

# 3 Holyoke women stars of silent films

By MIKE PLAISANCE

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**HOLYOKE** – When movie-making was in its infancy, it was raised with the silent help of three Holyoke women.

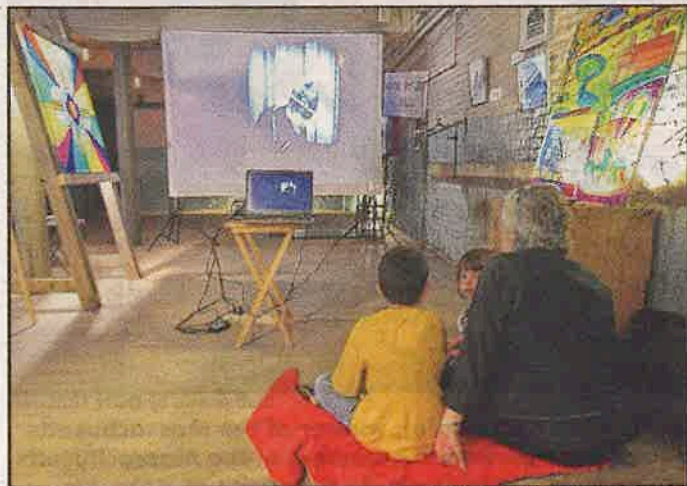
Silent-film actresses Eva Tanguay, Pauline Curley and Ormi Hawley all were born or raised in Holyoke and were featured in a two-minute “Holyoke Stars of the Silent Screen” video that premiered April 19 at the Wauregan Gallery, 386 Dwight St.

The brainchild of Kathy McKean, managing director of the Massachusetts International Festival of the Arts (MIFA) here, the audio-visual composition was part of the ongoing “Holyoke Points of View” series of art exhibits.

The video was produced by PorterHouseMedia here and Zach MacDonald of Milltown Productions, of Northampton.

The short movie blended vintage sounds and images of the actresses and their times. It will soon be available on the MIFA website, MIFA spokeswoman Emily Mann said.

McKean said the idea came



Staff photo by DAVE ROBACK

**Sally Cragin, of Fitchburg, sits with Christopher Cragin-Warner, 9, and Jet Cragin-Warner, 4, during the showing of “Holyoke Stars of the Silent Screen” at the Wauregan Gallery in Holyoke.**

to her on a stormy day in January or February.

“So one snowy day, I was left alone with my computer and I Googled ‘Holyoke, Mass. actresses’ and wound up with these women I’d never heard of,” McKean said.

She spoke with Jeffrey C. Bianchine, the city’s creative

economy coordinator. They had been seeking a film-based idea to add to “Holyoke Points of View.” They contacted PorterHouseMedia, which has made music-video compositions for ESPN, Disney, NBC and VH1, and within weeks, Tanguay, Curley and Hawley were starring in another pro-

duction.

“She was known as the ‘I Don’t Care Girl,’” after the title of her best-known song, said Donald T. Sanders, of MIFA, which is renovating the Victory Theatre, 81-89 Suffolk St.

Rose Pauline Curley (1903-2000) was born here and began as a child stage actress at 5. She made her first movie in 1912 and her last in 1929. She died in Santa Monica, Calif.

Ormetta Grace Hawley (1889-1942) was born in Holyoke. She acted in the theater and began doing silent movies in 1911 with Lubin Studios in Philadelphia. She died in Rome, N.Y.

“It’s a part of our history that we obviously didn’t know much about. But it’s great to have,” said volunteer Erin Pro-novost, of South Hadley.

The video played on a loop, projected from a Dell laptop computer onto a movie screen. The set-up was on the scuffed wooden-slat floor inside a room of worn, painted brick walls at the Wauregan building, a red-brick complex built

at the canals in 1879.

The rectangular room offered a lot to look at. Besides “Holyoke Stars of the Silent Screen,” several glass blocks were fashioned into art and on display from the “Selections for Glass Block Initiative.” The community competition features artists and others using the 75-pound glass panels cut from an old floor of the Holyoke Public Library, which is being renovated at 335 Maple St., for works of art. A tree and butterfly were painted against a blue background on one panel, while another showed what looked like industrial and other scenes.

“Holyoke Then and Now” consisted of photographs of the city by contemporary photographer Jeffrey Byrnes, six young women from Girls Inc., and Bill Ravanese, who photographed the city in the 1970s and 1980s.

In addition, hung on the old brick walls and near the gray metal electrical boxes were black and white photographs for the exhibit “Boomtown: Milan P. Warner & The Photographing of Holyoke.”