

The publication of Hollywood Heritage, a non-profit organization dedicated to the preservation of Hollywood through its architecture and the history of the motion picture industry.

Lawsuit Update

Final Arguments to Save Hollywood Bowl Submitted

By Robert W. Nudelman

On June 3, Hollywood attorney Lawrence Teeter filed our response to strongly refute the arguments of the Los Angeles Philharmonic Association (LAPA) and Los Angeles County (defendants) in the State of California Court of Appeals. The document is available on our web site.

Hollywood Heritage's last newsletter outlined several of the County's and the LAPA's arguments to proceed with the demolition of the

historic 1929 orchestra shell (the newsletter is also available on the web site). Our latest response targeted several areas. This has been done to both protect the shell as well as to stop the County from gutting the protective status historic structures have in California under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

Such legal precedent as attempted here to circumvent CEQA would endanger thousands of historic structures in both private and pub-

lic ownership (as well as devastating many safeguards for parks, open spaces, impacts from large developments and other quality of life issues protected under CEQA).

Highlights of our response include a detailed breakdown and rebuttal of the County and LAPA's arguments that only a "new shell" will make good music possible at the Bowl. This was used as the "Statement of Overriding Considerations" (SOC), which is the sole legal reason the defendants adopted

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87 years later

ABC Television Center Studio Lot is Reborn

By Marc Wanamaker

The old ABC Television Center lot at Prospect and Talmadge Streets in east Hollywood is undergoing an expansion, restoration, and renovation program. After the Disney Company purchased the assets of ABC Television, reorganization began of both companies resulting in the transfer of all television network activities from the ABC lot to Burbank. In May of 2002 the ABC Television Center name was dropped and "The Prospect Studio" was born. The idea would be to make the studio available to all ABC-Disney production units as well as film, television, and commercial producers,



THE VITAGRAPH STUDIOS—Prospect & Talmadge 1924. This is the last photograph of the staff of the studio prior to its sale.

independent of the mother company. The new Prospect Studios logo is based on the original 1915 entry gate to the Vitagraph and later Warner Brothers archway framing the main gate to the lot.

Demolition of 1960s-70s era buildings has already begun, leaving the

original 1915 buildings that still exist and are considered historic studio structures. The Prospect lot is one of the oldest "lots" in Los Angeles still in operation. It first opened in 1915 as Vitagraph Studios and was later purchased along with the entire company's assets by Warner Brothers in 1925. Through the years many historic films have been produced on the property, including many William S. Hart films, Keystone films, *Don Juan* (1926), *Public Enemy*, *Svengali*, *Captain Blood*, *Noah's Ark* and *The Sea Beast* (1926) among many others.

The property was purchased by ABC Television in 1948 and was

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President's Message

Hollywood Always Holds New Challenges

by Kay Tornborg

When I became president of Hollywood Heritage last December you may recall my waxing poetic about my excitement, generated by the "new" Hollywood and the exciting arrival of Hollywood-Highland in our midst. I assumed that after six months things would quiet down and move along at a more leisurely pace. NOT! Something stimulating/ interesting / thought-provoking / aggravating/ outrageous / and fascinating happens with Hollywood Heritage (and Hollywood!) almost every day. Here's just a few from the last couple of months:

- Parking rates went down to \$2 for 4 hours at Hollywood-Highland (psssstt! Even *residents* can shop there now!).

- We recently began a year-long collaboration with the National Park Service on an archival photo exhibition, for June 2003, celebrating 75 years of filming at Paramount Ranch in Agoura, CA.. Also joining the celebration is the California Art Club, founded in 1909, which will participate by having a "paint-out" i.e., its members will do plein-air paintings of specific sites, in this case iconic movie locations. The photos and paintings will be exhibited together for a month, starting next June, at four different Hollywood locations which will, we think, get people out *walking around* Hollywood, along the Hollywood Boulevard Historic Commercial and Entertainment District, looking at our wonderful restored theatres and other landmark buildings and also enjoying our varied restaurants. We will promote cultural tourism as well as welcome locals as new visitors to our Museum where movies speak to *all* nationalities.

- Barn Volunteer Carolyn Slavens Navara recently persuaded a friend, who works in Bob Hope's office, to come to the Barn for Jan Sterling's birthday and the screening of *Ace In the Hole*. Her friend liked what she

saw, returned with Linda Hope and Jan Morrell (who is with the Bob Hope Archives) and, after a splendid tour by our own Robert Nudelman, invited us to make a proposal for financial support to the Bob and Dolores Hope Charitable Foundation! *Whatever happens*, it's nice to be asked!

- Our own Natalie Shivers led a team of consultants through the year-long challenge of preparing a Cultural Landscape Report on Wattles Mansion and Gardens, under the Getty's *Preserve L.A.* grant program. As of June 15th the report (WITH color photos!!) is finished and handed in to the Getty. Great job, Natalie!!

- Parking rates went down to \$2 for 4 hours at Hollywood-Highland (psssstt! Even *residents* can shop there now!).

