The Center for Home Movies

2011 Annual Report
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2011 IN REVIEW

2011 was another successful year for the Center for Home Movies (CHM). The ninth annual Home Movie Day was held at the most locations ever. *Amateur Night: Home Movies from American Archives*, CHM’s compilation film in collaboration with sixteen archives, played in eleven cities in the United States and Canada. We held a self-styled digitization party at which we transferred films from our collection and made them freely accessible on the Internet Archive. Our second fundraiser generated more donations than our needed goals. We are excited about 2012 and celebrating the tenth anniversary of Home Movie Day!

PRESERVATION WORK, NEW COLLECTIONS, AND SCREENINGS

*Amateur Night* screenings

2011 saw the release of CHM’s feature length film *Amateur Night: Home Movies from American Archives*. The compilation film includes home movies and amateur films from 16 archives blown-up to a beautiful new 35mm print. Included in the film is a home movie from Alfred Hitchcock, footage of a 1953 atom bomb test, documentation of a 1960 meeting of the San Francisco amateur film club, and a 2005 look at hurricane damaged New Orleans by filmmaker Helen Hill.

This past year *Amateur Night* played in 11 cities in the United States and Canada. After the January premiere in New York City at Anthology Film Archives, the film screened in Pittsburgh, Cleveland, Chicago, Philadelphia, Calgary, Boulder, Berkeley, Hollywood, Columbus, and Austin. In keeping with the mission of the Center to promote and educate on the importance of home movies, Dwight Swanson, CHM board member and the film’s curator, attended most of the screenings. This role was fulfilled by CHM co-founder Snowden Becker at the Austin screening that was a part of the 2011 conference of the Association of Moving Image Archivists.
Dwight Swanson introducing the *Amateur Night* screening in Boulder, Co on September 15, 2011.

Daniel Egan, author of *America’s Film Legacy: The Authoritative Guide to the Landmark Movies in the National Film Registry*, named *Amateur Night* his most memorable screening of 2011. You can read Egan's comments on the film at his blog “Reel Culture” found on the *Smithsonian Magazine* website. Other press on the film included a preview of the Berkeley screening in the *East Bay Express* and a preview of the New York premiere in *The Wall Street Journal*.

To inquire about booking the film in your town and to learn more about the film, please go to the *Amateur Night* website at [www.amateurnightmovie.com](http://www.amateurnightmovie.com).

**Francena Feeding the Chickens** screens at Celebrating Orphan Films in LA

CHM co-founder Snowden Becker introduced the 1905 film *Francena Feeding the Chickens* at the two-day festival of Orphan films held at the UCLA Film & Television Archive’s Billy Wilder Theater. The 35mm film may be the only extant work of the filmmaker Charles Camp, who shot actualities of the American west at the turn of the last century. The film, which shows the filmmaker’s niece on the family farm in Colorado, was presented in a new preservation print from the Library of Congress. Last year the Center helped Camp’s great-grand niece Jeanne Burckhardt find a home for the film at the Library. This screening was an early preview of the preservation print that will receive its premiere at the 2012 Orphans Film Symposium taking place April 11-14 in Astoria Queens. Jeanne Burckhardt and other family members will be in attendance.

**Our Day on DVD**

Wallace Kelly’s 1938 short film, *Our Day* was released in 2011 on DVD with a newly recorded score by composer/pianist Rachel Grimes. The film is an intimate look at the daily life of the Kelly family in Lebanon, Kentucky. Kelly gained wider attention when *Our Day* was screened at the 2007 Home Movie Day in New York City. It was added to the Library of Congress’ National Film Registry in 2007. In 2008 the Center for Home Movies received a grant from the National Film Preservation Foundation to preserve *Our Day* alongside a number of Kelly’s other films.

The new DVD, called *Marion County 1938*, was self-released by Grimes who submitted an earlier version of her score to *Amateur Night*, which includes Kelly’s movie. The new version on DVD also includes a number of other Kelly films and digital files of Grimes’ soundtrack. The DVD can be ordered for only 8 dollars from her [website](http://www.amateurnightmovie.com). Kelly’s movie can also be watched sans score at the [Internet Archive](http://www.archive.org) and while the film works silently, Grimes’ lush melodies help erase the historical distance that the seven decades have placed between now and the Kelly family in 1938.
Films from the Center’s collection used in music video
Danish musician Trentemøller incorporated footage from three home movies held in the Center’s collection in his new music video for the song “Sycamore Feeling.” Diana Tørsløv Møller directed the video which, switches back and forth between singer Marie Fisker observing the lonely inhabitants of a high rise apartment building and clips from home movies showing happier days. The video can be watched on YouTube here. The original home movies can be found at the Internet Archive here, here, and here.

