and verbal responses, as provided for by CEQA, the city did not respond in writing, nor at the hearing,

The CRA had attempted to delay the approval pending a further review of our material, but the city

attorney's office insisted the project move forward. An attempt was made in July to get another reviewer to compare the Hollywood Heritage and historic assessment reports. That review favored the assessment, but did not even comment on Hollywood Heritage's report, either by itself or in comparison to the assessment. The review did say that the historic assessment was vague and in need of considerably more documentation for its conclusions. But somehow they still let it stand despite its many considerable defects.

Based on this very questionable review of a now admittedly incomplete assessment and a refusal to allow public review and comment (our report would have debatable legal standing as the Neg Dec was never recirculated in a correct and legal manner as required by CEQA and promised by the city). The city attorney's office insisted that the CRA sign the demolition permit immediately. This occurred late on a Friday afternoon and demolition proceeded at dawn on Monday.

Since this new version of city planning started in Hollywood, several more projects have appeared using this same process. Why this change from CRA to the planning department for review and approval has occurred is very disturbing. But the new system foregoes the normal CEQA notification process and doesn't allow for response to public comment. Public comment now is only meaningful as evidence if a lawsuit is filed. This is City Attorney Rocky Delgadillo's view of how to protect the public and the taxpayer. There is also no explanation of why he is suddenly involved with the development process after never having been a participant in the CEQA process in Hollywood.

What the city attorney has further declared is that a substantial number of buildings and homes that were

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ater has seen one lot after another be taken over by clubs pushing their parking further away and harming business. Never mind the noise, traffic, and often obnoxious behavior provided by over 14,000 nightclub and bar patrons in one area.

The large scale of the Vogue Theater nightclub and the proposed changes were too much. Hollywood Heritage had protested against the



Historic image of the Vogue Theater
courtesy of Marc Wanamaker / Bison Archives

project's inappropriateness for yet another variance and the impacts to the historic structure, as well as a lack of parking. We were joined by the Vogue's neighbors, the legendary Musso and Frank's Grill, which had experienced a few days of special events at the Vogue. Based on this limited experience, Musso's owners stated that a project of this magnitude would force the closure of the restaurant, open since 1919, as parking, traffic, noise, and general interference with business over three days was more than they could handle and stay open.

After a six-month wait for parking, the proponents provided space on a lot that was being used by the Egyptian Theater, but was already proposed for the development of a condominium project. The Egyptian was kicked out, but the condo project remained, and the hearing officer and Councilman Garcetti opposed

the license, as did after a reversal of a previous vote, the neighborhood council. Hearing officer Daniel Greene had rejected the project on numerous grounds (almost a year ago), but it was appealed by the nightclub.

The appeal was granted in May by the then mayor Hahn's appointees, despite the overwhelming opposition. An astonished Alison Becker, planning deputy for Eric Garcetti, told me of an appeals process to the city council and it was made. The city attorney refused to hear it until a written appeal was given, which took four more months. That was then appealed to city council by both councilmen Eric Garcetti and Tom LaBonge. Two more hearings later, the city council finally killed the appeals approval. This took many months downtown and locally (planning department, city council and committee level hearings, neighborhood council, etc.) to result in the final action this past October.

Support of, and with, Musso and Franks was key to this, led by the fourth generation of the original owners, Jordan Jones. Jordan and his family stuck through the 1-1/2 year long process, which entailed a lot more than is outlined even here. The support of councilmembers Garcetti and LaBonge made this victory possible, and avoided the city costly legal action. A special note of thanks to Alison Becker and Daniel Greene who stayed the course on this when most others would have backed down.

Now Hollywood Heritage is working to find a new tenant for the Vogue that will be more appropriate to the building and the neighborhood. Several plans are in the works and our next issue will update this important preservation battle for a building, its neighbors, and the community.

The Los Feliz Brown Derby

Opened in 1928 as Willard's Chicken Restaurant, this structure was remodeled by then owner Cecil B. DeMille in 1941 as the fourth Brown Derby Restaurant. Located at the corner of Hillhurst Ave. and Los Feliz Blvd., it served the residential neighborhood and travelers between Hollywood and Glendale. As such, it was the only Brown Derby to feature a car-hop area for car side service.

This was once a popular feature of Los Angeles area restaurants, but has been all but forgotten today. Yet almost 65 years later, the car-hop roof, its main feature along with its wooden dome roof, still survives attached to the restaurant. Today two restaurants inhabit the building, including The Derby, a popular place for swing dancers. But plans were recently announced to demolish the building and develop on the site (including a large parking lot) for some limited retail and, of course, a large condominium project.

All of this upset one of the Derby's swing dance patrons, attorney Rebecca Goodman. Rebecca, took matters into her own capable hands and organized a Save The Derby campaign, garnering over 1,000 members. She organized patrons of the restaurant/club and the various neighborhood and homeowners groups into a coalition to oppose the project.



The culmination of this was a town hall meeting held in the Greater Griffith Park Neighborhood Council on November 10. Over 400

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Unprecedented Challenge To Historic Preservation Nationwide

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What's Happening and Why
This is a Critical Time for Grassroots Action in our Nation's Capitol

Imagine a highway project through a historic downtown that only considers resources already on the National Register. Now imagine a federally funded project in the West, bulldozing through centuries of tribal cultural resources because there was no law saying these resources mattered enough to consider during the planning process. It's pretty easy to do if you think back to the days of urban renewal, prior to the National Historic Preservation Act.

The worst threat to historic preservation in this country didn't make a most endangered list. It's the threat to the mother of all preservation policies, the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) established in 1966 to set out the federal government's commitment to preservation. The NHPA articulates why protection of our heritage is important while proscribing how the government goes about taking care of our nation's heritage.

In April, a "discussion draft" circulated within the House Resources Committee's subcommittee on National Parks that proposed subtle but significant amendments to the law.

Basically, the draft proposes to limit the scope of historic resource impact review (Section 106) to resources already on the National Register or determined eligible by the Secretary of the Interior during federal undertakings. When projects apply for federal dollars, federal review of resources kicks in.

A few other changes would make owner consent requisite for pursu-

ing National Register status and prevent Certified Local Governments (CLGs) from linking National Register designation to local landmarks regulations.

Why is this Happening Now?

The effort stems from an interest within the majority party (but not monolithically embraced by the majority party) to streamline government while privileging the rights of an individual over the

"Let's make the most of this opportunity to educate our leadership. Build the movement by being part of it."

rights of the community. Within an influential faction, those interested in reducing the deficit and streamlining are rooting out perceived abuses government-wide.

In an April 20 hearing on the discussion draft, preservationists were characterized as thugs bullying property owners into National Register designations or providing misleading information to owners. The hearing demonstrated a concern that thorough Section 106 review slows the process, doesn't reflect the "original intent" of the law, costs applicants too much money, and is too liberal in its consideration of what's important.

A misunderstanding of how significance is established is leading to an assumption that all resources over 50 years old are potentially

eligible for the National Register.

The Big Picture

In sum: this land is my land, and that land over there is your land...

Even some of those in support of streamlining the NHPA and similarly frightening changes like the effort to disallow easements on donor-occupied residences and the reductive reorganization of the National Park Service say they are preservationists and support preservation on their own terms.

The bad news is, these terms are generally focused on the obvious economic benefits of certain kinds of projects, revolve around private investment and seem to miss the federal government's responsibility to maintain our shared heritage for this and future generations. Governments lead by example. This effort in Congress reflects currents within the states, but should the federal government mirror the worst state policies for preservation, even the most enlightened communities will suffer.

The President's Preserve America initiative is somewhat controversial within some preservation circles in that it reflects this shift in thinking about how preservation activity figures into role of government – specifically the federal government and the communities it serves. When he suggested removing \$12.5 million from Save America's Treasures Congressional earmark grants, Representatives from both parties balked (this isn't as simple as a partisan issue). The House of Representatives has proposed restoring all of SAT to last year's level, and has zeroed out Preserve America, but the latter program remains popular (especially in designated Pre-

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people packed the hall, spilling out onto the sidewalk. Television crews and newspaper reporters covered the event. During public testimony, one speaker asked if anyone in the room supported the project and no one responded. He then asked if anyone opposed it and every hand in the room went up in unison, followed by cheers.

Councilman Tom LaBonge, who stayed for the entire meeting, had originally been leaning toward support of the project in some format. But he wisely listened to the audience and now spoke out in opposition to any plan to demolish the Brown Derby Building, to much applause. What eventually will be built there is undecided, but the developers have stated that they will reconfigure their plans. Other criticisms of the project included its size, traffic impacts, and appearance. Though its design looks better than the housing projects planned elsewhere in Hollywood, it is out of scale at this site, and this point, and others, were made by Hollywood Heritage at the hearing. We also endorsed Rebecca's plans to nominate the restaurant as a Los Angeles City Landmark, an official vote on this having been taken after her presentation to the Hollywood Heritage board at our October meeting.

Though not out of the woods yet, the decisive and energetic action taken by Rebecca Goodman and her group (savetherderby.com), has gone a long way toward helping protect this last vestige of a once great restaurant group. Hollywood Heritage thanks her and will continue to support her efforts. We also thank Councilman Tom LaBonge for understanding the situation and adding his all important support. Further information on what, if any, project plans are proposed here will be watched carefully by Hollywood Heritage for the impact on the Brown Derby and the neighborhood,

which includes many historic homes and apartment buildings.

The Ambassador Hotel

Through a tragic combination of stupidity and egotism, the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) was allowed to proceed with the demolition of one of Los Angeles' most famous structures, the Ambassador Hotel. The LA Superior Court had ruled earlier this year against a case to block demolition filed by the Los Angeles Conservancy and seven other historic preservation groups, including Hollywood Heritage.

A meeting was organized last September between the groups involved in the lawsuits and the LAUSD's superintendent, Roy Romer. A plan was put forth to save the hotel for housing, including some affordable units for teachers, and to build



the school around it. The plan was submitted by the Conservancy after having been prepared for them by reknowned school architect Stan Eckstut (the Conservancy had also made previous proposals to reuse the site with a school but all were rejected by the LAUSD, despite each project's merits).

Once again the LAUSD, through Roy Romer, rejected any compromise of his vision for the site. He was determined to tear down the Ambassador and that was that. He then proceeded to dictate a list of his personal achievements at the

LAUSD and considered the Ambassador's demolition an important trophy for his personal collection.

He continually chastised the supporters of the Ambassador as anti-children and anti-education, and refused to speak to the issue of any preservation of the site. This was his big game hunt, and no amount of cultural, historic, or architectural history was going to interfere with what he wanted. This was all the more depressing when one considers that this is the leadership teaching kids today, and Romer claimed that we were "anti-education" as he thrust his head deeper into the sand.

The LAUSD threw a bone to the Conservancy and the rest of us with the offer of a \$5 million fund set up to pay for historic rehabilitation projects at other schools. While this may have some merits, it is a very small amount to utilize for the

hundreds of schools that need, or will need, help. The real problem is one of attitude. Romer, backed by the LAUSD board's 4-3 vote

allowing demolition, showed their feelings toward historic preservation. If no significant support is given in the LAUSD policy program, historic schools will continue to suffer or be demolished and new school sites will continue to target historic homes, apartments, and commercial structures, as is occurring now in Hollywood. Five million dollars would not cover the costs for historic restoration of Hollywood's schools alone, never mind the rest of the city. Additionally, the \$5 million is for a trust fund, not the annual

Florentine *Continued from page 1*

Finally, in an attempt to avoid legal action, a meeting with Councilman Garcetti last August clarified our position to him and dispelled the false information he was hearing as to why it could not be saved. He listened, discussed both sides of the issue, and understood the validity of our position. Most importantly, he then acted on it as to save the Florentine Gardens and not impact the fire department's ability to protect the community. It also saved the city the costs of demolition and provided a neighborhood center and theater

protect the Florentine Gardens from any changes to its historic elements and assured that new work would respect the structure's history. A media story at the time of final approval in October incorrectly stated that the fire station would be located inside the Florentine Gardens. All fire department related uses will be in the buildings to be newly constructed next door.

The process is still ongoing as the city negotiates with the property's owner and the current operator of the Florentine Gardens night club. We hope that a purchase agreement



space (utilizing the stage and other theatrical facilities) for the community. Or, as Hollywood Heritage argued, the structure was an asset, not a liability, and Eric agreed.

The revised project made its way through the city council where Hollywood Heritage requested that renovation/restoration work be done to the Secretary of the Interior's standards and this request, backed by Councilman Garcetti's planning deputy Alison Becker was adopted by committee chair Councilman Tom LaBonge. This was done to

can be reached soon, so as to avoid the city's use of eminent domain to obtain the site.