- The letter- and photo-swap between Bud Lesser and William Sagar, of Fairfax, California, written about in the last newsletter, has now morphed into a full-blown correspondence with historian Eric Niderost of Haywood, California and also a member of the Niles/Essanay Silent Film Museum. Essanay, you may remember, was the outfit that filmed the Broncho Billy westerns and some of the early Chaplin films. The Essanay Film Manufacturing Company arrived in Niles, California in April of 1912. Although the town had only 1400 residents it already had a movie show 4 nights a week, run by the manager of the Edison Moving Picture Company.

Although Essanay closed in 1916 and was torn down in 1933, a few star/studio bungalows remain standing and one was recently acquired by the Niles Essanay Silent Film Museum, Inc., a non-profit corporation, which will convert the historic structure, on Niles' Second Street, into a silent film museum not unlike our very own Hollywood Heritage Museum @ the Lasky-DeMille Barn. I think the Sister Barn Program has just begun! Stay tuned. (More about Essanay in the next issue.)

- Steve Sylvester, Managing Director of Wattles, is starting plan-

ning for next year's celebration of Hollywood Heritage's **20th anniversary** at Wattles Mansion and Gardens (see separate item on this). Save May 2003.

- We have been working on three (3!) separate book development deals and have just signed a contract with Historical Publishing Network for a "coffee-table" hardcover which will be entitled *Historic Hollywood: A Centennial History*. Its publication will commemorate the 1903 incorporation of Hollywood as a city (a significant date in terms of the burgeoning Hollywood secession movement). Our extensive archives, lovingly assembled by Robert Nudelman (**and** Marc Wanamaker **and** Robert Birchard **and** Randy Haberkamp) over the last few years will be put to excellent use. Nudelman and Wanamaker will pen the text. The book will be partly history in text and pictures and partly individual and corporate biographies on sponsored pages. Stay tuned!

- Parking rates went down to \$2 for 4 hours at Hollywood-Highland (psssstt! Even *residents* can shop there now!).
- The *EVENINGS AT THE BARN* season will begin again on October 16th with Delmar Watson's evening with child stars (now grown-ups). On Wednesday, November 13th, film director Curtis Harrington will talk about his *What's The Matter With Helen?* (1971), which stars Debbie Reynolds and Agnes Moorehead and other films. Guests TBA...While Curtis' film is slightly later than our usual fare it is one of which he is particularly proud and he'll have plenty to say on the earlier years of his long Hollywood career. Save These Dates. Stay tuned....

- Attendance at the Museum has been growing and WE NEED VOLUNTEERS! The commitment is one day a month, either Saturday or Sunday, from 11 to 4. Call Kay Tornborg for details: (323)467-0287.
- Parking rates went down to \$2 for 4 hours at Hollywood-Highland (psssstt! Even *residents* can shop there now!).

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Evenings at the Barn season closes with “Betty and Bud at the Barn”

by Kay Tornborg

May 15th was the final *Evening at the Barn* before the start of the Hollywood Bowl season and there was a near-capacity house for Betty Lasky and Julian “Bud” Lesser talking about “What Our Poppas Taught Us.” Betty’s lingering illness prompted a quick re-naming of the program to “Betty in Bed and Bud at the Barn,” and all proceeded without a hitch. Bud was lively and charming, sharing his family photos and recollections with a responsive audience. He was especially informative about the seminal role played by Jesse L. Lasky in the early years of Hollywood movie-



Bud Lesser and his sister Marj Fasman

making, building on his vaudeville experience on the New York stage. This prompted some audience questions for Betty, who responded via speaker-phone, strategically placed where her answers could be heard by all. Bud’s family photos of not only his famous father, Sol Lesser, but also many of the illustrious stars that made early Hollywood such a special place, brought the evening a personal touch that was truly special.

Special thanks to Carroll Adams of Technicolor, Inc. who supervised the technical aspects of the eve-

ning and was kind enough to loan us equipment to make things run smoothly. Thanks, too, to Marc Wanamaker for providing some of the slides and information.



Miles Kreuger, Betty Lasky, and Nick Beck

Regulars at these *Evenings* have started to comment on the evolution of the ‘light refreshments.’ We have Barn Volunteer Carolyn Slavens Navara to thank for this. Carolyn not only brings her delightful friends to slice, arrange, serve and tidy up but she also sets out a lovely spread, using her personal linens and serving pieces. In addition, she selects the items available to eat and is coming up with increasingly tasty choices that fuel the post-presentation gab-fest that is taking on a life of its own. Thanks, Carolyn and Friends!!

Another “brainchild” from Carolyn Navara: a picture cake for the April 4th birthday celebration at the Barn for Jan Sterling. Following a screening of Billy Wilder’s dark masterpiece, *Ace In the Hole* (1951),



Jan was forthright and funny while discussing her career with Robert W. Nudelman, and quick to blow out her birthday candles in one try.

Day Trip

Recommendation

A tip for Hollywoodians looking for that slightly off-beat and different experience: visit The Velaslavasay Panorama. Drawing on the illustrious history of the Great Panorama Paintings of the 18th and 19th centuries, the Velaslavasay Panorama is a contemporary presentation of the 360-degree art form which became the sensation of Europe and America alike. The precursor of today’s and yesterday’s wide and large scale motion picture screen extravaganzas (Cinerama, CinemaScope, VistaVision, Panavision and IMAX) the 19th century panoramas drew millions of awe-struck visitors across this country and abroad.



