

Silver Dollar Cafe

by Steve Schoenherr

The Silver Dollar Cafe at 341 3rd Avenue was founded in 1934 by Willis Fullerton as the Owl Buffet. It became the Silver Dollar Cafe when purchased by I in 1943. Starting in 1950, owner Vallin led the annual March of Dimes campaign by donating the gross receipts for all drinks on the day designated as Silver Day. The Masonic Lodge met upstairs in this building from 1937 until 1955.



The Silver Dollar Cafe was located in the Wigginton Building at 341 Third Avenue in this 1947 photo.

1912/10/01 - Druggist's Permit issued to Benj. F and Jas. W. Wigginton, Druggists of Chula Vista, CA, permitting said persons to keep for sale and sell into liquors under the provisions of Ordinance #11 allowing only drugstores to sell alcohol with a permit. There were no bars or saloons in Chula Vista until the Prohibition in 1933. (Minutes of the Board of Trustees, Oct. 1, 1912.)

1930 - The Wigginton building was built in 1930 at 341 Third Avenue, and was considered eligible for historical status in the 2013 Survey of Potential Historic Resources Recommended for Evaluation. This building was also the office of Benjamin Wigginton, "Real Estate, Notary Public, Insurance, Proprietor of Wigginton Block and Apartments, 329 3d Av." in the City Directory of 1930.

1931/09/15 - The new Loba American Legion post will meet at different locations including Wigginton Hall at 341 Third Avenue.



ad in *Chula Vista Star* Nov. 22, 1935.

1937/01/08 - Masons move lodge from Heller bldg to Wigginton Hall at 347 and 1/2 Third Ave. Also meeting in the new hall will be the Eastern Star and the Regular meetings of the masons are held on the first Tuesday of each month.

1943 - Lou Vallin opened the Silver Dollar in 1943. Manager Frank Fernandez joined staff in 1946, has special salad and dressing made from Vallin's "secret" Chula Vista Star News, Sept. 19, 1968.)

1950/01/27 - March of Dimes for polio campaign, contest between Exchange Club and Lions, 10 men from each on either side of 3rd avenue will take one step for every dollar collected, led by Lloyd Lee president of Lions. Tomorrow is Booster Day for the campaign, merchants with special ads include Silver Dollar cafe. Mason Baity is merchants committee chairman of Chamber of Commerce. (*Chula Vista Star* Jan. 27, 1950.)

1952/01/31 - March of Dimes has raised \$5377, including \$1771 from Rohr employees, and \$1402 from Silver Dollar Days that was an idea formulated 3 years ago by Edward E. "Red" Spencer, manager of the Silver Dollar. Spencer's idea has been picked up by 3 more bars in the area. (*Chula Vista Star*, Jan.31, 1952.)

1953/01/15 - March of Dimes underway Jan. 2-31, Monday Jan. 26 will be Silver Dollar Day at the Silver Dollar Cafe, gross receipts from all drinks that day go to March of Dimes. In the last 3 years the cafe has contributed \$3500, the largest individual donor; ad show 15,000 dimes buys one iron lung for polio. (*Chula Vista Star*, Jan. 15, 1953.)

1955/01/27 - March of dimes campaign under way for polio victims, Rohr gave donations, 6th annual Silver Dollar Night by owner Lou Vallin, and manager Red Spencer, at 341 3rd ave. (*Chula Vista Star-News*, Jan. 27, 1955.)

1960/02/11 - The 11th annual Silver Dollar March of Dimes party at Lou Vallin's Silver Dollar Lounge, 341 3rd ave, will be Monday. Will feature entertainment donated by bands and vocalists from this area, performing every half hour, acc to Alex Balich, lounge manager, incl Ella Mae Morse and the Dick Ryan Band from the Hidaway, Jose Manaois and his Troubadors, Howard Hill from the Hacienda, the Hazlett Hasslers from the Honey Bucket, the Lala Latin Quintet from the Bear Club, Ron CREDIT from the Cosmopolitan, the Powerhouse Stokers from Del Mar, Henry Kaiminouku from the Bali Hai, Smokey Rogers and the Bostonia Ballroom and Charlie Johnson from the 21 Club. During the past 10 years the lounge has donated a total of \$18,875.35 to the March of Dimes. Last year, a total of \$2,750.60 was raised. The first year of the party the firm raised \$805.72. In 1951 the party raised over \$1005. In 1952 \$1,407.11. In 1953 \$1602.92. In 1954 \$2501.74. In 1955 \$2110. In 1956 \$2237. In 1957 \$2517.10. In 1958 \$2037.50. Vallin said that 22 employees were planning to donate their services during the day. These include 7 bartenders and 15 waitresses and kitchen workers. The recent Mothers' march raised some \$3063 in the South Bay. (*Chula Vista Star-News*, Feb. 11, 1960.)

1961/03/02 - wedding party for Florence Carrol, waitress at the Silver Dollar cafe for 15 years, will marry Ray Pauls (*Chula Vista Star-News*, Mar. 2, 1961.)

1965/02/18 - The 16th annual Silver Dollar March of Dimes benefit will be held at Lou Vallin's Silver Dollar Cafe, 341 3rd ave. Vallin has contributed over to the March of Dimes, making his the largest single special event held for the March of Dimes, campaigning against polio. (*Chula Vista Star-News*, Feb. 18, 1965.)

1967/03/09 - Lou Vallin watches sign go up for Silver Dollar March of Dimes party polio drive, March 13 Monday, (*Chula Vista Star-News*, Mar. 9, 1967.) prize this year for those who attend the party is a pair of tickets to Mexico City. (*Chula Vista Star-News*, Mar. 16, 1967.)

1969/10/05 - Silver Dollar roof burned, at 341 3rd ave. (*Chula Vista Star-News*, Oct. 5, 1969.)

ad in *Chula Vista Star*, Jan. 6, 1953

Silver Dollar Dimes



TWO GLASS jars jammed with currency, in the custody of Lou Vallin, represents advance receipts which will make up part of the annual donation to the March of Dimes by his Silver Dollar, 341 Third Ave., Chula Vista. Tomorrow, for the 16th year, the Silver Dollar will stage its annual benefit for the March of Dimes and all proceeds from business for this one day will be turned over to the charity. This is the largest single special event held for the March of Dimes in this area. Tom Pendergast, county chairman, said. A number of bands and entertainers will be on hand, throughout the day and night, to donate services to the cause. Door prizes will be awarded.

Lou Vallin in *Chula Vista Star*, Feb. 21, 1965

[Home](#) • [About Us](#) • [Next Meeting](#) • [Latest News](#) • [Resources](#) • [Organizations](#) • [Exhibits](#) • [Bulletins](#) [Contact](#)