This was an important victory for Hollywood Heritage and the community. It will help provide sorely needed community and theater space as many smaller theaters in Hollywood are being closed or forced to move elsewhere as rents skyrocket. We have been meeting with the CRA and its task force of theater groups trying to find performance locations in Hollywood. The Florentine Gardens can help with

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George D. Wallace: June 8 1917- July 22, 2005

by Stephen X. Sylvester

George William Francis Dewey Wallace was born on June 8, 1917 in New York City. In June of 2005, George and his wife Jane took a vacation to Europe. On their third day George stepped wrong while approaching a tour bus to visit Pisa Italy and fell breaking his leg. It took five weeks to recover from surgery so he would be stable enough to travel back to the United States. George did not do well from the surgery and upon arrival to Los Angeles was admitted to Cedars Sinai Hospital. George's condition continued to worsen and he was transferred to the ICU on July 9th. Finally on Friday July 22 at 9:00 p.m. his body gave out and George passed away.

At the age of 13 George and his family moved to McMechen West Virginia where he was employed in a coal mine and later the Civilian Conservation Corps. George joined the Navy in 1936 and did a four year hitch prior to WWII and re-enlisted once the war began. He served in both the Pacific and European Theaters as a bosun's mate. While in the Navy, George became the

Light Heavyweight Boxing Champ. George enjoyed boxing and in 1981 took it up again and quickly earned the name The Hollywood Hammer. According to his boxing coach, George could take out boxers half his age. After the war ended he was discharged in California and remained in Hollywood. He held various jobs and was employed at one time as bouncer for a bar. Later he was hired as a bartender by the Sand Bar but was no ordinary bartender, George would sing during his shifts. Hollywood columnist Jimmie Fidler heard George one night and helped him into show business.

"I went to see him (Jimmie Fidler), and he said, "How would you like to sing at a Jewish benefit?" I said, "I not Jewish." He



George Wallace as Commando Cody

said, "Who cares?" He introduced me to Mickey Katz, the father of

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open on Weekends (Saturday and Sunday)

from 11:00 am until 4:00 pm

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protected in the 1986 CRA Redevelopment Plan are no longer protected. Others, such as the Villa Capri, are only protected if the developer prepares an historic assessment that says that the structure is important, which is a complete conflict of interest. Furthermore, the new threshold for being important enough to be historic means that a structure must be exactly as it was during its time of importance, i.e. it has to look as it did 50-90 years ago.

This effectively eliminates almost every building in Hollywood from protection, and for that matter all but maybe a dozen buildings in all of Los Angeles. It is a complete misrepresentation of federal guidelines and CEQA that would now allow for the demolition of *any* structure. Even the Chinese, Pantages, or El Capitan theaters would not meet this new requirement. Yet it was under the previous guidelines that made possible the restoration/renovation of the El Capitan, Egyptian, Cinerama Dome, ABC/Merv Griffen studio façade, Screen Cartoonists building, Woolworths building, and many other landmark projects. *None* of these would have been saved if the city attorney and planning department's new guidelines and procedures had been previously in effect.

The Villa Capri also was subject to a review of its historic and cultural history, which was not done except in the Hollywood Heritage response. The new condo project was to have been reviewed for compliance with the Franklin Avenue Corridor Plan. Both of these are conditions of the Hollywood Redevelopment Plan. The Franklin Avenue review was not done as that plan does not exist, even though it was to have been completed by 1989. Yet the city attorney still approved the project despite it being impossible to comply with something that does not exist.

Campaign contributions do exist and that seems to be the only reason for this gutting of Hollywood's (and

potentially the entire city's) historic preservation system and the related federal and state laws. Obviously City Attorney Rocky Delgadillo has no such legal authority to do

Since this new version of city planning started in Hollywood, several more projects have appeared using this same process.

this and by his lack of response to our questions, the city is forcing legal action to be taken before this demolition of Hollywood's history can proceed further. For these reasons, Hollywood Heritage has retained legal counsel with Robert Silverstein, a CEQA specialist, to review all options that can be taken to block further degradation of the laws protecting Hollywood's historic structures.

Evenings @ The Barn

The Restored Harold Lloyd

Harold Lloyd was called a "Master Comedian" by the Motion Picture Academy years ago, and this title has only improved with



time. He made more money during the 1920s than anyone as he produced, co-wrote, and starred in a one classic comedy after another

each year. His great features were reedited after he passed away in 1971 with various versions in various conditions being seen. Now his features have been digitally restored and are available on DVD. Harold's granddaughter, Sue Lloyd, put this monumental project together and will be here to talk about the films and her grandfather on January 12, at 7:30 pm at the museum. Marc Wanamaker will give a slide show overview of Harold's studios and his legendary home.

this problem and we will continue as a part of the task force as well as working with the plans for the building's reuse and restoration.

For those new to the Florentine Gardens, it was a classic night club during 1938-55 with a capacity of over 1500. It was designed by noted architect Gordon B. Kaufman who also designed the Earl Carroll Theater (now Nickelodeon) on Sunset Boulevard that opened that same year. It was modified by famed architect Paul Williams in 1953 and is Williams' only project in central Hollywood. Performers played here for long runs of several months, often over a period of years during World War II. The legendary performers associated with the Florentine Gardens included Paul Whiteman, The Ink Spots, Sophie Tucker, and The Mills Brothers. Other performers include Henny Youngman and Fats Waller, whose last performance was there. The stage show's dancers included future movie and TV star Yvonne deCarlo.

Despite the significance of the structure and its position in Hollywood, the city had a historic assessment report written that denied any significance (even attacking the credibility of music legend Paul Whiteman) and downgraded the structure's historic status, granted by the city in 1985, to allow for demolition. The demolition was also questioned by the Los Angeles Conservancy. (Our web site has our response letter which details our arguments on these issues.) This showed, once again as outlined here on other projects, the problem with allowing the developer to determine the historic status of a building, even when the city is the developer. Just another example of why this process must stop.

But our persistence paid off and we thank Councilman and Hollywood Heritage member Eric Garcetti for taking this "win-win" solution for the benefit of all parties

Joel Grey. Mickey used to play a wailing clarinet, and he used to play for City of Hope and B'nai Brith benefits. Mickey taught me a couple of songs in Yiddish, and we started doing all the benefit shows. That's how my career started."

George took up acting lessons and was working as a greensman at M.G.M. studios in Culver City. He began to get roles in features



Hollywood Heritage's Stephen X. Sylvester conducts a Q&A with George Wallace during his tribute Evening @ The Barn, December 2004
photo by Alan Simon

and television. He worked with Hop-along Casidy in several episodes. George and Clayton Moore both auditioned for the Republic serial *Radar Men from the Moon*. George was opting for one of the heavies and Clayton for the lead of *Commando Cody*. After his audition, George was told they wanted him for the lead. Clayton Moore wound up as one of the heavies. In one scene where George and Clayton are having a fist fight in Al's Cafe, Clayton swung and broke George's nose. George was rushed to the hospital and returned later that day. Production continued with scenes where George wore the helmet so his broken nose would not be seen. George often mused whether Clayton might have been a bit put out about not getting the lead.

George's credits span over 50 years and include television guest appearances, feature film work,

commercials and even Broadway productions.

George's Broadway debut was in Rodgers and Hammerstein's *Pipe Dream* (1956), and later appeared in *New Girl in Town* (1958) with Gwen Verdon and was nominated by the New York Drama Critics as best performer in a Broadway musical. In summer stock, he starred with Ginger Rogers in *The Unsinkable Molly Brown*. George remarked

that Ginger got the whole star treatment, a car to take her to and from the theater, a new wardrobe and all the frills one could ask for. George on the other hand had to provide his own cab fare. George also played King Arthur in the national touring company of *Camelot* wearing the same costume as Richard Burton wore. He arrived at the theater with the

costume in hand, the costumer for the show had a fit. It just didn't fit in with her designs at all and must not be used. George remarked to her that it was the costume that Burton wore on Broadway and suddenly she changed her mind regarding her designs. George met his wife, Jane Johnston, when they both appeared in the musical *The Most Happy Fella* at the Long Beach Civic Light Opera in 1963.

In December of 2004, The Hollywood Heritage Museum honored George with an evening tribute to him.

At 87 George continued to work both in films and on television. Now a more gentler soul than his earlier fist fighting no holds barred characters by playing grandfathers, judges, priests, gnarley old men and even God in an episode of *Joan of Arcadia*.

Nothing 'Less' About Lesser

by Kay Tornborg

This is really a 'Save the Date' notice for an *Evening @ the Barn* marking the first anniversary of the death of Bud Lesser, our supporter, cheerleader, movieland guru and Barn-lover extraordinaire! His demise, last March, left a huge gap in our 'Enthusiasm Section.' Bud could always be counted on to thoughtfully embrace and promote Hollywood Heritage projects and he brought to the table an encyclopedic knowledge of Hollywood's early film industry that helped immeasurably in assembling the right 'players' and material, time after time.



Soon after he was introduced to our Museum in the Lasky-DeMille Barn he became our First Cheerleader, suggesting substantive programming and inviting interesting guests. His interest in improving the production values of the *Evenings*...helped focus our attention on work that did, indeed, need doing. And the growing success of the programs attests to his acumen in tweaking the right glitches. He was also among the earliest supporters of our *Historic Hollywood* book and in it one can find a fascinating piece on the Lesser family's place in early Hollywood movie history. Do read it! And plan on a 'Bud's Eye View' of Moviedom as we fondly recall him on March 22, 2006 in an *Evening @ the Barn*, 7:30 PM (SHARP!)

Hillview Apartments Opens at Last

by John Clifford

On Thursday evening, July 14, 2005, a four year dream was realized with the grand opening of the newly-restored Hillview Apartments on Hollywood Boulevard at Hudson Street. A gala opening party was held with dignitaries from the city and the Hollywood community in attendance. Johnny Grant, the honorary Mayor of Hollywood, MC'd the event which saw speakers praising the 54 unit apartment building and its champion, Jeffrey Rouze.

In 1916, the burgeoning Hollywood film community was facing a housing shortage for the large number of actors and technical workers at the new studios. Faced with signs that read, "No Dogs or Actors" on most of the apartment buildings throughout the small city, Paramount Pictures' co-founder Jesse L. Lasky decided to build a quality apartment building catering to the nascent film community, providing actors with a place to live that was close to the nearby movie studios.

Opening in 1917, the Hillview Apartments became *the* place to live in Hollywood. It housed some of the era's biggest film stars including Mae Busch and Viola Dana. The 54-unit Mediterranean style apartment complex offered the latest amenities including a large parlor lobby, a writing room, a ladies waiting room, garbage incinerators, automatic ele-



vators, a rehearsal space in the basement and, of course, a speakeasy.

However, with the decline of Hollywood from the '60s onward, the Hillview became the victim of

spreading blight, ending in 1994 when the building was closed due to sinkage caused by MetroRail subway tunneling under Hollywood Boulevard. With damage from the subway construction and the Northridge earthquake, the building was declared unsafe. New Year's Day 2002, with the unsecured building home to transients and drug deal-



ers, a fire broke out which caused extensive damage to the roof of the structure. The city, to ensure public safety, had a large portion of the fourth floor removed.

During this period there were several people who looked at buying the dilapidated building for use as everything from a hotel to low-income housing. Enter Jeffrey Rouze, architect, who had won multiple awards for the renovation/restoration of the El Capitan Theater Building a few blocks to the west on Hollywood Boulevard (and a director of Hollywood Heritage). Rouze recognized the opportunity to redevelop Hillview Apartments and purchased it in October 2002. His Wisconsin ties led him to Michael A. Conaghan and The Great Lakes Companies who became his financial partner in the project. Conaghan said the Hillview project was of particular interest as a chance to be involved with historic tax credit work for the first time. Established in 1992, Great Lakes is best known for Great Wolf Lodge, a year-round

indoor waterpark resort. "Jeff has played an important role in Hollywood's renaissance," Conaghan said. "He's been an incredible catalyst for change."

Rouze noted that after escrow closed he asked for the keys to the building he had just purchased, but that he hadn't been able to actually tour. He was told that all he had to do was to get over the cyclone wire and that he could get in. Arriving at the site and putting moving blankets over the razor wire, he was able to get to the front door but found that it was padlocked. He then climbed back over the fence, went to a local hardware store and purchased a "key," a pair of large bolt cutters. These bolt cutters symbolized for him the condition of the building when he first bought it and became his "prop" for the evening of the grand opening.

Using historic photographs provided by Hollywood Heritage and Marc Wanamaker's Bison Archives, the building's façade has been fully restored to its 1917 glory. The three Mediterranean-style arches have been rebuilt with terra cotta and plaster, and missing ceramic tile insets replaced. Existing cornices and railings have been restored, missing windows in the retail storefronts on Hollywood Boulevard have been reconstructed and window awnings have been added to all of the windows.