The Panorama is housed in a small round building at 5553 Hollywood Boulevard, one block west of the Western Avenue Metro Rail Station and is open Fri., Sat. and Sun, 12-5 PM. Suggested donation: \$2 for adults, \$1 for children, students and seniors.

Preservation PS: The lot on which the Panorama sits is being eyed for development so don’t postpone your visit.

Books And Bohemia In Early Hollywood

by Mary Sullivan

It's 1938 on Hollywood Boulevard on "booksellers row"..... a book-buyer's dream that flourished from the early 1930s until the late 1970s.

At its peak, as many as 20 bookstores were located in this area, selling new or used books to such actors, writers, directors and composers as: John Barrymore, Charlie Chaplin, Orson Welles, W. C. Fields, Alfred Hitchcock, Marlene Dietrich, Charlton Heston, Andre Previn, Burl Ives, Ray Bradbury, Red Skelton, Edward G. Robinson, Marion Davies, Clifford Odets, Marilyn Monroe, Aldous Huxley, F. Scott Fitzgerald, William Holden, Frank Sinatra, Mae West, Marlon Brando, Cecil B. DeMille, Thomas Wolfe, Leo McCarey, William Saroyan and Nathaniel West. In later years, celebrities such as Steve Martin, Whoopi Goldberg, Mel Torme, Gore Vidal, Johnny Depp, Eric Idle, Bernadette Peters, Nicholas Cage, Steve McQueen, and Dick Cavett might have been seen browsing the isles.

Opened in 1938, Louis Epstein's seminal **Pickwick Bookshop** (formerly at the N/E corner of Hollywood Boulevard and McCadden) soon became a Hollywood landmark and social institution alongside Musso & Frank's Grill and Grau-

man's Chinese Theatre. In Kevin Starr's accounting in his book *Material Dreams, Southern California Through the 1920s* he describes it this way: "The mystique which the Pickwick soon acquired came from the people who browsed through its counters and shelves. F. Scott Fitzgerald, then living at the Garden of Allah, came by, sad and polite. Fitzgerald loved to browse in the upstairs floor where the old books were, some of them written by himself at a better time. Raymond Chandler likewise came and went stealthily, like Philip Marlowe on a case. William Faulkner was another quiet and solitary patron. Faulkner lived nearby on Highland Avenue and ate frequently at Musso & Frank's. Faulkner knew his books, Epstein later remembered, and was a good customer, as was the young English writer Aldous Huxley, so weak in his sight that his thick glasses required a third lens mounted like a jeweler's lens to one side of the eyeglass frame. Sometimes Huxley would tire of this contraption altogether and hold the book against his face, peering at it from an angle, his head cocked, like an expectant secretary bird. Unlike the silent Fitzgerald and the laconic Faulkner,

Huxley talked: evaluations of books he was perusing, anecdotes regarding the writers, so many of whom he knew, all expressed in felicitous phrasing which itself seemed to be rising from a printed page in clear English-accented tones. One day a customer, mistaking Marlene Dietrich for a clerk, asked her for advice. Good humoredly, Dietrich played out the part until she could pass the customer on to a member of the Pickwick staff."

Stanley Rose's two Hollywood stores—the first on Vine, near Hollywood Boulevard, the second on Hollywood Boulevard itself next door to Musso & Frank's—represented the bookstore-as-hangout for Hollywood's urban bohemian intelligentsia. A master humorist and anecdotalist (and some say, former bootlegger), Rose maintained an ongoing party at his establishment which frequently spilled next door to Musso's lively bar, continuing into the early hours. The next-door establishment also served as Rose's informal banker. The bookshop and the bar/restaurant operated together with great synergy, creating a welcome sense-of-community for such screenwriters as James M. Cain, Raymond Chandler, Erskine



Louis Epstein's Pickwick Bookstore (2nd building from left) in the late 1930s at Hollywood Boulevard and McCadden

Caldwell, John Fante, A.I. Bezzerides, Frank Fenton, Jo Pagano, Louis Adamic, Budd Schulberg, William Saroyan, Nathaniel West and William Faulkner—who literally became Rose’s boys-in-the-back-room, enjoying his talk and whiskey. Rose also organized modern art exhibitions at his store which included such artists as Alexander Calder, Paul Klee, and Henry Moore—an effort which, during the late 1930’s in Southern California, was considered quite progressive. Most unfortunately, due mainly to his love of drink, Rose eventually came to grief, passing-away broke, and long before his time in the mid-1950’s, having closed the bookshop some years before.