Home movies digitized and uploaded to the Internet Archive
In the summer of 2011, three CHM board members met in Culpeper, Virginia at the Library of Congress Packard Campus for Audio-Visual Conservation. There they digitized 8mm and Super 8 films held in the Center’s collection of home movies that are currently housed at the Library. These digitized films were then uploaded to the Center’s page at the Internet Archive. Over 40 home movies that were previously only viewable from original one-of-a-kind prints are now freely accessible to anyone with an Internet connection. Highlights from these transferred films include 15 reels of travel films by the acclaimed amateur filmmaker Robbins Barstow (he also made Disneyland Dream (1956) which was added to the National Film Registry in 2008, and the 1936 fan film Tarzan and the Rocky Gorge), footage from the birthdays and Christmas celebrations of a West Virginia family, views of East Lansing, and, not for the faint of heart, a home movie showing an unidentified surgery. These films, and many more already digitized, can be found here on the Center’s page on the Internet Archive.

Board members Skip Elsheimer and Albert Steg digitizing home movies.

There you can also find the newly added collection of Humphrey JC Millet who shot amateur films showing his daily life as a British colonial officer in India during the 1930s. With the films uploaded from our digitization party and the new Millet films, the Center’s collection at the Internet Archive now totals 290 movies. As of the time of this report’s writing, these films have been downloaded an amazing 123,584 times, which is a testament to the possibility for access and creating new audiences for these important artifacts that is afforded by the Internet.
New Collections
In 2011, CHM acquired five new home movie collections from donors across the country. In addition to documenting the families’ domestic lives, all five collections include views of travel and vacation, which was a perennial favorite of amateur filmmakers in the twentieth century.

Our largest donation of the year was the collection of Dr. Rodney Kenneth Ketcham (1909-2002), which was donated by his daughter. Ketcham was a professor of Romance Languages in the State University of New York system, and in his daughter’s words, “this large collection of travel films is familial, yet international, in scope. Dr. Ketcham used his pictures of foreign landscapes, cityscapes, and, in particular, signs, to enrich his classes (including some for business people at Endicott's huge IBM Corporation), giving both a language lesson and the flavor of the countryside to students who had never traveled abroad. He was also a popular presenter at local schools, clubs, and travel groups.”

The George Struble Collection consists primarily of 16mm travel films in the Western United States, Yellowstone, Mexico, and a European journey through Paris, Venice and Athens.

Our colleagues at the United States Holocaust Museum pointed us to a collection of 8mm reels from the mid-twentieth century that had been discovered at an antique store in Virginia.

Donor Bernard Christiano contributed nine reels of 16mm films of Yellowstone in 1929, farming in the Pacific Northwest, and the 1949 Rose Parade, among others. This was one of the collections the CHM digitized and uploaded to the Internet Archive in the summer of 2011.

The Milai family of Virginia contributed a large collection of home movies of travels overseas in the 1950’s including trips to Switzerland, Africa and the Philippines. Other films shot by the donor’s father, Dr. Ahmed Samuel Milai, Jr. from 1965 to 1982 show family gatherings in Virginia as well as vacations to Pennsylvania, the Jersey Shore, Jamaica, Bermuda, Disneyland and Disney World.
HOME MOVIE DAY 2011

The films you'll see at Home Movie Day enable those of us who weren't around at the time to visit moments like the New York World's Fair of 1939-1940, and I for one can't get enough of those. Documentary filmmakers build whole features around such footage, and I'm sure historians will continue to rely on amateur movies to tell them what life was like in 20th century America.

- Leonard Maltin

On Saturday, October 15 the ninth annual Home Movie Day was held at 68 different locations in 61 cities spread across 13 countries. This is a record in terms of the number of sites celebrating Home Movie Day!

As celebrated film critic Leonard Maltin notes, the theme for this year was fairs and parades. The flagship Home Movie Day event was held at the Queens Museum of Art (QMA) in collaboration with Northeast Historic Film. Located at the site of the 1939-1940 New York World’s Fair, the Queens Home Movie Day highlighted the amateur film footage of that historic event.