The ground floor retail will include a restaurant, "The Lift," a workout space, "Andrea's Joint," and, in the basement, a jazz club, "86." The retail is being developed by Steve Adelman, who is the co-owner of Avalon, Hollywood, formerly the Hollywood Palace.

The apartment units include studio, one-bedroom, and two-bedrooms with prices ranging from \$1,750-\$3,500 per month. One-half of the units have fold-down Mur-

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budget.

The Los Angeles Conservancy and their attorneys, Gibson, Dunn and Crutcher, who donated their considerable legal fees, put forth a good fight. The court hearings, all attended by Hollywood Heritage, were well argued by Gibson, but to no avail. These are always hard cases, but they must be fought. Our attorney, Joseph Markowitz also donated his legal services for all seven groups and made strong arguments in his legal documents. After much consideration, the Conservancy decided not to appeal the case.

The appeal would have been a long shot, and we could have not afforded to continue without the Conservancy, which had invested a considerable amount of money into this action. Based on their position, Hollywood Heritage was unable to appeal (our legal efforts are focused on Hollywood at this time). There was talk of releasing the LAUSD from its commitment to preserve the pantry room where Robert F. Kennedy was assassinated, but we stated we would oppose any settlement that included that and it was then removed.

Thanks to the Los Angeles Conservancy's Linda Dishman, Ken Bernstein, and Jay Platt who spent many hours on this project, including a lot of them on the phone with Hollywood Heritage. Thanks to the many volunteers, members, architects, and attorneys, both here and elsewhere, who understood the educational value of this historic and cultural landmark.

What could have been an amazing educational/historic complex will now be land fill rubble. This is not the lesson to teach our children, who have enough trouble learning history and its importance to modern life. This tragic demolition and lost opportunity is anti-children and anti-education, but unfortunately that is Roy Romer's real vision.

The Raymond Theater

This 1921 Beaux Arts theater is located next to Pasadena's Old Town district and originally seated 2,000. Over the last several years the current owners, Gene and Marilyn Buchanan, have pushed to gut the theater for a housing project. Condominiums would be located throughout the interior, with a part of the auditorium left open, though skylights would be cut through the ornately detailed ceiling.

The theater would cease to be, though the façade would be restored, and much of this has already

The city of Pasadena has bent over backwards to accommodate the Buchanan's plans for the theater and to build a condominium project on the parking lot next door. Of course, as the *Pasadena Weekly* and *Pasadena Star-News* have pointed out, the Buchanans are generous supporters and donors to the members of the city council, but the city claims this is merely a coincidence.

Unfortunately in politics what happens in one city can affect another. Much of the law being dealt with here concerns the California Environmental Quality Act



Historic photo of Jensen's Raymond Theater

photo courtesy of California State Library

been done. A façade easement is held on the theater by Pasadena Heritage, whose position in all of this can be called, most gently, curious. Their easement says that the property cannot be subdivided, yet this is exactly what is being done for the sale of condos. Also, they declined to review the modifications being done to the interior, claiming it is not in their realm of influence. This creates another problem for Hollywood as there are several façade easements here, and if the protections and agreements that are given so as to get a federal tax break are meaningless, then more damage can occur here in protected buildings.

(CEQA). Precedents that occur here can show up in Los Angeles as cities and developers are always looking for new ways to attack CEQA.

There is also the issue of preserving a beautiful theater rich in movie and music history. Hollywood Heritage has been involved in the myriad of issues concerning the preservation of the Raymond Theater for over 3 years now, speaking at numerous hearings and commenting in writing on certain matters (I've been speaking at hearings for this theater since 1991 as it has had a long history under siege).

The guiding force to save the

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Yet our public and civic servants were not actually doing nothing. At every hearing to approve a bar or nightclub permit over the past 8 years they have been there. Representatives of the mayor, council offices, Chamber of Commerce, Business Improvement District, and plenty of others turned out to demand the approval of every liquor permit presented (until just this past year—see Vogue Theater story on page 3). These are the things our civic leaders point to now, as the “New Hollywood.” So we’ve gone from the “Entertainment Capital of the World,” to “Alcohollywood.” It’s enough to drive one to drink.

This has not just been the ending of the history that largely formed Hollywood and was a major source of finances to the community, but it creates a problem with now, or soon to be, vacant historic buildings. The modern classic Columbia Square is a primary example. Its owners already see it as a tear-down as they market the property for its purported land value. The same is true for the Hollywood Palladium, located on the next block to the west of Columbia Square, and owned by several of the same individuals. These are specialized buildings and getting a tenant at Columbia Square other than a radio or television station will



be hard due to the structure’s unique configuration of studios.

Hollywood Heritage is working

to bring sympathetic developers to these landmarks that will keep the historic structures and develop on the large vacant parcels behind them. A similar problem is at the old KFWB studios at Argyle Avenue and Yucca Street, which also emptied out earlier this year. At one time this was also a movie studio, rented to independent productions in the 1950s and ’60s, including the “classic” cult films of Ed Wood. We



KCBS / KCAL Newsroom at Columbia Square in Hollywood

are also trying to determine if there is a way to keep CNN here, which is also looking to leave its Sunset Boulevard studio (at Cahuenga) for another community. No one in Hollywood wants to talk to them either, except for Hollywood Heritage.

The entertainment business *is* Hollywood’s heritage and it cannot be allowed to leave unchallenged. Hollywood Heritage will now lobby to keep it here, not using the worthless excuse of corporate changes, as we see that as an opportunity, just as the other communities do. We strongly hope to be joined by those political and civic leaders who want to represent the interests of Hollywood in this battle. We’ll even agree to allow a bar at Columbia Square if CBS would stay, if that would ignite our leaders’ involvement. Otherwise, as Peoria, Illinois now has more radio and television stations than does Hollywood, we’ll have to hear people of that community, and elsewhere, wonder, “Will it play in Hollywood?”

Raymond has been Gina Zamperelli. Gina has written letters and speeches, done legal research for the several legal actions filed against the theater’s destruction when the laws are not followed, raised thousands of dollars to pay for these legal actions, and organized thousands of people from throughout the area and the world to support the Raymond. She has brought buyers for the theater only to have them rebuffed without explanation or the demand of a revised higher price.

The strangest part is that the Buchanans know better. They have successfully restored buildings in Old Town, but are intent on this destructive proposal. And they are aided by the city of Pasadena, which also knows better as Old Town and other highly successful historic restoration projects are located there. Gina knows the theater, having successfully managed and booked it before the Buchanans closed it. This may be a case of a bruised ego more than anything else, for the Buchanans who are used to getting their way in Pasadena.

The dismantling or disregard for CEQA laws affects everyone in California. It is the single most important set of protection laws we have and it is constantly under attack by government agencies and private developers. CEQA defines just what they can do so as to not harm historic structures, the community, and the rights of developers who have already completed projects and obeyed the rules. It is the law that levels the playing field, but the local courts rarely uphold it when it is attacked, so the main defense must be mounted before the courts are sought as a timely last ditch remedy.

The Raymond is on the verge of being “condoized” and Hollywood Heritage will continue to support the efforts led by Gina Zamperelli (www.raymondtheater.com) to make a last run at it, one that may still

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Bob Keane: The Oracle of Del-Fi At The Barn

by Robert W. Nudelman

This past year was considered by most as the 50th anniversary of Rock 'n' Roll, with *Rock Around The Clock* by Bill Haley and the Comets becoming the first No. 1 single on the charts. Toiling away at that time was one of Rock's pioneers, Bob Keane.

Keane's career started in the Big Band era of the 1940s, and was capped by taking over the Artie Shaw Show Band when Shaw retired in 1952. But the new evolving sound intrigued the renowned clarinet player and he started to produce records in the mid '50s. Legendary singer Sam Cooke was the first to get the Bob Keane treatment and Cooke's career took off.

Realizing he needed more freedom, Keane went out on his own with the creation of Del-Fi Records. His first star was an unknown 16 year-old from Pacoima, Ritchie Valenzuela, who became better known as Ritchie Valens. Over his brief career, Keane produced Valens' hits *Come On, Let's Go, Donna;* and *La Bomba*. Valens' tragic death in a plane crash in January 1959 with Buddy Holly and The Big Bopper become known as "The Day The Music Died."

But the success of Valens had led Keane to build a real studio; Valens and others often recorded at Keane's house. In March 1959, Del-Fi Studios opened on the second floor of a 1948 bank building. Located at the northeast corner of Selma Avenue and Vine Street, across from the original site of the Hollywood Heritage Museum barn, above a bank that was founded with Cecil B. DeMille on its board of directors, this tribute seemed a natural for our *Evenings @ The Barn* series.

Today though, the space sits vacant and developers plan to demolish the building, so we wanted to discover just what went on there to



From left: Charles Wright, Paul Politi, Irma Valenzuela, Bob Keane, Connie Valenzuela, Carl Burnett (Little Caesar), with birthday cake for Ritchie Valens at the Bob Keane / Del-Fi program, Hollywood Heritage's Evening @ the Barn. May 12, 2005
photo by Alan Simon

determine its historic importance. Of course, the developer did not even mention Del-Fi Studios, or those that followed in their historic assessment of the site. Thanks to Hollywood Heritage member Art Laboe and his assistant Denise Vogel, I was able to track down Bob Keane and our subsequent conversations grew into a special *Evenings @ The Barn* program on May 12, which also promoted the upcoming release of Bob's autobiography *Bob Keane: The Oracle of Del-Fi*.

The studio was a creative center where many great talents got started. Hit singles recorded here include *Those Oldies But Goodies* by Little Caesar and the Romans, Ron Holden's memorable *Love You So* and the blockbuster classic *I Fought The Law* by the Bobby Fuller Four. Starting out here as musicians and or producers were: Jim Messina (Buffalo Springfield, Poco, Loggins and Messina), Charles Wright (and the Watts 103rd Street Rhythm Band—*Express Yourself*),

soul singer extraordinaire Barry White, and even Frank Zappa, who worked a block away at Wallach's Music City. Other greats at Del-Fi included Johnny Crawford, Chan Romero (*The Hippy Hippy Shake*), and a number of surf music groups (some heard on the *Pulp Fiction* soundtrack).

Others came and went as the company and studio was one of the most diversified operations around, a diversity that echoed Rock 'n' Roll—black, white, Hispanic, Tex-Mex, surf, soul, folk and, well, Zappa. These names and songs continue almost 50 years later to be influential forces in music and culture. Yet, once again, a developer and the city somehow missed all this when evaluating the building and its history.

At our *Evening @ The Barn* tribute to Bob Keane, he was joined by Charles Wright, Little Caesar (Carl Burnett), the Valens family, including Ritchie's sisters and uncle (who raised Ritchie), and record

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l to r: Sally Beaudette, Huell Howser, Marian Gibbons

Capitan Theatre; Lavo How and Terry Otis from Grauman's Chinese Theatre; Nicole Goldman from Jim Henson Studios; Jeffrey Rouze from Hillview Apartments; Tyler Cassity from Hollywood Forever; David Green from the Pantages and Greek Theatres; Charles Armstrong from Paramount Studios; Bruce Davis from the Pickford Center for Motion Picture Study and Chris Breed from the Pig 'n Whistle.

Without the vision and perseverance of these people we feel safe in asserting that Hollywood would be far less than it is today. *BRAVO!* to them all.



Thaddeus Smith and Marion Gibbons shortly after Thad purchased the 1976 Mercedes 450SL, donated by her at auction photo by Richard Rownak

Our beautifully-dressed guests arrived for cocktails and the silent auction. Once past the gleaming and spiffy '76 Mercedes-Benz 450SL parked in front (and awaiting its new owner after the live auction), docents from the Hollywood Heritage Museum...George Kiel, Peter Weber, Glenn Dismuke, Mary Mallory, Adriana Patti and Betty Petitt...greeted all. Our version of a *tableau vivante* captured a lot of at-



Our Founders: Marian Gibbons, Fran Offenhauser, Christy Johnson McAvoy, and Susan St. Francis. were present to celebrate 25 years of Hollywood Heritage's commitment to preservation. With Mildred Heredeen, they were the ones that started it all photo by Richard Rownak

tention and photos as four of the five Original Founders hugged, kissed and chatted in the middle of the lobby: Marian Gibbons, Fran Offenhauser, Christy Johnson McAvoy and Susan St. Francis.

A buzz went around the room when Marvin Paige arrived with the legendary Jane Russell for a stop-by on the way to her appearance at the Aero in Santa Monica.

Flashes went off right and left. The Silent Auction tables put together by Sally McKibbin (with the help of husband, Jerry, and members Robert Nudelman, Steve Sylvester and Marc Wanamaker) ultimately drew the dol-

lars out of the wallets rather like the cobra out of the basket (starts low and slow...ends up high).