Also originally opened in 1938 (on LaBrea and various locations, moving to Hollywood Boulevard in 1963 three blocks from its current location at 6644 Hollywood Boulevard), **Larry Edmunds** and Milt Luboviski created Hollywood’s now best-known bookstore for film and television books, periodicals, movie stills, posters and general-cultural ephemera. Edmunds actually started out as partners with Stanley Rose, and as both were mutual-heavy drinking ‘partners’, frequent fights occurred between them, resulting in their eventual split. Sadly, Edmunds took his life in 1941, at the age of 35, having led a short but intense life. After Edmunds’ death, Milt Luboviski, and later his brother Din, made the store into the Hollywood icon it is today. Now, **Larry Edmunds Bookstore** remains a favorite for locals, tourists, and the entertainment industry, and is still owned and operated to this day by Din. It has continued to be a favorite source of film knowledge for such celebrities as the late Francois Truffaut, Henry Fonda, Sir John Gielgud, Gene Kelly and Jack Lemmon. And it continues to be the choice film/book-shopping spot for such celebrities as: Pierce Brosnan, Quentin Tarantino, Drew Barry-

more, Diane Keaton, Faye Dunaway, Bridget Fonda, Robert Wise, Leonard Nimoy, Jane Withers, and Robert Vaughn, among many others, who can frequently be seen perusing the books, movie posters and stills.

Hollywood Book City (6627 Hollywood Boulevard) was the last to open on Hollywood’s “bookseller’s row”, in 1973, and was also the largest, at 10,000 square feet. It contains an extensive collection of books on film, television, music, design, theater, and the cultural arts in general, with more than 250,000-plus books in stock or on file. Hollywood Book City quickly became a favorite for film and television productions needing historic reference books. Regulars who might be observed browsing the aisles include: Steve Martin, Whoopi Goldberg, Gore

Vidal, Ray Bradbury, Johnny Depp, Eric Idle, Bernadette Peters, Nicholas Cage, Dick Cavett, and the late Steve McQueen, and Mel Torme, among others. The store continues to be family-owned and operated by the Siegel family, third generation booksellers from New York. The store also sells an extensive collection of film and television scripts, autographed photos, and other memorabilia. A new Hollywood Book City satellite store is now located in the new Hollywood & Highland project.

Mary Sullivan is Director of Membership Development for Hollywood Heritage and great-granddaughter of C.S. Wainwright, a founding member of the Zamorano Club - a book collecting club established in Los Angeles in 1934. Special thanks to Anne and Aaron Epstein (son of Louis Epstein) for providing valuable information and photo for this article. Thanks also to Robert Nudelman and Marc Wanamaker for providing additional information.

The Silent Society of Hollywood Heritage
and

The National Parks Service present

Silents Under the Stars

At the Paramount Ranch in Agoura,
with Live Music by Michael Mortilla.

Sunday, July 21, 2002 at 8:00 pm

Hot Water (1924)

Starring Harold Lloyd After resolving to remain a bachelor, Harold falls in love and marries, little realizing that he hasn’t just married his wife, but her family as well.

Sunday, August 18, 2002 at 7:30 PM

Sherlock, Jr. (1926)

Starring Buster Keaton Buster stars as the cleanup man and projectionist at a local movie theater who has become an amateur detective through a correspondence course. Saving his sweetheart is confounded by his attempts at imitating the heroics of his movie idols.

Both films will be preceded by a *surprise* short subject.

Begin your evening early! Bring a picnic dinner and relax before seeing the films. A flashlight is recommended due to limited lighting in our parking area.

Tickets: \$6.00 General Public

\$3.00 Children under 12

\$5.00 Hollywood Heritage Members

For more information and directions to the Paramount Ranch
call **(805) 370-2301**

MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

We at Hollywood Heritage would like to thank the following new and renewing members who have made generous contributions at the \$100 level and above (as of 6/2002). Category titles are names of historic Hollywood movie studios.

MAJESTIC (\$2500+)

Rod Taylor

KEYSTONE (\$1000+)

Sharon and Ray Courts
Muller Family Foundation

BISON (\$500+)

Art Laboe Foundation

KALEM (\$250+)

Dan Barham
Eric Garcetti & Amy Wakeland
Stephanie & Randy Klopffleisch
Ted Otis

TRIANGLE (\$100+)

Timothy Brandt
John S. Bryson
Robert Burton
Brutus Productions Inc.
William Cavitt
Virginia Charon
Bill Condon & Jack Morrissey
Dr. David B. Day, D.P.M. &
Marcia Day
Morgina & Bill Eagleton
Lisa & Charles Ellin
Carrie Fisher
Todd Fisher
Beverly Garland
Allison Denman Holland
Francesca, Alba & James Karen
Jean & William Kelly
Patty & Joe Kowal
Ian La Frenais
Scott Martin
Myron Meisel
Susan & Richard Moll
Jon Padgett & Mark Howell
Debbie Reynolds
Don Roos
Mary Sullivan & John Sanders
Mary Sweeney – Syene Road, Inc.
Vivian Taylor & Jeffrey Rodgers
Lon Weyland & Alan Paul
Suzanne Whitten & Jim Leworthy

We would also like to thank the following corporations for matching their employee's contributions:

Merrill Lynch & Co. Foundation,
Inc.

Universal Studios

Robert Stack To Be Honored At Cinecon 38

Robert Stack will receive the Society for Cinephiles Career Achievement Award at the 38th annual Cinecon classic film festival and memorabilia show in Hollywood over Labor Day Weekend, August 29 through September 2, 2002. Cinecon 38 promises to offer an outstanding five day program of unusual films, exciting celebrity guests and one of the best movie memorabilia marts in the nation.

