

FULLERTON HERITAGE

Winter ❧ Volume 23 ❧ Number 1 ❧ January 2017

The mission of Fullerton Heritage is to foster an appreciation of our city's cultural history and to ensure the preservation of our historic architectural resources and environments.

Local Girl Makes Good

by Debra Richey

When Warner Brothers released Al Jolson's *The Jazz Singer* in 1927, Fullerton residents began clamoring for sound pictures at the Mission Court Theatre, now the Fox Fullerton Theatre. The town was abuzz when the theater finally announced the opening of "perfected talking pictures" on Sunday, February 17, 1929. Equally exciting was the announcement that Fullerton's first talkie, *Give and Take*, would feature starlet Sharon Lynn, a 1920 graduate of Fullerton Union High School. The daughter of an oil worker employed by the Standard Oil Company in Brea, Lynn – whose friends called her La Verne Lindsay – had been both a song leader and actress in a number of class productions during her years at the high school. Her demure school attire contrasted to the sleek and snazzy

clothing she would become known for during her Hollywood years. At a time when there were few options for women beyond home-keeping, Lynn served as a role model for young girls in the city, and her career would be closely watched by her former classmates. Lynn's public appearances, exotic bird collection, and fashionable dress would also be regularly reported in the movie magazines of the day.

A petite brunette, Lynn was born D'Auvergne Sharon Lindsay in Weatherford, Texas on April 9, 1901. A singer, songwriter, and musician, Lynn had a strong, bluesy voice. She began singing in nightclubs, did some modeling, and appeared in a number of film shorts after leaving high school. In 1925, in what she thought would be her big

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Amerige Building Site Improvements

by Terry Galvin

The improvements consist of security, lighting, landscaping, and information plaques. They were funded by contributions from the following local organizations and businesses:

Fullerton Beautiful – financial contribution for plant materials;

Chevron – financial contribution for where funding was needed;

The Rotary Club of Fullerton – fi-

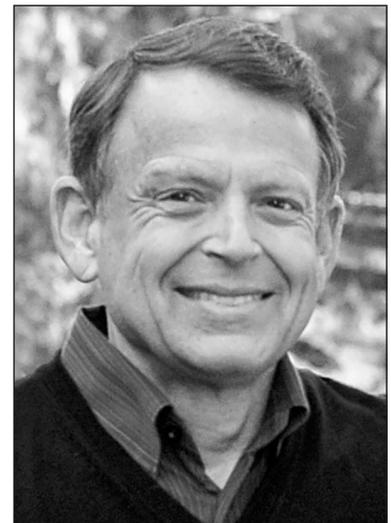
nancial contribution for construction of a new pilaster and purchase of information plaques about Amerige Park and the Amerige Building;

Fullerton Electric – in-kind contribution for installation of underground conduit, provision and installation of electrical materials for the new old style street light;

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In Memoriam: Joel Gread

With sad hearts we report that, following a long fight, Fullerton Heritage Board Member Joel Gread passed away peacefully on September 29, 2016. Joel was a quiet, intelligent man who felt strongly about contributing to his community. His responsibilities as a board member included serving as the editor of the Newsletter and working closely with Jim Powell on the Fullerton Heritage website. He had been an active member of the board for over six years. In addition to being a long time Fullerton Heritage member, Joel was also passionate about Boy Scouting and was an active member of Fullerton Boy Scout Troop 97 for over 15 years. Joel is survived by Ann, his wife of 30 years, children, Robbie and Katie, and his brother, Geoff. Ann has been on our Board of Directors for more than 20 years.



Advocacy Issues

by Kate Dalton

Update on Beckman Instruments Administration Building Local Landmark Nomination

Our Local Landmark application is still pending with the City, but with the owners' support, we hope to obtain final approval within the next few months. In the meantime, the application to the National Register of Historic Places for the Beckman Administration Building was heard by the State Commission on October 28, 2016. It was approved and sent to the Keeper of the National Register for final listing following a public comment period. We should get final notification sometime in February. This has been a long and involved nomination, but well worth the effort given the building's significance to Fullerton's history.