Then the doors to the theatre and dining area opened and...*glorious!* Thad Smith, Brian Sayers and a small army of talented transformers had hung the lanterns, grown the palm trees and dressed the stage with Marj Fasman's wildly elegant flowers in faux projector vases. On a



l to r: Stephen X. Sylvester, director of Wattles Mansion and Gardens, board member Marvin Paige, and legendary actress Jane Russell photo by Richard Rownak

huge overhead screen flashed memorabilia from the Hollywood Heritage Museum collection: postcards, period magazine ads, menus from all the Hollywood hot spots, photographs, posters and more, all chosen by Robert Nudelman and Marc Wanamaker and artfully assembled by John Clifford. The infectious music of Mora's Modern Rhythmists, lead by Dean Mora, played while

guests dined on what many agreed was "the best event food they'd had in a long time." The tables looked gorgeous, with white orchid centerpieces by Rica Van Ausdall of Hollywood Famous Florists.

Show Time opened with welcomes from our Event Host, Thaddeus Smith and Hollywood Heritage president Fran Offenhauser. Following in the steps of the Academy,

we 'borrowed' our member, Randy Haberkamp, as emcee and presenter for the evening. He did a masterful and gracious job and the honorees were all kind enough to limit their



Hollywood Heritage 25th Anniversary "Gift To Hollywood" honorees: Lavo How and Terry Otis from Grauman's Chinese; Ed Collins from the El Capitan; Chris Breed from the Pig 'n Whistle; ; Charles Armstrong from Paramount Studios Barbara Zicka Smith from Graumen's Egyptian; Tyler Cassity from Hollywood Forever; Nicole Goldman from Jim Henson Studios; Jeffrey Rouze from Hillview Apartments; David Green from the Pantages and Greek Theatres; and Bruce Davis from the Pickford Center for Motion Picture Study



remarks to just the Right Length.

That allowed us a few minutes to turn the mike over to Councilman Tom LaBonge, who called the Founding Four to the stage and read his Citation aloud. We were delighted he had come out on a Sunday night!

Following close on that, Thad Smith and Brian Sayers took stage for a hilarious but effective version of a live auction of the Mercedes-Benz 450SL generously donated by Marian Gibbons. Brian's 'auctioneering' was dazzling and, before we knew it, Thad was the happy new owner of the spiffiest car on the block and Hollywood Heritage was \$11,000 richer. A win / win situation.

Last but not least...everyone gathered in front of the stage for the 'Class Photo' with Gurdon Wattles again in the center. Arnold Schwartzman who, with his wife Isolde, had produced our beautiful invitation, supervised the shot, which was also covered by member Richard Rownak.

Mora's Modern Rhythmists then picked up the beat for dancing and listening pleasure until the last guests departed.

PS: we couldn't have done it without the cheerful assistance of Scherr Lilloco and her troupe of special event assistants.

New Museum Exhibits Now On Display

by Robert W. Nudelman

As described in our last issue, Jamie Rigler announced the donation of a matching grant of \$10,000 for the museum from the Rigler-Deutsch Foundation to use for the purchase of new exhibit items. The 1 to 3 match was met and over 800 new items have been added to the museum's archive as a result. This includes rare photos, posters, magazines, brochures, historic arti-

facts, postcards (our collection now includes over 3,000 on Hollywood and over 1,000 on Los Angeles), books, programs, and much more from the 1890s to the present.

Hollywood Heritage is very grateful to Jamie Rigler and the Rigler-Deutsch Foundation for this grant and opportunity. We also thank the many members who contributed the necessary donations to meet the grant's



Hollywood Heritage Secretary Libby Simon views the preserved caryatid statue from the facade of the 1919 Garden Court Apartment Building photo by Alan Simon

matching requirements. Some of the newly acquired items are currently on display at the museum.

Some other major donations made this year include Marion Davies oak desk from her Beverly Hills home from Hilda Bohem, arranged by Marc Wanamaker. Weighing just as much, but made of concrete is one of the five foot tall caryatid statues from the facade of the now demolished (in 1984) Garden Court Apartment Building, opened in 1919. This is the largest piece of the city landmark that was saved by the quick thinking in 1984 by Hollywood Heritage member Tony Villaneuva, who presented it to the museum through the arrangement of Kay Tornborg. A number of 1950s uniforms from the Ambassador Hotel were donated to the museum by Robert Koscielski.

Finally, in November, a number of artifacts from the excavation of the sets from the 1923 version of *The Ten Commandments* went on display. A three foot long hand, a sphinx paw, and a pharaoh's head bas relief highlight the four cases of items, courtesy of Peter Brosnan and John Parker, who have been in charge of the project. They located the site where DeMille buried the massive set in Santa Maria, California (it was the cheapest way to dispose of the 110 foot tall, 700 foot long set). The exhibit's plaster items were restored and repaired for display by Hollywood Heritage member Amy Hig-

ATTENTION HOLLYWOOD HERITAGE SHOPPERS

Get your 2006 calendars NOW! A new item! Beautiful, informative, practical, affordable, makes a great gift!! The calendar features the Lasky-DeMille Barn, inside and out, in its 4 sites and many functions over the years. Interesting historical data keyed to dates. Holidays, too! Also available: Hollywood Heritage's book *HISTORIC HOLLYWOOD: A Centennial History* by Robert W. Nudelman and Marc Wanamaker



Instead of cutting up your newsletter, jot your name on a piece of paper and enclose your check.

Historic Hollywood: _____ copies @ \$31.45 (members' rate w. 10% discount)

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gins. Many items still remain buried, or partially buried, in the sand dunes and are threatened by erosion and vandalism. Financial help is needed to save the site and allow more items to be displayed. If you're interested, contact Hollywood Heritage for more information to help save these cinematic treasures. The display will be at the museum for a limited time before going to Santa Maria, so come see the results of the only "Egyptian archeological" dig in North America, and for a lot less than the cost to see that other Egyptian museum exhibit that just left town.

Evenings @ The Barn

Winter Calendar

This fall, when traffic will be worse than ever, all *Evenings @ the Barn* will start promptly at 7:30 since the situation is SO BAD there is no point in waiting to start...we'd be there all night.

January

Thurs. 12th: Sue Lloyd, granddaughter of Harold Lloyd, will intro some of the films featured on the newly- restored boxed sets of Lloyd's best.

Thurs. 26th: Jim Pauley of Philadelphia will give only the second presentation of his documentation of several of the more interesting sites in Los Angeles where the Three Stooges filmed.

February

Thurs. 16th: Robert Birchard on *Francis Boggs and the Selig Polyscope Co.* Screening *The Cattle Rustlers* (1908), *Blackbeard* (1911) and *The Little Widow* (1911)

March

Thurs. 16th: Celebrating *100 years of Hollywood High*. Marc Wanamaker shows slides of the school and its graduates. Yearbooks and other memorabilia on display.

Wed. 22nd: Celebration of Bud Lesser's career in film and television on this first anniversary of his passing. Marc Wanamaker with slides; Screening: *The Saint's Return*

Keane *Continued from page 17*
producer Paul Politi, who continues today with Art Laboe, but started 45 years ago as a kid who co-wrote *Those Oldies But Goodies*, as well as playing drums on the session (with Wright on the piano). Bob also brought a clip reel of early television appearances by many of the acts and the original portable Ampex tape recorder that he used to record *Donna* in his home.

Great story tellers, on their own or commenting on each others stories, the evening was a true celebration of a studio and the people who came from it and helped to evolve the Hollywood entertainment industry and its world-wide influence. Birthday cakes for Ritchie Valens, whose 64th birthday was the following day, were enjoyed by all and the Valens family took the extra cake to the kids at the Ritchie Valens Recreational Center in Pacoima. One highlight of the event was when Bob and the Valens family got together again after discovering that the animosity that each through had developed for the other was nothing more than evil gossip and a 48 year old friendship was renewed to everyone's delight. And if one waited after the show officially ended, Bob pulled out his clarinet and played *Begin the Beguine*, the Artie Shaw classic. At 82 Bob showed why Shaw's arrangement was such a memory maker.

As has been discussed throughout this newsletter, another Hollywood cultural landmark is under threat as the Del-Fi Studios are slated for demolition next year. The studio would become others after Del-Fi left, including Mystic Studios where

part of Led Zeppelin's *Whole Lotta Love* was recorded. Hollywood Heritage has talked with the community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) about storing the 3,000 square foot second floor space, and reassembling it in the new project. Though



Ritchie Valens' sister Irma Valenzuela with Keane's original recording equipment at the Lasky/DeMille Barn, Hollywood Heritage Museum
photo by Alan Simon

not a perfect solution, the CRA is reviewing this as a possibility, preserving the "box" where the studio was for some other "respectful" use within the new project.

Even so, this once again demonstrates the failure of the current system to protect or even monitor our historic sites. This is why a survey of historically significant structures was to have been completed in 1986 according to the Redevelopment Plan, but has never been done (leaving almost all the work to defend historic structures to the volunteers of Hollywood Heritage). Others will come up next year, including legendary Cello Studios on Sunset Boulevard where Frank Sinatra, The Rolling Stones, Tom Petty, The Beach Boys, The Mommas and the Pappas, Bonnie Raitt, and many others recorded memorable classics.

Special thanks to Bob Keane, the Valenzuela family (especially Connie and Irma), Little Caesar, Charles Wright, and Paul Politi, and Rhino Records for helping to show why Del-Fi will not die.

Hollywood And Broadway Together Again At Last!

by Robert W. Nudelman

When the Broadway-Hollywood department store closed in 1979 after 48 years at Hollywood and Vine, it was the domino that fell and started a long line of closures that the Boulevard still has not recovered from. The 1927 structure itself was converted to offices with little success and is now being converted into condominiums.

Our last issue outlined the successful exterior renovation that Hollywood Heritage fought for, including the brick and terra cotta facade. The polychrome brick, now stripped of 41 years of dirty white paint, is even more spectacular than we imagined, and Hollywood Heritage has been thanked by many for its work to convince the owners, KOR Group, to make it happen. KOR Group itself has been one of the most appreciative and has been given a positive example as a result of this for other preservation projects.

But one element of the restoration was missing. The 30 foot plus tall neon sign on top of the Broadway was built facing south and was large enough that the nearby Hancock Park area could see it and be encouraged to visit Hollywood for shopping and dining. The sign accomplished this, but went dark permanently in 1979. An attempt made to remove it by a previous owner was thwarted when city Cultural Affairs Director Al Nodel nominated the Broadway, assisted by Hollywood Heritage, as a city landmark, including the rooftop sign.

Enter into the picture David Bohnett. Mr. Bohnett is a fan of neon and Hollywood, and puts his money where his mouth is. He put up the majority of the funding to pay for relighting and maintaining Hollywood's largest neon sign. Rededicated this past October 6



Hollywood Heritage Vice President John Clifford and Special Projects Director/Treasurer Kay Tornborg watched as the historic Broadway Hollywood rooftop sign was relit after decades of darkness.

photo by Stephen X. Sylvester

at 8:45 pm, it is visible now every night. But his generosity did not start there; he was also the force and finances behind the relighting of the Plaza Hotel sign, dark for over 30 years. That sign located immediately south of the Broadway, came on earlier this year thanks to Mr. Bohnett. Though somewhat blocked now by a billboard, plans are underway to have the billboard removed by summer (the plan to remove it goes back to many discussions between Hollywood Heritage and the Community Redevelopment Agency for over two years).

David Bohnett's gift to Hollywood and to the thousands of people who will view it each night is a major boost to the community. It is an example for others to follow, and he didn't have to be told to do it. It was his own initiative, supported literally and figuratively by KOR Group's dedication to restoring the Broadway-Hollywood building (special thanks to KOR's Kate Bartolo), that this landmark is once again becoming the crown of Hollywood and Vine with jewels that sparkle day and night.

Save 20%

Discount at Trastevere

Exciting news for those Hollywood Heritage members in Hollywood before an event at the museum or any other reason. Trastevere Ristorante Italiano, a new member to Hollywood Heritage, is offering all card carrying fellow members a 20% discount on their bill (gratuities not included). They are located on the fourth floor of the Hollywood and Highland Center right between the Babylonian elephants. Dine outdoors among the elements, along side the Babylonian arch and you can almost hear D.W. Griffith giving directions. All the more fitting as the sculptors used by Griffith to build the *Intolerance* Babylonian set were mostly from Italy. So enjoy Trastevere's excellent Italian food, which is already reasonably priced, and receive a 20% discount on top of it. Many thanks to Reda Alili for his generosity in giving this special benefit to members.

succeed by getting the Buchanans to sell rather than continue fighting to build a project that will be a poster child for what not to do with an historic building. And despite the other successful projects of the Buchanans and Pasadena, this is what they will be remembered for, and also for breaking a contract with the IRS to not subdivide the property.