Stack began his film career in the 1939 Deanna Durbin picture *First Love*, and he went on to star in such screen classics as *To Be or Not to Be* (1942), *Badlands of Dakota* (1941), *The Mortal Storm* (1940), *Written on the Wind* (1956), *House of Bamboo* (1955), *The High and the Mighty* (1954), *The Bullfighter and the Lady* (1951), and *Airplane!* (1980). Stack is also well known for his TV work in such series as *The Untouchables* and *Name of the Game*.

Previously announced Cinecon 38 guests include Beverly Roberts, star of *God's Country and the Woman* (1937), and Ken Annakin, director of *Miranda* (1948), *Those Magnificent Men in Their Flying Machines* (1965), and co-director of *The Longest Day* (1962).

Robert Stack will receive the Society for Cinephiles Career Achievement Award at the 38th annual Cinecon classic film festival and memorabilia show in Hollywood over Labor Day Weekend, August 29 through September 2, 2002. Cinecon 38 promises to offer an outstanding five day program of unusual films, exciting celebrity guests and one of the best movie memorabilia marts in the nation.

Among the films scheduled to be screened in the Lloyd E. Rigler Theatre at the restored Grauman's Egyptian on Hollywood Boulevard are: *Badlands of Dakota* (1941), *The Idle Rich* (M-G-M, 1929), *The Last Card* (Metro, 1921), *The Cocktail Hour* (Columbia, 1933), *Pennington's Choice* (Quality-Metro, 1915), *Half Shot at Sunrise* (Radio, 1930), *Under Cover of Night* (M-G-M, 1936), and *The Silver Horde* (Goldwyn, 1920).



The Cinecon Dealers Rooms will be expanded this year, and there is a special "buy two tables and get one free" offer for dealers. Dealers who have questions regarding tables should contact Danny Schwartz at (818) 707-2273

This year's host hotel will be the Renaissance Hollywood Hotel located next to the new Hollywood and Highland entertainment complex at 1755 North Highland Avenue. It's a closer walk to the Egyptian and the brand new facility should be a real plus for the Cinephiles.

For further information, visit the Cinecon web site at: <http://www.cinecon.org> or write:

Cinecon 38, 3405 Glendale Boulevard, #251, Los Angeles, California 90039.

For hotel reservations call the Renaissance Hollywood Hotel/Marriott reservation lines at 1-800-HOTELS-1 or 1-323-856-1200. Remember to ask for Cinecon rates.

Celebrity appearances and announced film titles have been confirmed but are subject to change due to unforeseen circumstances.

BOWL *continued from page 1*

to justify the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) when it contains findings that will cause a “severe negative impact” that cannot be mitigated.

Hollywood Heritage showed that there was no hard evidence provided to justify the SOC—as is required by law—complaints given at a public hearing or undocumented claims in the EIR are not “substantial evidence” as required under CEQA. Otherwise any developer or government official could determine that their unsubstantiated (therefore uncontestable) opinion could be given to go around *any* historic preservation ordinance to allow for a landmark’s demolition, simply because it would benefit the developer or politician. Findings need to be made and “substantial evidence” provided to back them up. The County and the LAPA failed to do so or to defend the SOC and subsequent demolition plans.

Other key arguments included a lack of meaningful mitigation measures or a lack of enforceability for such measures. A highlight of this is that the new project would have seven 84’ tall light and sound towers, replacing the existing four 32’ towers and three 54’ tall towers.

The defendants now argue that these towers will be painted silver and thus invisible at night with lighting and sound equipment hang-

ing from them. Also, that the admittedly “negative visual impact” of the four front towers will be mitigated by “vegetation.” We asked for a better definition of what that meant (no other information is in the EIR), and are now told that the vegetation will be 32-foot tall, since that is the height of the *existing* towers (brick structures, not metal), which are covered with ivy. The remaining 52 feet of silver towers will be left alone, with no mitigation. This proposal makes no sense—either mitigation is complete or it is not, there is no partial mitigation as the negative visual impact of the towers will remain for 52 of the 84 feet.

Perhaps the County could place signs on the towers at 32’ that say “Don’t look above here,” and one above it that illuminates at night saying “Lighting does not reflect off of silver, you only think it does.”

Additionally, the County and the LAPA did not adequately review Hollywood Heritage’s plan to modify the shell in a manner to meet the goals of the LAPA as stated in the EIR. Instead, the defendants rehashed old arguments about a plan submitted by the Los Angeles Conservancy. That plan did not work, and does not resemble the one submitted by Hollywood Heritage. This plan was substantiated by one of the premiere designers of outdoor concerts and concert facilities in the world, E.H.B. “Chip” Monck (Woodstock, The Rolling Stones, Monterey Pop Festival, Newport Folk and Jazz Festivals, Filmores East and West, Hollywood Bowl, George Harrison Concert for Bangladesh, Bob Dylan, John Lennon, David Bowie, Joni Mitchell and over 2000 other concerts).

