

## Olivia at town hall

## Idol steps out of scrapbook

By SUSAN ROGERS

There she was—right off a page of my tattered movie scrapbook—Olivia de Havilland.

The warm brown eyes of "Gone With the Wind's" Melanie gazed out over the vast crowd at the Plymouth Hilton and she began to speak in the rich resonant voice I recognized instantly.

I smiled at her and I think she smiled back.

The dual Academy Award winner stepped from the celluloid and my movie star idol dreams to take human form at the Northville Town Hall series last week. The petite frame was slightly more rounded and the hair a little lighter to soften the features but the face was the same. And I have to say it—she is beautiful.

"The years do pass and the pounds do accumulate, so thank you for recognizing me," she said. She had won my heart again.

Miss de Havilland, a product of Hollywood's glittering golden era, is on a month-long lecture tour of the United States from her home in Paris. She had come to tell of her life in two glamorous cities of the world—the city of stars and the city of lights.

"LET ME TAKE you by the hand and lead you back to the city of stars in 1934—when I was 18 years old," said the diminutive star, dressed in soft peach.

There began the journey of a young girl who left behind her dreams of achieving "academic excellence" at Mills College in California to become a twice-honored Academy Award winner, the first woman president of the Cannes Film Festival and the winner of two New York Film Critic awards. She remains best known and loved for her moving portrayal of Melanie in the classic, "Gone With the Wind." Could it really have been 40 years ago?

That movie was an important part of Miss de Havilland's life, and many other lives as well. It made a profound impression on me, when, at 13, I began a love affair with the movie and its stars at the 1967 re-release.

I loved everything about it—the glorious story, the costumes, the music, the characters. I remember being impressed with Clark Gable and Miss de Havilland—I cut out their pictures and put them in a big book that grew along with my love for the movies.

Miss de Havilland didn't mind people still thinking of her as Melanie, the role she created when she was 22 years old. "Melanie was driven by love," she said. "She was perfectly happy woman—the woman I wanted to be but wasn't and the woman I may perhaps never be."

"Scarlett meant the survival of civilization and of human life," said Miss de Havilland. "Melanie symbolized the survival of the spirit. I think I would like to be remembered for Melanie."

MISS de HAVILLAND began her career as Herta in Max Reinhardt's production of Shakespeare's "A Midsummer Night's Dream" in 1934 at the Hollywood Bowl. "The night glittered with stars and so did the audience," she said. "We heard them announcing 'Miss Bette Davis,' 'Mr. Charlie Chaplin,' 'Miss Jean Harlow.' I forgot all my lines, and on her cue, Herta had to be pushed on stage," she said.

I understood perfectly. When the time came for me to actually talk to my idol I was shaking. But I didn't die—I didn't even faint. I handed her a red rose to thank her for the many

hours of enjoyment her performances have given me. She smiled at me and I smiled back.

At the time of "Gone With the Wind" Miss de Havilland said, she was under a seven-year contract to Warner Brothers. Her rise to stardom had been hindered by the series of rather mediocre films she made there before Melanie came along. Jack Warner whisked her back to his studio following completion of "Gone With the Wind" and refused her attendance at the extravagant premiere of the film in Atlanta.

"Melanie turned Scarlett," recalls Miss de Havilland. She went, and was put on suspension, the time to be made up at the end of her contract. "It was life imprisonment, and no way out," she recalls.

THE LAW BOOKS refer to it as the "de Havilland decision." She took Warner Brothers to court in violation of a California law forbidding an employee to be under contract for more than seven years.

Miss de Havilland won the case three times following two appeals by the studio. She feels she had set her fellow actors free. And she herself was "free to do the work I wanted to," she remembers.

Then her career skyrocketed. She won the city of stars Award in 1946 for her portrayal of an unwed mother in "To Each His Own" and another in 1949 for "The Heiress." She married twice and brought two children into the world. "Benjamin is working on his degree in statistical mathematics and Giselle is a fourth year law student at the University of Paris," says their proud mother.

In the late 40s and early 50s Hollywood experienced the fatal blow that was to prevent it from ever rising to its former glory again.

"I noticed the spider webs of TV antennas on the roofs of the Hollywood houses one day," said Miss de Havilland. "And people began staying home. The city of stars cut back production and a whole civilization began passing out of existence," she said.

Living in Paris, she returns to the city of stars occasionally now to make a movie, some of the more recent being "Hush, Hush Sweet Charlotte" (with "best friend Bette Davis"), "Airport 77" and last year "The Swarm," a film about killer bees.

"I think the city of stars will never be same again. But the people who were once a part of it are now remembered through television."

MEMORIES of some who have gone are kept alive by Miss de Havilland. "I can see him now as he was when I first met him," she says of Errol Flynn, with her dark eyes sparkling and her tiny hands clasped. "He was tall, magnificent, charming—the most beautiful man in the world. I fell silently, madly in love with him," she said, looking 18.