The Old Spaghetti Factory Building

Located at 5739 Sunset Boulevard, this has been the home of the successful Old Spaghetti Factory restaurant for almost 30 years, who also owned the property. They sold it for a housing project site over a year ago, and then it was sold again for a 12-story condominium tower site. The structure was listed on the Community Redevelopment Agency's (CRA) list of historic structures in 1985 in the survey that was contracted to Hollywood Heritage. Of course the new owners did not see the building as historic and had prepared a report to say as much.

A brief look at the building's history covers a lot of ground. Opened in 1924 as a dealership for Peerless Automobiles, two years later it would serve as a dealership for Hudson-Essex autos. In 1928, the Motion Picture Museum Hall of Fame opened here. The first Hollywood museum and possibly the first movie museum anywhere, it was established by Harry Crocker, the black sheep of the Crocker banking family. Crocker had come to Hollywood to enter the movies and became an assistant director to Chaplin and had parts in some of his films, most notably *The Circus* (1928). He had the money, the enthusiasm, and the connections to open such a museum. Exhibits included Chaplin's costumes and the miniature log cabin from *The Gold Rush*, Buster Keaton's costumes, Valentino's French carriage from *Monsieur Beaucaire*, chariots and costumes from *Ben-*

Hur (1925), and much more (no one knows where all this ended up and I've looked for over 20 years).

In 1933 Western Broadcasting Company, owners of KNX radio moved here. This was KNX studios until moving down the street in 1937, leaving that site and Hollywood only a few months ago. In March 1936 CBS bought the company and KNX became their west coast flagship station while at this location.

In 1937 Max Reinhardt leased the building for his acting school and workshop. Reinhardt was one of the most respected theatrical director/teachers in the world, having



emigrated to America from Vienna in 1934. He came to direct a monumental production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* at the Hollywood Bowl (and two other California locations) playing to capacity crowds (20,000+) over several nights in the midst of the Depression. Its success was so great that Warner Brothers hired him to create a film version of it in 1935 including two of its new stars, Mickey Rooney and Olivia de Havilland (her part was sometimes played by Gloria Stuart) from the Bowl production. Reinhardt's acting school had a faculty that included Basil Rathbone and John Huston, and included such graduates as Nannette Fabray, Ann Savage, and Robert Ryan.

By 1943 radio once again occupied the building as KMPC "The Station of the Stars" bought the site. KMPC was then bought by the leg-

endary Gene Autry, the first piece of his eventual media empire. KMPC also used a stylized version of the building for their logo. In 1968 Autry moved KMPC a couple of blocks east to the old Warner Brothers Studios which he had purchased, along with television station KTLA, though KMPC continued with some usage of this site until 1971 when Autry sold it to Saul Pick. The Old Spaghetti Factory took over in 1978.

Despite all of this history, much of it quoted from the report prepared for the site itself, the preparer, architect Robert Chattel, deemed it as non-historic. There have been modi-

fications to the building as with any 80 year old structure. The façade mostly suffers from blocked off windows, all of which can be seen in outline and restored, as is often done in such cases. The interior lobby and side studios appear original or very close to it. Tile floors, high beamed ceiling, and a tile fireplace still decorate the lobby area. The large back room, where the main dining area is today, appears to have had its roof removed. The large bow truss ceiling seen in a 1928 or '29 photo is gone, replaced with a lower flat one. This was probably done in the late 1950s or early '70s when seismic and structural work was going on at the building to reduce weight on the earthquake bracing.

With these considerations an argument can be made that only the original front sections and exterior could

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Docent Profile: George Kiel

by Kay Tornborg, Docent Wrangler

Anyone who has visited the Hollywood Heritage Museum (aka The Barn) during the last four years will remember meeting George Kiel, whether the visit was during our weekend hours (Sat. & Sun., 11-4) or during an *Evening @ the Barn*. George has qualities that make him The Perfect Docent: 1)he enjoys volunteering OFTEN; 2) he loves telling the story of the Barn and the artifacts inside it; 3) he lives nearby and 4) he speaks fluent Spanish,



thanks to his mother's Mexican heritage. Are we lucky, or what!???

George joined Hollywood Heritage after reading an article in (of all things!) *House Beautiful* about Robert Nudelman and his then-current fight to save the Hollywood Bowl from demolition. He finished the article and picked up the phone, figuring (rightly) that Hollywood Heritage was his kind of organization. He'd visited the Barn more than 10 years ago, but a chance invitation from Yours Truly to attend an *Evening @ the Barn* AND work proved the lure of our charming, historic structure. George was enlisted as

a Barn Docent almost as fast as he signed up for membership.

In real life George is a Draper for films and television. His initial interest in costume design in the late '80s segued into drapery and anything to do with fabric: the furniture, carpets, drapes and related items we see on screens large and small. His early training in theatrical design resulted in a BFA from Ohio State University and then an MFA from USC.

George speaks with some amusement about his start as a preservationist in his hometown of Alliance, Ohio (between Akron and Canton, 40 mi, from Cleveland), where the past had little value. When he was 9 he circulated a petition to stop demolition of two Victorian homes. He persuaded his father to City Hall,

to take him but his plea fell on deaf ears. At 14 he allied with some grown-ups to rally support for preserving the local Carnegie Library. It's now a KFC. He also lamented the demolition of his grade school, a graceful structure with pressed tin ceilings. "The Alliance School Board's approach to improving the schools was to tear them down and build new ones. Kind of reminds me of LA," George remarked.

After the sale of his childhood home George's mother sent him his baby book, for safe-keeping. It was then he noted her penciled remark from his childhood: "George is ob-

essed with old houses and old antiques." A good start, we'd say!

George's special interest in the entertainment of the past is 'Stone Age' musicals: #1 is *Hollywood Revue of 1929*, followed closely by *Applause* (1929) with Helen Morgan and/or *The Show of Shows* from Warner Bros. Let us not omit *Paramount on Parade*. He is also devoted to Tin Pan Alley music and his formidable collection of 78's played on his Victrola.

Currently the proud owner of a 1924 Spanish home that is 'Hancock Park adjacent,' George's 'spare time' (when he's not at the Barn...) is spent "trying to restore it to beyond its original splendor. I thought tract houses were ONLY from the '50s...I didn't know my entire tract was built in 3 months!. On either side there are two model homes: English and Spanish...something to live up to.' The paperwork that came with the house points up the fact that it was built as part of a 'ring' around Hancock Park to separate apartment dwellers from mansion owners. Little houses were the buffer zone.

Somehow George manages to also run his own business, G.W. Kiel Interiors. He has specialized in homes of producers and actors of shows he has worked on. Obviously his work is a good calling card.

He was featured on *Entertainment Tonight!* for one job that entailed removing broken furniture from the home of an actor who-shall-remain-nameless after he and his wife had a well-publicized drunken brawl. In stark contrast, he spent the summer of 2000 living in Paris while he decorated an apartment there and had the time of his life going to Paris' flea markets for antiques.

He counts as the High Point of his movie career being the Draper on *Down with Love*, recreating a whole world of New York, c. 1963. "Ab-

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MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

In grateful recognition of their generous support, we would like to sincerely thank the following renewing members who have made contributions at the \$100 level and above as of September 2005. Category titles are names of historic Hollywood studios.

MONUMENTAL

PICTURES (\$10,000+)

Jamie Rigler

MAJESTIC (\$2500+)

Fran Offenhauser

Thaddeus Smith – *Music Box Theatre*

KEYSTONE (\$1000+)

Larry Bond–Bond Capital Group

Sharon & Ray Courts–
Hollywood and Celebrities Show

Marian Gibbons

Art Laboe Foundation

Kay Tornborg

BISON (\$500+)

Donelle Dadigan

David W. Lang

KALEM (\$250+)

Glenn Dismuke

Chatty & Donald Eliason

Johnny Grant

Stephen Lesser

*Los Angeles Fire Dept.
Historical Society*

Mr. & Mrs. Chapin Nolen

Kevin & Don Norte

Anthony Slide

TRIANGLE (\$100+)

Alice Allen

Mary Anton

Dan Barham

Jane & Richard Bartholomew

Nick Beck

Michael Berman

Tim Brandt

Elizabeth & Richard Brill

Brutus Productions Inc.

Mr. & Mrs. Lawrence H. Bulk

Bert Cassan

Violet & William Cavitt

Deborah & John Clifford

Miriam & Peter Colantuoni

Gini Colvig

Bill Condon & Jack Morrissey

Lena & Tommy Dangcil

Johnathon Daugherty

Gregg Davidson

Ken Denton

Allan Ellenberger

Morris & Diana Everett

Eric Garcetti & Amy

Wakeland

Peter Gutzmer

Barbara & Douglas Hadsell

Dr. R. E. Harold

Betty & Gunter Herman

Carol & Dan Hill

Allison Denman Holland

Todd Holland & Scotch Ellis

Loring

Don Hunt

International Al Jolson Society

Craig Kaiser

James Karen & Alba Francesca

Martin Kearns & Ken

Richardson

Jean & William Kelly

Patty & Joe Kowal

Mary Lambert

Mrs. Hilary F. MacKendrick

MANN Theatres

Beatrice & Al Marsella

Myron Meisel

Helen & Richard Nederhauser

Michael Nissman

Christine O'Brien

Outpost Homeowners

Association

Jon Padgett & Mark Howell

Steve Paolozzi

Mark Penn

Betty Pettitt

Susan Pinsky & D. Starkman

Meg & David Sameth

Andrew Schwartz

Kevin Simpson

Barbara Smith

Eleanor & John Stern

Lois Surmi

Steve Sylvester

Patricia Eliot Tobias

Randy Van Ausdall

Karen & Eric Warren

Debra & Fares Wehbe

Lon Weyland & Alan Paull

DOCENT *Continued from page 24*

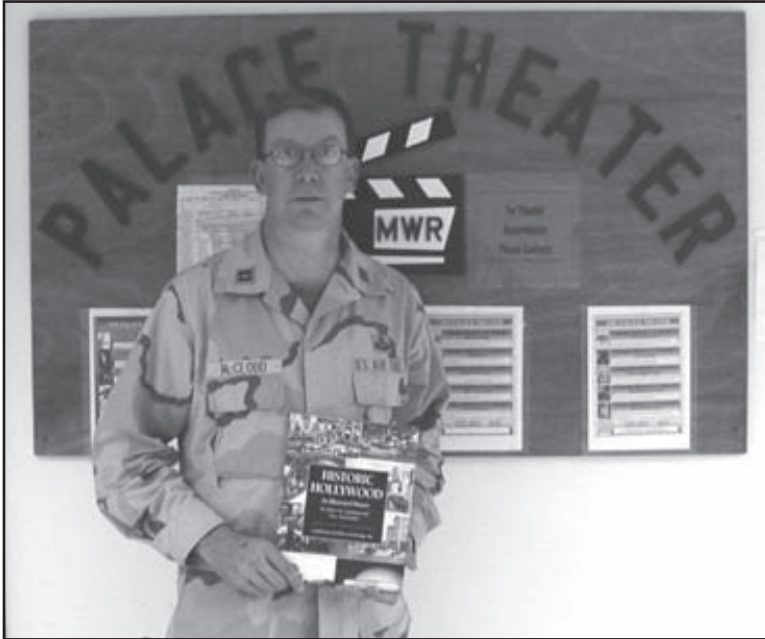
solutely the favorite thing I've ever done." His work can also be seen in *The Last Samurai*, *Along Came Polly*, *Mr. & Mrs. Smith*, *The Beachboys: An American Family* and *The Island*. And on TV: *Empty Nest*, *Blossom*, *the John LaRoquette Show* and *Golden Girls*, to list a few. He is currently doing Disney Channel's *The Suite Life* and *That's So Raven* in between stints at the Barn!

We're thrilled to say George is also a cat lover, proven fact by his 2 sister cats, Venus and Serena and the ever-darling Orange Kitty.

We Get Letters:

Hollywood Heritage News From Members Around the World

collected by John Clifford



member Rodolfo Garavagno from Buenos Aires, Argentina. While his English is not perfect, his sentiments certainly are understood by us all.

In its 25 years of life something strangely beautiful happened in that

T*his email, along with the photo above, was sent to me just after our 25th Anniversary celebration. Mike McCloud is a member who is currently at home, but he indicated that he will soon be traveling again.*

Hello John,

It was nice to meet you at the Gala. I thought you might be interested to see where Historic Hollywood ended up. Kay mailed the book to me while I was in Baghdad last summer so I posed for a picture. I'm in front of the entrance to a theater in the basement of Saddam's former Presidential Palace, now the US Embassy in Baghdad. Movies are shown nightly and there is never a bit of trouble, everyone is armed! I read somewhere you are the third man behind the preparation of the book, doing all of the hard work while Robert and Marc get the glory. ;-) Thanks to all for the great job, I am enjoying my copy.