Finally, the County and the LAPA admit that they removed Hollywood Heritage from notification of the EIR. This means that we were un-

able to comment on it and thereby have an impact on it three years ago (instead of going to court). The defendants argued our name was removed from the mailing list because we did not respond to issues (not even requiring an EIR) such as landscaping modifications and additional restrooms, nothing considered historic, that were part of a 1994 mailing.

Despite there being over 1300 names on both mailing lists (including many simply labeled as “occupant”) and only 20 having responded to the 1994 mailing, Hollywood Heritage is the *only* one that they have admitted to removing from the EIR mailing by the County. Yet they and the LAPA do not consider this admitted action as prejudicial and there were at least three subsequent mailings, none of which were mailed to Hollywood Heritage.

It should also be noted that CEQA law states that *all* owners of property within 500 feet of a project are to receive notification by mail of the EIR, not just those chosen by the project proponents (for obvious reasons). Hollywood Heritage owns and operates the Hollywood Heritage Museum building across the street from the Hollywood Bowl. Thus another, admitted, violation of the law and a potentially dangerous legal precedent.

The date for verbal arguments before the Court of Appeals will be announced soon and be posted on our web site.

There is another issue here, one of funding. The funds budgeted for this new facility were based on construction estimates made in 1992, undoubtedly woefully inadequate by now. The County is once again experiencing a severe budgetary crisis. Where will the funds come

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Rod Taylor Signs Autographs for Heritage

At the April 7-8 Hollywood Celebrity and Collectors' Show at Beverly Garland's Holiday Inn in North Hollywood, MGM's last great contract actor, Rod Taylor, signed photos and more to benefit Hollywood Heritage. A solid line of fans surrounded Rod both days, coming from as far away as Europe.



An Australian native, Rod Taylor's career has been quite remarkable, showing a great amount of versatility. He came to MGM in 1954, the same day that Clarke Gable left, and he watched "The King" unceremoniously load his belongings into his car and drive off. Starting his American acting career, he quickly built up a resume of quality films (*Giant* (on loan to Warner Brothers), *Raintree County*, *Long John Silver*, *Separate Tables*, and others).

In 1960 he played the lead in George Pal's classic film version of H.G. Wells' *The Time Machine* (his co-star, Alan Young was also signing at the show). One of the true classics of the science-fiction film genre, Rod's portrayal of George gave humanity to an adventure hero rarely seen before or since (another Australian, Errol Flynn, as well as Tyrone Power and Sean Connery have this talent/gift).

He transferred this talent to Walt Disney's *101 Dalmatians* as

the voice of Pongo, and to Alfred Hitchcock's *The Birds*, where he leads a battle to save a family/town/civilization (if we only knew what happened after they drive off at the end). His starring work continued in *The V.I.P.s*, *Fate Is the Hunter*, John Ford's *Young Cassidy*, *The Glass Bottom Boat*, *Hotel*, *The Train Robbers*, and many more. He is preparing for a new film later this year to be filmed in Australia.

After the show dates, Rod came to visit the Hollywood Heritage Museum and Wattles Mansion to see what Hollywood Heritage was all about. His interest in movies and Hollywood history made the visits a fun experience for him and his tour guides, Robert Nudelman and Stephen Sylvester. His generous gift of time and services to Hollywood Heritage netted us over \$10,000 that weekend and will be used for new exhibits at the museum and to create a Hollywood Heritage brochure for the museum and membership solicitation (the last brochure was produced over 10 years ago).

By the second day, and after hundreds of signatures, he was beginning to feel the toll of writing and answering questions (no, he had not seen the new *Time Machine* movie and yes, he had heard that his version was better). He thoughtfully answered each time as if it was being asked of him for the first time.

Sitting at the next table was MGM's last great contract actress, Debbie Reynolds, Rod's costar in *The Catered Affair* (1956), effortlessly signing each of her photos with a perfect signature. Rod asked her how she kept doing it for two days straight. Debbie responded, "Honey, you came from the movies, I came from

vaudeville," as she continued to answer questions and sign away (she was raising money for her soon to open Debbie Reynolds Hollywood Motion Picture Museum). Debbie recently became a member of Hollywood Heritage, along with her two talented offspring, Carrie and Todd Fisher. Her museum will be working in conjunction with the Hollywood Heritage Museum to share exhibit materials (more on her museum project in the next newsletter).

It was impressive to watch these two great stars handle the public. Taught by the MGM studio system how to deal with the public 50 years ago, they were generous, responsive, enthusiastic, and polite, answering questions and gladly standing up for hundreds (yes, hundreds) of photo opportunities. This is a skill and quality that too few "stars" have today (though at the January show, Carrie Fisher was every bit as good at this as her mom).

Hollywood Heritage would also like to thank Marvin Paige for helping to arrange for the appearances of his friend, Rod Taylor, Stephen Sylvester and Robert S. Birchard for helping to run the sales table, Phil Docktor and Crush Creative for preparing the photos, the show's producers Sharon and Ray Courts, and our host, actress/hotel owner (and new Hollywood Heritage member), Beverly Garland.



Rod Taylor with Alfred Hitchcock on the set of *The Birds*.



WARNER BROS. EAST HOLLYWOOD STUDIOS 1926—The assets of the Vitagraph Company were purchased in 1925 by Warners and the lot name was changed.