Click here for an episode of the Leonard Lopate show from WNYC that previewed the Queens event and which interviews QMA curator Louise Weinberg and local volunteer Walter Forsberg. Home Movie Day and the Center for Home Movies were also mentioned by Daniel Egan in the Reel Culture blog on the Smithsonian website. The article from October 12, 2011, titled “Celebrating Home Movie Day,” features quotes from CHM co-founders Brian Graney and Dwight Swanson.
The following is a list of 2011 Home Movie Day cities. A list of organizers and local event volunteers can be found at the end of this report:

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<th>Argentina</th>
<th>Mexico</th>
<th>United States</th>
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<td>Buenos Aires</td>
<td>Mexico City (two locations)</td>
<td>Austin, TX</td>
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<td>Vienna</td>
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<td>Canada</td>
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Screening films at the Home Movie Day in Hilversum, Netherlands.
Second Annual End-of-year Fundraiser
The Center for Home Movies held its second annual fundraiser in December of 2011. Once again, thanks to the gracious help of our donors we surpassed our fundraising goals. We received $3,595 from December 1 to end of 2011, beating our needed goal by almost 20%! All of the executive board contributed to the fundraiser. The donations will be used to totally cover our annual operating budgets, with the extra funds going to planning the 2012 Home Movie Day.

Donations are still being accepted online through the Network for Good for US residents (http://www1.networkforgood.org/). The executive board of the Center for Home Movies thanks all who donated, which makes our work in preserving and promoting home movies possible.

A full financial report for 2011 is available upon request.

Living Room Cinema DVD
In 2011 the Center for Home Movies ended its agreement with Watchmaker Films to distribute copies of the DVD Living Room Cinema: Films From Home Movie Day. Originally released in 2007, the DVD features 22 films that were discovered at Home Movie Day events from around the country, many with accompanying commentary from the families in the films and/or original music. Copies of the original DVD are still available and can most easily be purchased here at Amazon.com.

Website redesign
In December of 2011 the Center for Home Movies went live with a newly redesigned website. The URL is the same – www.centerforhomemovies.org – but the new site includes streaming video for many of the home movies in the Center’s collection. The site is a work in progress; any suggestions or comments on how we can make it more useful would be greatly appreciated.

Mike Mashon added to the Advisory Board
The Center for Home Movies was honored to add Mike Mashon to the Advisory Board. Mashon is the head of the Library of Congress Moving Image Section at the Packard Campus for Audio Visual Conservation and is a long time supporter of amateur filmmaking and the Center for Home Movies. We greatly appreciate his time and willingness to share his expertise with us.

2011 Letters of Appreciation
Every year the Center for Home Movies sends out a number of letters expressing our appreciation to individuals who have significantly supported the cause of home movies. In 2011 letters were sent out to Brian Meacham for his efforts in running the Home Movie Day blog and assisting with the website, Ruta Abolins and Margie Compton of the Walter J. Brown Media Archives and Peabody Awards Collection at the University of Georgia Libraries for their sustained and continuing promotion of Home Movie Day, and
Paolo Cherchi Usai for his forging of connections that made the production of *Amateur Night* a possibility.

**Submitted National Endowment for the Humanities grant**

Following the Center’s 2010 Home Movie Digitization and Access summit, CHM joined with Northeast Historic Film (NHF) to develop a proposal for The Amateur Travel Film Online Archive project, submitted in July to the National Endowment for the Humanities’ *Humanities Collections and Reference Resources* grant program. The project establishes a consortium of archives including CHM; NHF; the Chicago Film Archives; Harvard Film Archive; the Texas Archive of the Moving Image; the Walter J. Brown Media Archives and Peabody Awards Collection at the University of Georgia; and the Arts Library, University of California, San Diego. Our shared objective is to provide free access to an integrated digital collection of over 500 hours of unique moving images related to travel and tourism and to advances new avenues for tourism study by placing isolated regional holdings in the context of a coherent virtual collection. Our hope is that the project will also develop and promote a model for integrated and enhanced digital access to non-theatrical film collections that may be adopted widely across humanities disciplines.

In addition to its role as a partner in coordinating the project, The Center for Home Movies is contributing three collections to the online archive: the Bernard Christiano Collection, the Fritz Vandover Collection, and the Tennessee Archive of Moving Image and Sound Collection.

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS ACTIVITIES**

**Conference presentations/publications/interviews**

On February 25th Dwight Swanson spoke at the Personal Archiving conference in San Francisco. The conference brought together librarians, archivists, and other practitioners working on the preservation of everyday documents created by private individuals. Swanson reported on the Digitization and Access Summit held by the Center for Home Movies in August of 2010. The Summit addressed the feasibility of creating an online portal that would gather together home movies from disparate sources. A video of his talk can be found [here](https://www.archive.org/details/swanson2011) at the Internet Archive.