Mike McCloud

T*he following was sent to the newsletter by our friend and*

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place, desert, does not much more of one hundred years. I say this, because often I have asked-perhaps others as I they asked the same thing because it indeed had to be in that point of the city Nuestra Señora Reina de Los Angeles, that was born a spring of light and illusions called Hollywood. Clear. He is not nothing easy that to somebody is happened to him that something happens thus and in the morning makes specific it to the night without an alchemy luck in which they participate creative like that they made that city... That it happened, asked to me?

Sometimes, I found answers that did not convince much to me. At least, it did not like to my heart. Like that hypothesis that Hollywood is born because the new creators, they needed to run of the east to avoid the legal restrictions sketched by Edison.

But, really, never it conformed that argument to me. It would be necessary to ask that it crossed the mind of the Selig, Horsley,

Laemmle, Griffith, Ince, De Mille, Lasky...but sincerely, I do not believe that that is a deeply logical argument like so that one was created makes of dreams destined to immortality like Hollywood. With the historical materials that people of the Fairbanks Center have sent me and mainly, my friend Marc Wanamaker from Hollywood Heritage, I found by aim. ¡Eureka!, the most logical hypothesis.

This was for my the reason by which Hollywood is Hollywood!: When Selig films the exteriors of *Count of Montecristo* in the coast of Santa Monica, and much more even though Horsley takes to the comedies of Nestor Films, the unthinkable thing happened. The new producers, settled down in the New Jersey and New York found something different in those films. **THE LIGHT!**

What happens that those outer takings have very many more light than those than we made here? Asked Edison to Porter. And the question did not find answer until somebody related to Selig, settled down already in Edendale, it filmed a taking twice, and in different places.

One in Hollywood, probably in earth in where today the Barn of the Heritage is nailed. There, to a flank of Highland, before the same existence of Highland. Soon it took the train in the Station Union, and crossed everything to the country towards New York.

It looked for a day of sun similar to which had chosen in Hollywood (it was summer) and filmed. Soon, it compared the two takings there and he looked the difference.

The sun of Californian was differ-

continued on page 28

Tribute to a Great Man

by Robert W. Nudelman

With the recent passing of editor/director/producer/educator, Robert Wise, Hollywood loses one of the last of a great breed. Mr. Wise was not just a great film editor (*Citizen Kane*, *The Magnificent Ambersons*, etc.), director (*Day the Earth Stood Still*, *Executive Suite*,



Tribute To A Bad Man, etc.), or director/producer (*West Side Story*, *The Sound of Music*, *Star Trek: The Motion Picture*, etc.), but he worked to make Hollywood and the movie industry better for everyone.

He was the first to appear at the Ray and Sharon Courts' Hollywood Celebrities and Collector's Show to autograph books and photos for Hollywood Heritage, setting the stage for many others and the raising of tens of thousands of dollars for the Hollywood Heritage Museum.

He also made possible one of the few success stories of historic preservation in Beverly Hills when he led the way to relocate moving the Margaret Herrick Library for the Academy of Motion Picture Arts

and Sciences into the 1928 water pumping plant building. Abandoned for several years and facing demolition, the Academy approved the move there, saving and restoring this historic building through the leadership of Mr. Wise. He told me he was going to get the library built because it was desperately needed and he was "tired of hearing how we need to do it every year," and not seeing it get done. A man of action, I knew at that point he would make it a reality.

His efforts created a landmark library in a landmark structure in a city famous for demolishing its landmarks. This would set the precedent for years later when the Academy located its film archives in Hollywood at the old Don Lee Mutual Studios building, another important restoration project (it should be noted that the architect on both of these projects was Hollywood Heritage's current president, Fran Offenhauser, who made these hopes and dreams a reality).

I knew Robert Wise for almost 30 years and he was always someone who enjoyed talking about Hollywood; past, present, and future. He was a gentleman and a scholar in a time when even the understanding of what that means is becoming harder to comprehend. Even as his health was failing him, last year he still had hoped to make another appearance at the Collector's Show for the Museum (he genuinely enjoyed talking to his many fans). A true genius of the cinema, without any pretensions, a benefactor to all who asked, and one of only a very few people of whom I've never heard anything negative said. Robert Wise was a friend and inspiration to Hollywood and its history, of which he will always be an important part.

serve America communities, which are many). Preservation Action has asked its members to weigh in on our support of Preserve America.

It's a Presidential initiative for preservation that would support heritage tourism planning in hundreds of communities nationwide -- a good thing. But it also represents this aforementioned shift toward less government, more private investment and volunteerism that (in the current budget scenario) siphons funds away from the nation's only bricks and mortar grant program.



Explore and Enjoy Our Heritage

These are rough times for preservation advocates, but these threats represent why Preservation Action was established in the first place in 1974. Threats to core regulations, funding and tax law reflect ignorance of preservation's relevance to a civil society, healthy communities, and the relationship between the past, our personal identity and our connection to others where we live, and throughout the country.

Now is the time to think, admit confusion, learn, and make time to speak up. Let's make the most of this opportunity to educate our leadership. Build the movement by being part of it.

10 Commandments Footwear Sought

Query: Do you know anyone who has any footwear reputed to be from DeMille's silent *Ten Commandments* (1923) OR *The King of Kings* (1927)? If you have any information, please call Kay Tornborg at (323)467-0287. No reward but lots of thanks.

Museum Gets Restoration Painting

by Robert W. Nudelman

As part of the museum's 20th anniversary, the 110 year old barn is getting painted. But what started out as a clean and paint project took a turn when it was discovered that most of the building had never been stripped of old peeling paint. Past efforts had just cleaned and painted over existing paint. Some areas had at least six different colors underneath using 8-10 different coats of paint. Some colors appear to reflect those needed to best photograph the barn on black and white or color film stock from the 1940s to the '70s. Grays, beiges, greens, and brown are the previous colors before the yellow used by Hollywood Heritage since 1984, based on the approximate original color, pre-studio filming.

The old paint was scraped and sanded off where it was flaking or uneven and the barn lost its ragged look, appearing now as it originally did. Cracks and nail holes were repaired and refilled and silicone beading was replaced between every third board. Deteriorated window frames were repaired and stabilized as the windows, frames, and trim also revealed several colors underneath.

The complete project will be finished early next year as the barn receives its first comprehensive restoration and paint job in over 50 years (DeMille himself probably supervised it the last time). The project has been led and supervised by Amy Higgins, who has worked on paint and material restoration on Grauman's Chinese Theater, the Avalon (Palace) Theater, Pantages Theater, Subway Terminal Building, Wattles Mansion, and other landmarks with labor intensive assistance from Laura Mahaney, Robert W. Nudelman, and Amy's mother,

Karen, who came in to help from Philadelphia. Next time you visit, take a look at the barn's new birthday suit.

Letters *Continued from page 26*

ent! This much more near the earth that in other parts of the world, I said!

Clear then. If I always felt the caress of the sun with much greater proximity than until in the own Blue Coast. That was what brought to Hollywood the other pioneers. That sun had the magical enchantment to caress the creators as in no other part happened. That is that stops those that those that argues that the cause of the foundation of Hollywood was a strictly legal subject, which they follow then with a freezer in the chest. Hollywood is much but much more. And this also, is for my the main reason that the heirs of the founders next to other magical men, are there, in The Barn , preserving and protecting the magic.

Unfortunately, My body is very far from my loved Hollywood, but with a piece of my soul and my heart rambling permanently from Gower and Sunset to La Brea... zigzagging sometimes by Cherokee to plunge to me in the Cross Road, before arriving at the Chaplin studios. And walking, without never stepping on a star, by I came until the Hollywood Boulevard and of there, always greeting the mural "You are a Star" in the corner of Wilcox, until the Egyptian, kissing a nice woman with heart alive. A woman transformed in my Hollywood's bride, one Marilyn and Rita Hayworth, fused, while we drink a coffee in the Snow White. Late, the Captain, Roosevelt Hotel with the his Chaplin phantom waiting in the hall, the Chinese and finally, looking to rest in that fabulous stable located in Highland, meters beyond Franklin...[The Barn!... doing a saluting catholic always when seeing the cross in the hill and my adored

Hollywood White Sign. I love Hollywood, I love Hollywood Heritage and all his members, because they protect the magic and work creating eternities.

Congratulations Hollywood Heritage. This it is a desire of Rodolfo Garavagno and his children.

HILLVIEW *Continued from page 14*

phy beds. The apartments have new appliances including dishwashers, washers and dryers (in each unit), garbage disposals, refrigerators, gas ranges and ovens. Each unit has new wood floors. The bathrooms have new fixtures and tile floors. Each unit has an individual heating and air conditioning unit for comfort. Among the common amenities are high-speed Internet access, rooftop deck and Jacuzzi, and a 24-hr. business center.

"A building that played such an instrumental part in film history needed to be preserved," says Rouze. "It had long since become a hazard and nuisance to the neighborhood and the time was overdue to restore this national treasure to its former beauty." Rouze is sure that "the Hillview Apartments will once again be the premiere place to live in Hollywood."



courtesy Hollywood Heritage Museum collection

be saved in a legal challenge as the back half does not relate as strongly to the building's period of significance (1924-71). Whereas we would prefer to keep it all, modifications are limiting this possibility. It's bad enough to see the restaurant leave as its antiques and affordable food had an old Hollywood charm that anyone could afford to be a part of.

After discussions with Hollywood Heritage, the developer decided it was better to keep the original front area and restore the façade as part of their new project. This compromise keeps all that is known to be historic and restores it, allowing for a new project. We were also helped by Hollywood Heritage board member, architect Bill Roschen, who is working with the developer to ensure that the restoration will be done right.

But the proposed new project is a big question mark. The one story Old Spaghetti Factory building would be built into a 12-story office and condo tower. Though set backs are planned to somewhat reduce the impact, the 1924 structure looks like a wedge struck into the corner of the new tower. Additionally, the tower is "modern" in design and does nothing to complement this Spanish Revival style "cornerstone." Hollywood Heritage has not approved this part of the project, and will listen to the neighborhood council for the community's input on the impacts of traffic and scale presented by this tower. The current height limit is only four stories, and even that allowed only with certain conditions being met. The variances for this project are many. The design also needs work for the reasons stated here.

As with any project, this will be a long negotiating process, Chattel's report alone was dated, fittingly, on April 1, 2005. But, at a minimum, the historic section will be preserved and restored. The process here though also demonstrates the problem with a system that argues against historic

importance when significant names, events, and businesses of importance to the growth and development of Hollywood are dismissed. What then is "historic" here?

1800 Highland Avenue

This is not a battle to save an historic building, which this one certainly is not. A relatively nondescript 1970s seven-story office building, it has a key location at Highland and Franklin Avenues, a location deemed to have the most traffic anywhere in Los Angeles with over 12 million trips per year according to the latest figures.

As such it is the major gateway to Hollywood connecting it to the Hollywood Freeway a mile to the north. For the past several years it also had the distinction as the most blighted part of Hollywood, where a driver coming into Hollywood could see from one spot, 14 billboards, rooftop signs, and wall covering supergraphics, many illegal and without a permit. But the past two city attorneys refused to enforce existing codes and instead accepted large, six-figure campaign contributions from sign companies. Both Mayor Hahn and City Attorney Rocky Delgadillo accepted over \$200,000 each from just one company, one of the smaller ones at that, Regency Outdoor Advertising, as reported in the *Los Angeles Times* 10/23/05. Neither felt that the large contributions and the unwillingness to enforce the laws against these donors were improper.

The 1800 building sits in the middle of this entry into Hollywood, arguably one of the ugliest of any major urban area in the country. This is the unfortunate image Hollywood puts forth to visitors and residents, and the plans are afoot to match this mess at all entry points into Hollywood.

Why is this? The city recently, after years of debate, put forth a new billboard ordinance to reduce the number of billboards in the city. Though simply removing the

existing illegal ones, estimated at 30% of the city's total would be an immediate and substantial improvement. What the city created, along with Hollywood property owners and the Chamber of Commerce, was a plan where supergraphics, large vinyl signs that cover the sides of buildings, would be allowed in Hollywood and part of downtown, and nowhere else. The auto traffic downtown is not nearly as heavy as it is in Hollywood so all interest is in covering Hollywood. One can even remove billboards in other parts of the city and in exchange put new ones in Hollywood, but not vice versa. In other words, what is blight in the rest of Los Angeles is somehow positive for Hollywood.

To those of us who do not benefit financially from this two class system, this makes no sense, and this is reiterated in the 1986 Hollywood Redevelopment Plan, Section 516:

"It is recognized that that coordination of signs and billboards within the project area affect its appearance and image. Therefore it is the *intent* of the Plan that the Agency may, after public hearing, adopt additional sign and billboard standards for a portion of or the entire project which may be more *restrictive* than city standards in order to further the goals of this established plan" (emphasis added).