VITAGRAPH *Continued from page 1*

renamed the ABC Television Center. Under ABC, the studio became the home of a number of long-running television shows such as: *You Asked For It*, *The Lawrence Welk Show*, *The Dale Evans Show*, *Let's Make A Deal*, *American Bandstand*, and *General Hospital* (10,000th episode), *Good Morning America*, *Port Charles*, *Network News*, and *News-One*. Some of the recent productions using the lot include *The Test* (game show), *The Shield* (TV series), *Just Married* (Fox feature film), *Push, Nevada* (ABC pilot show), and *Soap Talk* (talk show).

In the coming months the studio lot will be renovated, restored and upgraded for modern film and television production needs. Original soundstages will be renovated for rental along with other facilities nearby. There will be an employee commons that will be created on the site near the original front gate and bungalows, the original KABC bungalows will be reconfigured to their 1915 Vitagraph design and incorporate an archway bearing the Prospect Studios name. They will provide executive or talent space and a new conference center. The main gate on Prospect will be tied

into the new “look” and will incorporate the new studio logo. As part of a 24-month program, the building exteriors will be repaired and repainted with a consistent color scheme that is being developed to enhance the history of the lot. A plan is being developed that will include new names and signage for the streets, stages and other buildings on the lot. Signage will be designed and installed to carry the historic themes throughout the studio.

This is a very exciting time for the old Vitagraph Studio lot, which is one of Hollywood’s oldest existing studio landmarks. With all the Vitagraph productions during the teens and 20s into the 1930s and 40s with the Warner Brothers East Hollywood Studios to ABC and the beginning of television in Hollywood, the old lot is truly a Hollywood treasure that has been reborn.

BOWL *Continued from page 7*

from if this project were to be built? Which health facility will be sacrificed by the County? At least our proposal can be done for substantially less, probably within the 1992 larger project budget. The County needs to get a grip on reality as well as the law.



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Robert Vaughn Visits Museum And Wattles

By Stephen Sylvester

On April 24th, actor (and Ph.D!) Robert Vaughn spent the afternoon visiting two Hollywood Heritage projects. While best remembered for his role as Napoleon Solo in the 60s television series *The Man From U.N.C.L.E.*, he has starred in such feature films as *The Magnificent Seven*, *The Young Philadelphians* (Oscar nomination), *If It's Tuesday This Must Be Belgium*, and *The Towering Inferno*. In addition, he has appeared in over 100 television shows and directed episodes of the TV series *Police Woman* and *The Protectors*.

His first visit was to the Hollywood Heritage Museum. He had participated in a Hollywood Memorabilia Show in 1998 and had given Hollywood Heritage a portion of his proceeds so now he would be able to see what that money had helped to fund.

Robert Nudelman gave Mr. Vaughn an extensive tour of the museum. After viewing the recreation of Cecil B. DeMille's office, he reminisced about his experiences working with the director. Mr. Vaughn's first appearance on screen was as an unbilled featured extra in DeMille's 1956 version of *The Ten Commandments* as a spear-carrier and a worshiper in the Golden Calf scene. He was fascinated by the display of silent film set design. He remarked on the scale and grandeur of the sets and the vast number of extras, and that it was all accomplished without the aid of computers!

Mr. Vaughn was especially enchanted by our extensive collection of vintage Hollywood postcards. Many of the landmarks represented warm memories for him. He had moved to Hollywood from



the midwest as a young man and was overwhelmed by the sites and excitement. For several years he resided at the Commodore apartments (still standing) located at 1830 Cherokee Avenue. This is the reason he chose the intersection of Hollywood Boulevard and Cherokee Avenue as the location of his Walk of Fame Star. Not having the time to view the entire collection, he vowed to return. The postcard collection could be of use to Mr. Vaughn as he continues research for his upcoming autobiography.

The second stop was at the Wattles Mansion. This property has a personal connection to Mr. Vaughn. As a young actor in Hollywood, he had worked as a messenger for a local message service. After completing his rounds and as the heat became too much for him, he would drive to the Wattles Mansion to take naps under the shade of trees that lined the driveway.

He had always wondered about the history of the house and who lived there. Now approximately fifty years later, he was going to get to come inside.

Steve Sylvester, the Managing Director, gave Mr. Vaughn a com-

plete tour of the house interior and the grounds. After viewing "before" photos of the site's previous condition, he was very impressed with our restoration and maintenance efforts to date. He then remarked on the similarities the Wattles mansion had to a home he had lived in with his family in Connecticut. He knows first hand the constant attention and cost a historic home demands, which explains why they eventually moved!

We hope Robert Vaughn will return for another visit in the future. He is currently rehearsing a play titled "Quintet" a story of four retired opera singers. The play was a hit in England and will be making its American debut in Connecticut with hope of landing on Broadway.

We wish him well.

HHI at Wattles Mansion **20th Anniversary**

Hard to believe, but next year marks the 20th Anniversary of Hollywood Heritage's commitment to Wattles Mansion and grounds. In May of 1983, Hollywood Heritage Inc. signed a lease with the City of Los Angeles, Department of Recreation and Parks. We agreed to fund, maintain and restore the historic property.