And Clark Gable. "When I first met

Clark Gable I was so in awe of him I could barely get out a 'Good morning, Mr. Gable,' to him," she says. Her fears vanished. "He was nervous over the scene in which he had to cry over his guilt in Scarlett's miscarriage," she said.

"He fussed, he fumed, he threatened to quit. He was embarrassed over the naked suffering of Rhett Butler. I encouraged him along with the director, and when the cameras rolled, Clark was wonderful," she said while

her brown eyes shone proudly.

And now? "Yes, I do watch my old movies on TV sometimes she told me. She names Melanie and her characters from "The Heiress" and "The Snake Pit" as her favorite roles, although she likens herself to her character of a protective mother in the film "Light In The Piazza."

"I feel a woman's greatest accomplishment is bringing a child into the world and raising him. I get the greatest fulfillment out of being a mother."

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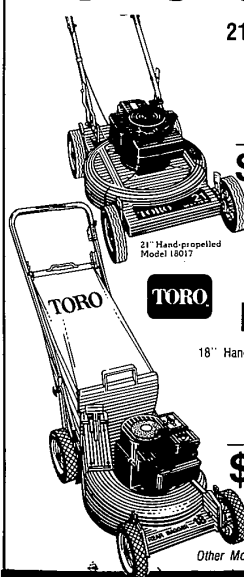
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Las Vegas balks  
at equal rights  
talk by Shana

By SHIRLEE IDEN

Shana Alexander says she was forced to cancel out of Las Vegas for "talking dirty"—trying to make a pro-ERA speech.

The prominent television personality and journalist was the featured speaker at "It's a Woman's World," the annual donor event of the Sistershood of Congregation Shaarey Zedek last week in Southfield.

"I didn't think that there were two dry words left in the language but there are in Las Vegas and they are 'regal rights.'"

She explained that Goodwill Industries in Las Vegas had decided to present "Women of the Year" awards and asked her to be the keynote speaker.

"They requested a specific speech title and I told them 'Goodwill to women for equal rights,'" she said. "When they heard the title they asked me to give up editorial control of my own speech. It was the first time in 35 years anyone asked that of me and I refused. I cancelled my speech."

Ms. Alexander blamed the incident on pressure from the Mormon church, a major backer of Goodwill Industries in Nevada and an opponent of the Equal Rights Amendment.

Nevada is one of the states who have not ratified the Equal Rights Amendment and many large organizations are boycotting the state as a convention site at the urging of such pro-ERA groups as the National Organization for Women (NOW).

THE JOURNALIST said that these same two words "equal rights" have brought her back into being an active, militant feminist.

Referring to Nevada as the big gambling state she said: "The greatest gamblers in every state are the wives and homemakers who are just one man away from welfare."

Author of a book on women's legal rights, she cited many inequities that exist in the country for women who are wives, divorced, widowed or seeking child custody.

"We aren't chattels anymore," she said. "Yet, of Jimmie Carter's first ten appointments to the federal bench, none were women."

Ms. Alexander, who is part of the Point-Counterpoint with James Kilpatrick on CBS's "60 Minutes" television program, told her audience how she and her philosophical adversary

work out their portion of the show.

"Jack and I pick the subject we'll argue about on Monday morning over the telephone," she said. "Then whoever's on point and will go on first types out a position and the other prepares a reply. We each drive 100 miles to the studio and tape."

She said she's often asked if she means what she says and her reply was: "I always mean it, but I'm not sure about Jack."

"I work harder because I have to go to the library and research my position but he made up his mind on everything at least 30 years ago."

GYPSY ROSE Lee was Ms. Alexander's first interview subject, 30 years ago. The topic was her pregnancy.

"I asked her if she would continue her career after the baby was born and she retorted: 'I can't have everything going out and nothing coming in'—a quote that established me in journalism."

Since her auspicious beginning, Ms. Alexander has been an editor and writer. She was a columnist for Life Magazine and is a former editor-in-chief of McCall's. She continues as a contributing editor of Newsweek and is the author of several books.

Her latest book, "Anyone's Daughter," is about Patty Hearst.

"I was in California four years ago visiting my mother, and father when Patty Hearst had been missing three or four weeks and I really began to feel an empathy with the case because I have a mother and a daughter too," she said.

The book's title is taken from something Patty herself once said. Ms. Alexander considers Miss Hearst a victim of her family, social class, the new media, psychiatry, the law and her own inner conflicts.

"The central statement of the book is the question: Did she ever have a chance?" Ms. Alexander said.

Since her Nevada incident with the Goodwill Industries and her equal rights speech being cancelled, Ms. Alexander said she goes everywhere she can to speak about ERA.

SHE SAID she learns a lot speaking publicly and on nationwide television.

"Point Counterpoint shows me that the public cares about public affairs," she said. "They are far ahead of where the networks think they are."

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