New Local Landmark Nominations

Fullerton Heritage has nominated two new Local Landmarks which we recently submitted to city staff, and will be considered by the Landmarks Commission and City Council in the next few months. The Pomona Bungalow Court and Apartments (314 and 320 North Pomona Avenue) and San Souci Court (501 West Whiting Avenue) were both built in the 1920s and are excellent examples of early 20th century multiple family residential buildings in Fullerton. Following approval by the city as Local Landmarks, Fullerton Heritage intends to nominate the Pomona Bungalow Court and Apartments to the National Register of Historic Places. We will keep you updated as we move through the process.

Miscellaneous Issues

Historic Hillcrest Park renovations which include the front lawn, fountain and related historic rock work have begun. Let's all enjoy watching the transformation of this wonderful Fullerton jewel, one of the few parks in the entire United States that is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Much to Fullerton Heritage's dismay, following the Landmarks Commission's denial of the requirement for owner's consent for Local Landmark nominations, on August 16, 2016 the City Council reversed the Landmarks Commission's decision and voted to require property owner consent for all nominations in the future. Despite support by some members of the Council for our position, the majority voted to require consent. While we always seek consent from property owners and have to date never been denied support, we hope that this new restriction will not hamper attempts to preserve Fullerton's historic buildings. Thankfully we do have other options in the event that an owner denies consent for nomination for a property that we feel strongly about preserving.

Finally, the owners of 201 Brookdale Place (in the Jacaranda-Malvern Preservation Zone) appealed to the Landmarks Commission staff's denial of their front yard fence which exceeds the height limit. On November 9, 2016 the Landmarks Commission approved the fence, despite noncompliance with the Design Guidelines for Residential Preservation Zones. Another homeowner in the neighborhood, with the support of Fullerton Heritage, has appealed the fence approval on the grounds that the Landmarks Commission took inappropriate action in a preservation zone.

Amerige Building

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Bushala Brothers – in-kind contribution for excavating the street light foundation, forming and pouring concrete for the foundation and base;

City of Fullerton – labor for installation of information plaques, new street light, and new landscaping.

The remaining task of installing fencing adjacent to the

Amerige Building will be included in the larger Community Center fencing project by the City of Fullerton.

Fullerton Heritage is pleased to have been involved with the coordination and fund raising for the project and encourages you to stop by the building to see the results.

President's Corner

by Ernie Kelsey

Hello and Warm Greetings Fullerton Heritage members, Happy New Year! Can you believe it? 2017 has arrived. 2016 has come and gone and it's hard to believe we will be writing 2017 now. It always takes a bit of getting used to, but I know 2017 is going to be a fantastic year.

Last year was a busy one for Fullerton Heritage for sure and a lot has gone on since our annual meeting in July. We've continued our ongoing (and never ending!) advocacy for historic properties in Fullerton. We're thrilled with our recent success involving the Beckman Instruments building on Harbor Boulevard. After many years of negotiations, it looks like the main administration building will be saved and used in the new development. This is very important because not only is the building itself important, but many important events happened on that site so it's important to keep this history in Fullerton. Like I always say, once a building is gone or altered dramatically, we can never get it back.

We've also seen more changes to the Amerige Brother's Realty Office as we continue Phase II of the restoration. If you walk or drive by, take a look at the new streetlight and plaque. This is very exciting for Fullerton Heritage as we move forward with projects like these that include a combination of fund raising and city support to keep the first commercial structure in Fullerton in excellent

condition.

We also have been focused on a Baggage Cart restoration project for the Sante Fe Depot, documenting the Pacific Ready Cut Homes located in Fullerton, working with a Fullerton College intern to continue our Building/Residence Documentation project and our 2017 calendar.

In fact, we certainly hoped you liked our small gift to you this year – the 2017 Fullerton Heritage Calendar. What a fun project and the type of thing we would like to do more of in the future. That's why we need you all to renew your memberships this year – and help us get more new members to join. You are truly the lifeblood of Fullerton Heritage and it's through your contributions we can continue to get things done. I would be remiss if I didn't mention our ongoing supporters including the Main, Sunrise and South Rotary Clubs who give so generously and the City of Fullerton which works with us on so many projects. Thank you all!