This would refute the current expanded use of billboards, supergraphics, etc., as now being granted by the city and the CRA and demonstrate the negative impacts from such signage, including that proposed for 1800 Highland Ave. as not meeting the goals of the Plan. The Redevelopment Plan supersedes city laws, which is why it can, and should be more restrictive as explained above. If reducing billboards meets the goals of the Plan, it goes without saying that increasing billboards, etc. does therefore not meet

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WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

Walter Albert
Paul Allison
Gordon Bachlund
Laura Binkley
Garret Boyajian & George Ridjanack
Tamra Brown
Ted E.C. Bulthaupt III
Michael Callahan
Ray Campi
Lillian Chain
George A. Crittenden
Jerry Cabbage
Dearly Departed Tours LLC
Patty Dryden & Brien Siberell
Marni & Robert Elen
Todd Estes
Mark Farquhar
Pat Felten-Tashma & Tom Dinger
Barbara & Douglas Hadsell
Peyton Hall
Carol & Dan Hill
Don Hokanson
Don Hopkins
Craig Kaiser
Laura June Kenny
Katy Lain
Paul Matthew Layne
Elizabeth Minehart
Charles W. Mountain
Mrs. Gloria Newhouse
Christine O'Brien
Deanna Hardy O'Mara
Steve Paolozzi
Jim Pauley
Dr. Robert S. Rich
Dan Riley
Brett Sales
Eric Sanjurjo
Jeffrey Schwarz – *Automat Pictures*
Eric Senat
Steven Silverstein
Mark Simon
Woodward Smith
Donald Stables
Patricia Eliot Tobias
Billie Nelson Tyrell
Robert W. Vautherine
Melvin Weiss
Jan Westman
Christian Ziebarth

OPEN CALL: Docents, male or female, any age. If you enjoy history and telling people about it, this is your gig. No pay but very rewarding. Work one weekend day a month, 11-4, **and/or** during *Evenings @ the Barn*, one Thursday night a month. **VERY FLEXIBLE.** Only requirement is a 'customer service' outlook. Call Kay Tornborg at (323)467-0287.

New Old Streetlights For Hollywood Boulevard

by Robert W. Nudelman

When the Hollywood Improvement Association and the Hollywood Chamber of Commerce worried about the loss of business on Hollywood Boulevard in the late 1950s, a number of grand plans were drawn up. The highly popular Walk of Fame, the continually misunderstood ficus trees (which are being slowly replaced today a block at a time with palm trees, aesthetically appealing, but providing no shade for pedestrians and shoppers) and the five star light fixtures.



This is the style of streetlight that was in Hollywood throughout the 40s and 50s Photo courtesy of Marc Wanamaker/Bison Archives

Announced in September 1957 the new "light standards will cast 12.2 candlepower (sic)—10 times as bright as the present lighting," and "with construction scheduled to begin on or around March 15, 1958" (*This Is Hollywood* magazine, September 30, 1957). For the record, the street lighting committee was composed of lighting legend Otto K. Oleson, Harry M. Sugarman, and William J. Daniels. The idea was good, but over time it lost its effectiveness. The light fixture itself was supposed to have

illuminated the 5 stars on the sides, but it was rarely visible.

The actual bases and posts were installed in the late 1940s. By the 1980s, the fixtures from 1958 were breaking down regularly and would only be fixed when two of the three bulbs were out as it required removing and rebuilding the fixture, by then at a cost of \$4,000 per fixture. By 1988 requests were made by the Department of Street Lighting (DSL) to replace them. At the old Hollywood Economic Revitalization Effort meetings this presentation was made and I had favored a more classic looking double fixture as is seen on Wilshire Boulevard, presenting photos of them to the DSL. Current Hollywood Heritage board member Aaron Epstein, who had also been with the Hollywood Improvement Association, stated that an extra fixture was needed to go over the sidewalk as the black terrazzo absorbed the existing light, leaving the pedestrian area darker than normal.

Well, with your tax dollars at work, this past fall 2005, the DSL finally finished the project first requested for information about 17 years earlier. Late, but it was done right. The two 1930s style light fixtures illuminate the Walk of Fame areas of Hollywood Boulevard and Vine Street brighter than ever and a third fixture brightens the Walk of Fame itself as bright as the one in Disneyworld. As for historic precedent, when the posts and bases were installed in the '40s, they had a single fixture on top identical in design to the current ones, which now has two as on Wilshire. The design is standard and has been for over 70 years. It is easy and inexpensive, comparatively, to repair. Much brighter and more energy efficient, progress has been made by

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Evenings @ The Barn

Art Deco Los Angeles and Arnold Schwartzman Open Fall Season

The fall 2005-2006 season of *Evenings @ The Barn* began on October 20 with a special presentation by author and Hollywood Heritage Board member Arnold Schwartzman on Art Deco Landmarks in Los Angeles. The evening featured a slide show, showcasing over 300 examples of Art Deco in and around the Los Angeles area that included building facades, signage, architectural elements, fences, grillworks, and others.



Mr. Schwartzman is an Academy Award winning documentarian and the author of the just released *Deco Landmarks: Art Deco Gems of Los Angeles*, as well as *Designage: The Art of the Decorative Sign*, among others. He is an officer of the Order of the British Empire and a member of the British Academy of Film and Television Arts (BAFTA), as well as the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences. He is also a noted graphics designer who has been responsible for many of the Academy Awards posters as



well as special printed items for the Academy.

The near capacity audience also had an opportunity to purchase Arnold's book and have it personally autographed. All-in-all a very good opening to another season.

York And Laemmle Sign For Museum



by Robert W. Nudelman

At the October 1 and 2 Hollywood Collectors and Celebrities Show, screen and stage legend Michael York was mobbed by his fans while helping to raise funds for the Hollywood Heritage Museum. His latest book, *Are My Blinders Showing?*, published to rave reviews a week earlier was popular and a few signed copies are at the museum for that unique holiday present. The book chronicles Michael's adventures in filming in Russia before and after communism, giving a first-hand account of the changes in politics, society, and movie making. Due to this work on *Casablanca* that weekend at the Pantages for an Actors Fund charity show, he had to cut his time signing

autographs to a minimum. He has, though, has left a limited number of signed copies of the book at the Hollywood Heritage Museum gift shop.

Three weeks short of her 96th birthday, Carla Laemmle was also surrounded by fans the day of the show while signing for the museum. Carla's uncle, Carl Laemmle, founded Universal Pictures and she *lived* on the lot from 1922 to 1936. She spoke the opening lines in *Dracula* (1930), and was a featured dancer in *Phantom of the Opera* (1925), and *Hollywood Review* (1929) to name but a few classic titles. Both Marc Wanamaker and I were hard pressed keeping up with her as she never tires of talking with fans and after hundreds of signings, her signature was still perfect. Word of Carla's appearance spread throughout the show and stars such as Stella Stevens, Linda Blair, and Elvira came to meet here. And the show's producers, long-time Hollywood Heritage champions, Sharon and Ray Courts, have asked her to come back as requests for her return have been among the most in the show's 15-year history.

Thanks again to Michael York (one of Hollywood's most generous supporters of numerous non-profits,



including the California Youth Theater at the Ivar Theater, of which he is the long-time chair), the human Energizer Bunny Carla Laemmle, and Sharon and Ray Courts whose next show is January 27 and 28 at the Burbank Airport Hilton (more info at hollywoodcollectorshow.com).

the goals of the Plan, and is thereby in non-compliance, which would invalidate the permits, according to the Plan:

“All development (whether public or private) shall be subject to review and approval by the Agency. All development in the Project Area must conform to the Redevelopment Plan.”, Section 407.1.1 page 16 (emphasis added).

What is proposed for 1800 Highland is to reface the building to improve it architecturally, and then cover four sides permanently with supergraphic wall signs and also to permanently add a rooftop sign. The refacing is a waste as the giant billboards will be the actual architecture, turning the building into a 7-story tall signpost. Welcome to Hollywood!

Beside the city law being in non-conformance with the law and intent of the Redevelopment Plan in general, this project pushes the definition of a ‘variance’ to a new level of absurdity. The most flagrant of the new sign ordinances allowances for billboards is, of course, in the area of contention, the Hollywood Boulevard National Register Historic District, though no comment has been made on how this will comply with the federal standards. 1800 Highland sits across from the high density billboard area, and could not once again be covered with supergraphics even under the new ordinance. So the new owners, CIM Group, have asked for a variance from the city so as to be included with the more lenient district. Then, after approving that, they asked concurrently to have another variance from this first variance to double the amount of billboards/supergraphics that would be allowed.

So, the Hollywood core district with the most lenient sign laws in Los Angeles is a variance from the rest of the city, and then a further

variance from the rest of Hollywood. Therefore CIM has requested a variance from a variance for a variance of a variance. The absurdity of this qualifies for Ripley’s and begs the question, why? CIM claims that they need the additional sign money, and it will be in the millions of dollars, to pay for improvements to the building. First any variance amounts to a public subsidy by allowing someone to do something for a profit without paying additional money to the city outside of a small one time fee or permit. Second, a variance can only be issued by showing that significant hardship has occurred.

Obviously this is not the case here. CIM, one of the largest developers in Hollywood and downtown Los Angeles knows the rules, and sat in on the creation of the new sign ordinance for Hollywood and were well aware of its conditions, which they frequently break without penalty. They bought the building a year ago with a full understanding of all conditions and are experienced enough to know what the renovation costs would be. To claim a year later that they cannot proceed to maintain and improve their property is not a hardship. Everything they know now they knew when they bought the building. If indeed they somehow cannot proceed forward, then it was a bad business decision on their part and the taxpayers and community who see the building are not to make up for CIM’s stupidity. Simply, they planned to do this all along. In any of these cases, the legal and ethical definition of a hardship to qualify for even a single variance, never mind one from the fourth dimension, is not met and can only, by law, be denied by the city, and even more so by the CRA.

So far, a hearing has been held for this project before a zoning administrator in the planning department on November 18, with a report due back in January. Hollywood Heritage testified at the hearing, giving the

points outline above. Similar opposition was given by the neighborhood council for the area and the Hollywood Heights Homeowner Association. City council member LaBonge, who represents the area, is still reviewing this issue according to his deputy, who was at the hearing.

The importance here is one for the overall aesthetics of Hollywood, but also to stop this abuse before it moves even more into the historic district. This project is a test to see just how far the city and CRA will allow a developer to go, and this is about as far as one can push. The article below on Sunset and Vine Tower will show how this same attack has been launched at the other end of the historic district on a building that the CRA claimed was historic but now because of potential billboard revenues, is not historic.

Sunset & Vine Tower

The CRA prepared a Mitigated Negative Declaration (Neg Dec) under CEQA on June 22 to claim that this project would have no significant negative impacts. This for a project where the Sunset & Vine Tower would be stripped of its outer surface, or skin, and be replaced with a more modern glass one. But the real reason behind this is to allow for a redesign of the surface area so as to allow for supergraphic vinyl billboards to cover the four sides. They would be framed and front lit from that frame until 2:00 am.

The size of these proposed signs is 140 feet tall by 36 feet wide. How tall is this compared to the neighborhood? Each sign is taller than the Broadway or the 12 story Taft buildings at Hollywood and Vine, 2 blocks north. Actually, the four signs are taller than any structure in Hollywood except the tower itself and the 22-story House of Blues building (6255 Sunset), becoming the 3rd, 4th, 5th, and 6th tallest structures (when framed and lighted) in Hollywood. Somehow the Neg Dec concluded that this

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2004-05 Ends On High Notes

by Kay Tornborg

The season ended on a merry note with June 16th's screening of *The Singing Kid*, putatively starring Al Jolson but numbers are legion that would swear the star is really Sybil Jason. The concentration, charm and immediacy are all there in her winning performance. Miss Jason had been scheduled to join us for the screening and sign her new book, *My Fifteen Minutes*, but a family illness cancelled her plans.

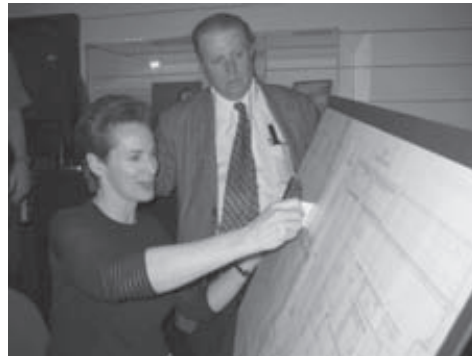
Trains rolled into our 'station' for the April 21st Evening...with



Steve Waller with the model train set up he brought, showing some of the trains that were present on opening day of Union Station
photo by Alan Simon.