The next month, Snowden Becker gave a report on the Summit at the 2011 conference of the Society for Cinema and Media Studies, which was held March 10-12 in New Orleans. Becker also chaired the workshop titled “Home Movie Research Methodologies,” which covered the challenges to incorporating home movies and amateur films into a discipline traditionally based on theatrical Hollywood films.

Board president Chad Hunter gave a talk titled “Basic Home Movie Care & Preservation” at the Pittsburgh Preservation Fair on October 7th. The Fair’s focus was Preserving Family Treasures and Hunter’s talk was one of many that presented best practices on conserving the material objects of the domestic sphere. His presentation
covered how to identify different film gauges, diagnosis of common degradation problems such as vinegar syndrome, methods of proper film storage, and avenues for film digitization.

In November, Snowden Becker was interviewed on the Austin public radio program *Lights, Camera, Austin* to preview the annual conference of the Association of Moving Image Archivists. She also discussed the role of CHM and Home Movie Day in the larger field of film preservation. Becker was joined in the discussion by Rachael Stoeltje, film archivist at the Indiana University Libraries Film Archive, and Steve Wilson, Associate Curator of films at the Harry Ransom Center. The broadcast is available [here](#) for streaming or download in two parts.

**CHM Board of Directors 2011 annual meeting and retreat**
The Board met in upstate New York from April 21-25, 2011 for its annual meeting. Business conducted included follow-up discussions on the previous summer’s Digitization and Access Summit, the welcoming of two new board members, efforts towards updating the organization’s mission statement and other institutional policies, and plans for that fall’s Home Movie Day. Joining the executive board were two CHM co-founders, Brian Graney and Snowden Becker who agreed to serve again as honorary board members. CHM covers the cost of food and one third of the venue expense for the retreat while board members pay for any transportation costs.

The Center for Home Movie Board of Directors at the 2011 annual meeting serendipitously paying tribute to our departed friend, filmmaker Robbins Barstow.
CENTER FOR HOME MOVIES 2012 ACTIVITIES

CHM Board of Directors 2012 annual meeting and retreat
On February 18-22, 2012 the Board will meet on the coast of North Carolina to plan this fall’s tenth annual Home Movie Day. Further topics to be covered include plans to digitize more collections of home movies, board development, additions and revisions to the CHM website redesign, and possible avenues for aggregating online home movies at a central portal to increase enjoyment and scholarship of the form.

Home Movie Day 2012
The tenth annual Home Movie Day will be held on Saturday, October 20, 2012. For this special anniversary we have set a goal of 100 locations to host local events. This goal represents a 47% increase over the number of 2011 Home Movie Day events, which is the year with the largest number of locations. If you are interested in being a part of this effort to call attention to the importance and value of home movies, either as an event sponsor or local volunteer, please go the Home Movie Day website at www.homemovieday.com. There you can learn how to sponsor a Home Movie Day event in your town or find the closest venue where you can volunteer.

Conference on DIY Archives
Center for Home Movies co-founder Snowden Becker will give the keynote address at the New England Archivists Spring 2012 meeting that will take place on the 23rd through the 24th of March at Wesleyan University. The meetings will address workable methods of archiving that should be very useful in these times of shrinking budgets. Becker’s talk is titled “How to Become a Film Archivist in Five Easy Steps (and Five Good Reasons Why You Should).” The keynote presentation will cover a history of Home Movie Day, issues in using home movies as source of history, and the necessity of archivists being proactive in their educational and occupational development. Information on registering for the event can be located at www.newenglandarchivists.org.

THE CENTER FOR HOME MOVIES BOARDS

Executive Board
Skip Elsheimer
Chad Hunter
Albert Steg
Dwight Swanson
Katie Trainor
Andy Uhrich
Molly Wheeler
Snowden Becker (honorary member)
Brian Graney (honorary member)

Advisory Board
Ray Edmondson
Mona Jimenez
Gregory Lukow
Mike Mashon
Rick Prelinger
Melinda Stone
Dan Streible
Russ Suniewick
Advisors in Memoriam
Robbins Barstow
Alan Kattelle
William O’Farrell

HOME MOVIE DAY EVENT ORGANIZERS AND LOCAL VOLUNTEERS

Event organizers

Some of the folks who volunteered at local Home Movie Day venues