On a sad note we lost a valuable board member, excellent person and caring husband and father when Joel Gread passed away in the fall this past year. Joel was a huge contributor to Fullerton Heritage and his attention to detail and sense of humor are already missed. His lovely wife Ann continues to serve on the Board and we wish her and her beautiful children all the best.

Happy New Year everyone and here's to a fantastic 2017!

With my warmest regards and sincere thanks,

Ernie

Sharon Lynn

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break, Lynn won a scholarship to attend the Paramount Pictures School in Astoria, New York, a new venture by the studio to train young talent for a movie career. She and the other two scholarship winners from Hollywood, however, were expelled after the three rebelled over the school's strict disciplinary rules. Lynn found herself stranded in New York, but was able to get a job as a chorus girl in the Broadway production of *Sunny Side Up*. It was around this time that she decided to change her name to Sharon Lynn and return to Hollywood.

Following her success as Leah Cohen in the silent film, *Clancy's Koshier Wedding* (1927), Lynn signed a long-term contract with Fox Films in 1928. She was one of the few silent actresses to

make the successful transition from silent films to talkies, easily passing her Fox Movietone sound test. Fox Films had high hopes for her to reach stardom in the later twenties and early thirties, and she made regular appearances in musicals and comedies of different genres, including *Fox Movietone Follies* of 1929, *Speakeasy* (1929), *The Big Broadcast* (1932), and *Happy Days* (1929), notable for being the first feature film shown



A 1930 movie still.

entirely in widescreen. In *Sunny Side Up* (1929), her Eskimo-inspired number "Turn on the Heat" would bring her additional fame. Choreographed by Sammy Lee, "Turn on the Heat" inspired what many historians consider the first truly cinematic production number on film. Many of the early musicals that Lynn appeared in are seen by film historians as important steps in the developing genre as studios experi-

mented with new ways to present song and dance outside the confines of a stage

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Sharon Lynn

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show. Lynn appeared on screen with a number of well-known actors and personalities, including Bing Crosby, Spencer Tracy, Charles Farrell, Cary Grant, Joel McCrea, Tom Mix, and Will Rogers. One of her best known parts was in Laurel and Hardy's *Way Out West* (1937) where she played a devious foil to the clueless comedians. Her now classic scene in the movie – known as the “Tickling Scene” – has Lynn tickling Laurel to steal a mining deed he has hidden in his jacket. Between films, Lynn starred in stage productions and also composed songs, one of which – “Monte Carlo Moon” – would become

a hit and be featured in the 1926 Phocea film *Monte Carlo*. By the end of the 1940s, Lynn found it increasingly difficult to find film parts, and retired.

In 1932, she eloped to Yuma, Arizona with motion picture writer, producer and director Benjamin (Barney) Glazer, a two-time Academy Award winner and founding member of the Motion Picture Academy. The couple settled in the Malibu Movie Colony, a one-mile stretch of beachfront home to many Hollywood celebrities. After

Glazer's death in 1956, Lynn married Beverly Hills businessman John R. Sershen. She died in 1963 at the age of 62 of multiple sclerosis.

1920 Fullerton High School yearbook picture

In October 2015, Fullerton Heritage nominated Sharon Lynn for inclusion on the Fullerton Union High School Wall of Fame, and she was inducted on September 16, 2016. She became only the twelfth 1920s graduate to make the Wall of Fame. A number of her films and production numbers, including “Turn on the Heat” and *Way Out West*, are available on *YouTube*. The Local History Room of the Fullerton Public Library also has movie stills, publicity photographs, fan magazine articles, and other information on Lynn.

Fox Theatre Update

by Tom Dalton

The Fullerton Historic Theatre Foundation has hired a local grant writer to oversee grants and administrative preparation heading into the 2017 capital campaign. Also, we have engaged experienced volunteers who are passionate about supporting completion of the Fox. Please be watching your mailbox and donate what you can to help us complete the restoration and get the theatre open for business.



Sharon Lynn (center) on the Fullerton High School Wall of Fame.

Welcome New Members

Betsy Gibbs, Kristin and Carl La Plante



Board of Directors 2016-2017

Maureen Burton / Kate Dalton / Tom Dalton
Terry Galvin / Ann Gread / Ernie Kelsey / Bob Linnell
Debora Richey / Noelle Rossi
Warren Bowen, Board Member Emeritus

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