HH member and rail buff John Petros and a few of his friends. Steve Waller set the tone perfectly in his impeccable conductor's outfit and punched all of our tickets before Marc Wanamaker began his archival slides of Los Angeles stations, trains and the occasional use of both by the film industry. John followed up with his copy of Ward Kimball's 'home movie,' on the Opening Day of Union Station, May 2, 1939. Our president, Fran Offenhauser, brought us all up-to-date with slides of her work on the 1999 restoration

of Union Depot by her firm, Offenhauser/Mekeel. There was also wonderful railroad equipment and memorabilia on display, courtesy of Steve Waller, as well as an invitation and reply card for Opening Day festivities with a program covering the



Fran Offenhauser, preservation architect and President of Hollywood Heritage discusses plans of Union Depot with a guest of the Evening @ The Barn program on Union Depot
photo by Alan Simon

gala goings-on.

One of our most ambitious programs to date, and the only one (so far!) to wind up on the NBC Nightly News, was the March 10th celebration of the 90th anniversary of the founding of Universal City. Tuesday, March 10, 2005 was exactly 90 years to the day . . . accuracy insisted on by Robert Nudelman, who guided the content of this program from beginning to end.

Marc Wanamaker was again the lead-off, with wonderful slides from not only the era but the exact day. It is difficult to understand, today, what a huge event this was in the



For Universal City's 90th Anniversary, our special guest was 95 year-old Carla Laemmle (center), neice of Universal founder Carl Laemmle
photo by Alan Simon

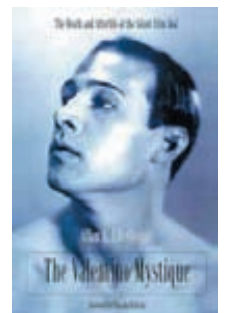
history of Los Angeles. More than 10,000 people trekked to the dusty Cahuenga Pass hillside to watch the free festivities meant to encourage people to come and see how movies were actually made, a novel idea at the time. It was fascinating to also see three short films about the actual content of the Universal tour, from 1915-1924.



Long time Hollywood Heritage / Silent Society silent film accompaniest, Michael Mortilla, brings to life the Universal Studios tour film
photo by Alan Simon.

The celebration was complete with birthday cakes...not one but two (vanilla and chocolate!) generously provided by Thad Smith, our member from the Music Box Theater. Y-a-a-a-y, Thad!!! They were on the news, too!

Back in the Dark Ages...February 24th, to be exact, we were treated to some fascinating research and stories on Rudolph Valentino by Allan R. Ellenberger, author of *The Valentino Mystique*, a well-researched biography. Mr. Ellenberger (a former docent in the Barn!) not only spoke but also signed his book. The screened biopic, *The Legend of Valentino*, gave an excellent overview of Valentino's extraordinary life and death, for those who wanted a few loose ends tied together; a couple of 'myths' were exploded during the heavy Q&A afterwards.



would not be an impact and would blend in with other signage. Even more deceitful, the Neg Dec declared that the billboards were good for the community as they would, “contribute to the visual uniqueness of the Hollywood area” (page 20, Neg Dec).

Yes, they are unique. But as the Redevelopment Plan stated, billboard projects should be more restrictive and these are gigantic. Obviously the building’s owners, CIM Group, are not telling advertisers that this will blend into the neighborhood. They realize that these signs will be seen for many miles and be worth millions to them as dominant features within Hollywood at a major intersection. The south facing sign will overpower the visual importance of the newly re-lit Broadway-Hollywood neon sign, and any other sign or billboard in Hollywood.

This would be blight in any other neighborhood. But in Hollywood it becomes an asset, at least for the CIM Group. As people come to the area from all directions they will be greeted with billboards galore, whether on Highland from the north, Vine from the south, Sunset from the east or west. The Neg Dec’s “visual uniqueness” reference is that other communities wouldn’t allow this monstrosity. This also requires a variance to, once again, double the amount of signage allowable even under the revised sign codes. So the CRA and Councilman Garcetti have to approve this, and the CRA already has. It is up to the Councilman to protect Hollywood from 140 foot ads for beer and footwear.

The other concern is stripping off the building’s surface so as to make these supergraphics possible with a new design. The tower was declared historic by the 2003 historic survey done by the CRA. As usual, the developer was asked to determine if it really was, and they said no. So once again in what we are told is a protected historic resource in order

to get the Redevelopment Plan approved, is now no longer historic when “further review” is done, although such reconsideration is not described in the Plan.

Reasons given to resurface in the Neg Dec are meaningless. The building is to be converted to condominiums, as has been done downtown and elsewhere on many older and historic buildings, yet never have any required to be resurfaced. This is being done solely to accommodate the new signage. In addition, the open plaza space in front of the building will be filled in with retail stores. Any historic importance by virtue of the tower’s design will be completely removed.

The CRA’s October 20 Memorandum on the project to get its approval continued this bizarre form of reasoning. Despite the size and having no knowledge of what the actual supergraphics would show, it claims that it would not “detract from the scenic quality of Sunset Boulevard” (page 6). How can such a claim be made of 140 foot tall billboards? This goes against every opinion or fact concerning the negative impacts of billboards. If this was true, why limit or eliminate them elsewhere in the city?

Additionally, the Memorandum heralds the removal of two on-site billboards as an exchange for the 4 supergraphics. “Visual clutter will be limited by the removal of the existing signs” (page 7). The two being removed are within 30 feet of the ground while the new ones will rise to a height of 270 feet. The two being removed contain a total of 1250 square feet of advertising while the new ones contain 20,160 square feet. Yet somehow this exchange is a positive trade off visually. The Memorandum is full of such idiotic references that these billboards will improve Hollywood, including on page 6 how these will “reflect” on “Hollywood as the global center of the entertainment industry.” If only the city did go to this much effort and bending (breaking)

of the law to keep the entertainment industry in Hollywood (see CBS article, page 5), never mind the psychic knowledge of sign content in that statement.

Finally, as with the 1800 Highland Building, CIM Group claims, as does the Memorandum, that the variances to allow this are necessary for economic hardship. Once again, they bought a building that cannot be repaired without this extra income, knowledge they would have to have had prior to the purchase. So they bought the building expecting to get the variances, which is by definition of the law not a hardship. They simply overpaid, and want the taxpayers and community to subsidize them for their poor judgment.

Even if they were correct, no where is a budget provided to show how much renovation money is needed. Nothing shows the revenue stream from the billboards to show if 2 or 3 would cover their costs. Finally, there is no agreement of any kind that any of the money will go toward renovation or when it will be done if the billboards go up and the condo market drops off, then what? Without this information or any guarantees, this is nothing more than a scam and the city knows it.

Street Lights *Continued from page 30*

adopting the past.

Whether this was the culmination of a 17 year sojourn, or merely a coincidence that it finally happened this way after years of talk, we’ll never know. But thanks to the Department of Street Lighting, Councilman Eric Garcetti, and the Hollywood Boulevard Business Improvement District, who operate the old assessment that funded the Hollywood Improvement Association and now maintains the lights, and to Aaron Epstein, who sat on all three committees since the 1950s before arriving at Hollywood Heritage and pushed for better lighting during that entire time. Now, about those Christmas lights used in the ’30s and ’40s. . .

Hollywood Heritage Mourns The Passing of Attorney Larry Teeter

by Robert W. Nudelman

Attorney Larry Teeter passed away on July 31, 2005 in Conchitas, Mexico, where he had gone to seek alternative treatment for advanced lymphoma. Whenever an uphill legal battle against a developer or some government agency required an activist attorney, Larry Teeter was there. Larry was Hollywood Heritage's attorney for the three year battle to save the Hollywood Bowl's 1929 orchestra shell. In court from 2000-2003, Larry fought a desperate battle—what else would you call a case where the basis of our loss was that Judge Yaffe declared that it was built in 1980 and therefore not historic?

Larry had an amazing grasp of the average citizen's legal rights and a tremendous will to defend them. But he usually ended up taking the cases other attorneys would avoid because the client's ability to pay was questionable or some politicians might be rubbed the wrong way. His reputation for this was well known and other attorneys would send him the clients no one would handle. Larry took most of them, maybe too many of them. It strained him physically, financially and emotionally as he took each case personally and to heart. People weren't clients—they were a cause.

I worked with Larry on the Bowl case and later on the Ambassador Hotel, which ended its legal run shortly after he died (he would probably have appealed it, by himself if need be). We consulted each other on various other issues over the past dozen years, especially development projects and CEQA concerns. We also spent two years fighting over the safety of MetroRail construction under Hollywood Boulevard. Despite what the courts would say, or not as they continually refused

to consider the case as timely, our arguments proved all too true as the boulevard and landmarks sank and were damaged. We did get some concessions, concerning protective upgrades as well as additional protection for Runyon Canyon Park.

Going to court with Larry was



always an experience. Deadlines were always met at the last minute, but the work

was always of high quality. Despite his problems with health and getting paid, no attorney worked harder for his clients. He didn't have the political pull, but I always sensed that other attorneys respected him as he did what they were afraid to do, he was, in a sense, their conscience. Even if they disagreed with him, as they obviously did, they respected his willingness to help the underdog or underprivileged.

I saw him at the hospital shortly before his death from cancer. He was in obvious pain and heavily medicated. His sense of humor was still there as I had him sign documents for the Ambassador case, and listened to his comments about the LAUSD.

Larry Teeter followed and advised Hollywood Heritage on many issues, at no cost. He represented us when no one would take on the Hollywood Bowl suit because of fears of political retribution (that encouraged Larry). And he won a major CEQA case against the city's general plan in 1999 to stop segmentation of the CEQA process, one that has helped us and preservationists throughout California. His sense of justice and how the courts and the government should be open and

representative to all was his gift to people everywhere. This was the foundation on which this country was founded, even if it is getting harder for the governments and the courts to remember. Thank you Larry, court's adjourned.

Evenings @ The Barn

Location Sites for 3 Stooges

No, this is not a program on City Hall or the County Administration Building. Hollywood Heritage member Jim Pauley of Philadelphia will be visiting and will give only the second presentation of his documentation of several of the more interesting sites in Los Angeles where the Three Stooges filmed. Jim is working on a book of these sites and has a few unknown sites that our membership may help to identify as well. Marc Wanamaker will give a slide show of various studios used, mostly at Columbia but there were others. And, of course, a couple of 3 Stooges shorts will be shown to help bring the real world into focus. This program will be held January 26, 2006 at 7:30 at the Hollywood Heritage Museum.



The Three Stooges used steps in Sliverlake similar to those used by Laurel & Hardy in The Music Box for their An Ache in Every Stake



P.O Box 2586
Hollywood, CA 90078

Mark Your Calendar

Thurs. Jan. 12th: Sue Lloyd, grand-daughter of **Harold Lloyd**, will intro some of the films featured on the newly- restored boxed sets of Lloyd's best. 7:30 at the Barn.

Thurs. Jan. 26th: Jim Pauley of Philadelphia will give a presentation of his documentation of several of the more interesting sites in Los Angeles where the **Three Stooges** filmed. 7:30 at the Barn.

Thurs. Feb. 16th: Robert Birchard on *Francis Boggs and the Selig Polyscope Co.*

Thurs. March 16th: Celebrating *100 years of Hollywood High*. Marc Wanamaker shows slides of the school and its graduates. 7:30 at the Barn.

Wed. March 22nd: Celebration of **Bud Lesser's** career in film and television on this first anniversary of his passing. Marc Wanamaker with slides. 7:30 at the Barn.

PRESERVING OUR HOLLYWOOD HERITAGE FOR 25 YEARS

- Wattles Mansion and Gardens • Hollywood Heritage Museum/Lasky-DeMille Barn •
- Silent Society: Motion Picture History and Preservation • Architectural Preservation, Advocacy, and Education •



Membership Application

YES! I would like to become a member of Hollywood Heritage, Inc.

**\$2,500 Majestic \$1,000 Keystone \$500 Bison \$250 Kalem
\$100 Triangle** \$50 Household \$35 Individual
\$20 Senior (65+)/Student (Full Time)**

**Join at the \$100 Triangle level or above, and receive a 24"x36" collectable reproduction poster, *A Map of Hollywood from the Best Surveys of the Time* (c. 1928).

Membership Benefits Include:

- Free admission to the Hollywood Heritage Museum for two adults and two children.
- Ten percent discount at the Museum Store.
- Advance notification of special member programs.
- Discounts on Silent Society film programs at the Hollywood Heritage Museum, UCLA, and the Paramount Ranch.
- Quarterly **Hollywood Heritage Newsletter**.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: ____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____

E-mail Address: _____

I wish to pay by:

Check

Please make checks payable to **Hollywood Heritage, Inc.**

Charge my: Visa MasterCard

Card Number: _____ Exp. Date: _____

Signature: _____

Clip and mail to: Hollywood Heritage, Inc., P.O. Box 2586, Hollywood, CA 90078