During Hollywood Heritage's tenure, over \$1.5 million has been spent on the property and the site has been designated a Cultural Landmark. This figure includes donated goods, services, and grants, both public and private.

In the spring of 2003, we will be hosting a special event to celebrate our many accomplishments during the past twenty years, and outline our plans for the next twenty years. More information will be forthcoming in future issues of this newsletter. Stay tuned and plan to attend.

Francelia Billington

Actress with Potential That Was Never Realized

By Robert Birchard

Francelia Billington was a fine screen actress, although her career seemed to falter after her best film role in Erich von Stroheim's *Blind Husbands* (Universal, 1919).

She was born in Dallas, Texas, on February 1, 1896. Her parents, the former Adelaide Bueter and James Billington, moved the family to Glendale, California, in 1905, and Francelia was educated at Sacred Heart Convent—although apparently not very well educated, because cowboy actor Ted French recalled that she could not read or write with any great skill.

At age sixteen she managed to land some acting jobs at the Glendale studio of the Kalem Company. Under director George Melford she became leading lady to Kalem's biggest male star, Carlyle Blackwell, and she gained a lot of audience attention. After a brief tenure at Kalem she landed with the Thanhouser Company's west coast unit as leading lady to William Russell. The Thanhouser engagement led to an association with the affiliated Majestic Film Company and later the combined Reliance-Majestic Company.

In 1916, Miss Billington briefly joined Universal, but she was soon engaged by the American Film Company of Santa Barbara, and once again appeared with William Russell in a popular series of action films, including *Snap Judgment* (American-Mutual, 1917) and *In Bad* (American-Mutual, 1918).

When American trimmed its payroll after the collapse of its distributor, the Mutual Film Corporation, Francelia Billington returned to Universal and landed a plum role in Erich von Stroheim's debut film

as a director. *Blind Husbands* was a commercial and critical hit, and Francelia Billington seemed to be on the verge of becoming a major star.



In 1920 she appeared in two Tom Mix Westerns for Fox Film Corporation, *The Terror* and *Desert Love*. While working with Mix she met and fell in love with Lester Cuneo, an actor who had worked with Mix at Selig in 1912-13 and then given up films briefly to pursue an abortive career in banking. Cuneo's work as a heavy in the Mix pictures was noticed and led to a career as a minor star in a series of cheaply-made independent Westerns. Billington joined her husband as leading lady, and the move effectively ruined her career. Billington divorced Cuneo in 1925, and two days later Cuneo committed suicide.

Francelia Billington worked intermittently in pictures until 1930 when ill health forced her retirement. She died of tuberculosis at age thirty-eight on November 24, 1934, in Glendale, California. In the mid 1960's one page of her scrap-

book and a handful of stills from her films with Lester Cuneo turned up in a La Crescenta, California, antique shop. A mother's carefully preserved memories of her once-famous daughter brought only twenty-five cents a piece, plus tax.

Save These Dates Upcoming Events

Monday, Oct. 7, 2002 7:00 pm:

As a **Pre-Season Dividend** there will be a *Special Evening At the Barn* in celebration of the 75th anniversary of the premiere of *The Jazz Singer*, starring Al Jolson. In addition to an exhibition of archival photographs, lobby cards and other *Jazz Singer* memorabilia, the film will be screened in 16 mm with commentary prepared by The Jolson Society's Dave Griem. (PS: There's a FREE program the evening before, Oct. 6th, at 6:15 PM at the LA Convention Center, Rm. 433A: The Radio Engineering Society will present a recreation of the Lux Radio Theatre's presentation of *The Jazz Singer*, with Richard Halpern as Jolson. Pass it on!)

Wednesday, Oct. 16, 2002

7:00 pm: *The Evenings At The Barn* season will begin again with Delmar Watson's evening with child stars (now grown-ups). Guests TBA. Delmar narrates.

Wednesday, Nov. 13, 2002

7:00 pm: **A Special Tribute to Curtis Harrington** Guests and film TBA. The director of such films as *Picnic* and *What's The Matter With Helen*, Harrington's films are slightly later than our usual fare. However, he will share with us insights into Hollywood of earlier years as well as his own early career.



www.hollywoodheritage.org

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Mark Your Calendar

Sunday, July 21, 2002: *Silents Under the Stars*. Featuring the Harold Lloyd film *Hot Water*. 8:00 pm at the Paramount Ranch in Agoura.

Wednesday, July 24, 2002: Hollywood Heritage Board of Directors meeting. 7:00 pm at Wattles Mansion.

Sunday, August 18, 2002: *Silents Under the Stars*. Featuring Buster Keaton in *Sherlock Jr.* 8:00 pm at the Paramount Ranch in Agoura.

Wednesday, August 21, 2002: Hollywood Heritage Board of Directors meeting. 7:00 pm at Wattles Mansion.

Wednesday, September 25, 2002: Hollywood Heritage Board of Directors meeting. 7:00 pm at Wattles Mansion.

PRESERVING OUR HOLLYWOOD HERITAGE FOR MORE THAN 20 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
- \$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: _____

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