LONG BEACH HERITAGE

Volume 18, No 4 Fall 2008

Curious about the history of your house?

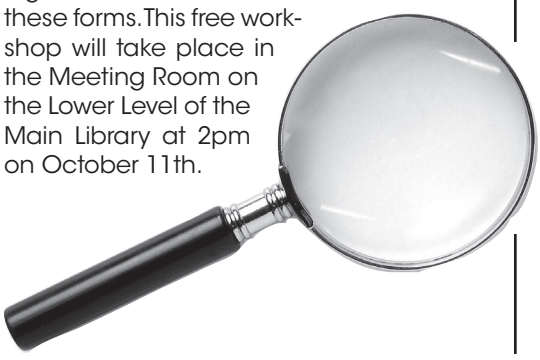
Long Beach is fortunate to have many older homes and neighborhoods steeped in history and tradition. Today's buyers often look forward to restoring, preserving and enjoying the unique touches these houses offer.

Besides the ambiance of a house, though, it is also important to discover its biography. Who built it? Who lived here? Why was it built in this fashion? What was the neighborhood like? There are many clues to a house's history if you are willing to do a bit of detective work.

Join Maureen Neeley, local librarian and owner of HouStories, at the Main Library on Saturday, October 11th. Through her HouStories business, Maureen has researched over 50 properties in Long Beach. She also writes freelance for various publications about neighborhood histories and local lore. She is a longtime board member of Long Beach Heritage, past recipient of the Preservationist of the Year award, and serves on the Advisory Board for the Historical Society.

She is more than happy to share with others her methodology in researching the history of homes in Long Beach. In this afternoon talk, she will walk participants through the myriad of records, photographs and maps available to those wishing to research local architectural and biographical history.

Handouts will be provided which detail the locations and costs of these records, along with samples and tips on navigating the information found in these forms. This free workshop will take place in the Meeting Room on the Lower Level of the Main Library at 2pm on October 11th.



The Long Beach Civic Center

Long Beach City Hall and Main Library.

By Louise Ivers

The Long Beach Civic Center has gone through many changes over the last 120 years.

The first City Hall was in the Tower Building at Ocean and Pacific Avenues when Long Beach was incorporated in 1888.

In 1899 Henry F. Starbuck, a trained architect who lived in Long Beach, designed an imposing brick building with a classical temple front on Pacific Avenue, which contained the City offices on the first floor and the Library on the second floor. The Fire Station was behind the building.

In 1907-09 a Library funded by steel magnate Andrew Carnegie and designed by Franklin P. Burnham of Los Angeles was constructed in what was known as Pacific Park, donated to the city by the Long Beach Land and Water Company in 1905. Also in the neoclassical mode, it had a portico with paired Doric columns. Damaged in the earthquake of 1933, it was remodeled in 1936-37 by local architects D. Easton Herrald and Edward F. Mayberry in a more simplified style with fluted piers.

In 1915 Pacific Park was renamed Lincoln Park when a statue of Abraham Lincoln, a replica of the one in Chicago by the famous American artist Augustus St. Gaudens, was erected.

By 1920 the city had outgrown the 1899 City Hall and commissioned W. Horace Austin, the "dean" of Long Beach architects, and his former partner, civil engineer Harvey H. Lochridge, to design a new structure. This eight story classical building had an arcaded entrance and four domed towers and was completed in 1923. It sustained some damage in the earthquake and was remodeled by local architect Cecil Schilling and engineer C. D. Walles with Art Deco details in 1933-34. The City Hall was complemented by the Municipal Utilities Building of 1931-32, an Art Deco structure designed by local architects Warren Dedrick and Earl Bobbe with reliefs by Merrell Gage, a noted Los Angeles sculptor, and the Veterans Memorial Hall of 1936-37 by another local architect, George W. Kahrs.

These three Modernistic buildings together with the Library constituted the Civic Center which was constructed around and in Lincoln Park. A farmers' market was also

See Civic Center page 7

Message from the President

In my first President's message, let me begin by extending by sincere appreciation to the members of Long Beach Heritage for your support and this wonderful opportunity to serve as President. I look forward to working with this year's terrific Board of Directors, all of whom are educated, talented and passionate members of our local historic preservation community. Our Vice Presidents and Committee Chairpersons will work this year on many programs and approaches to achieve our goals and objectives. Strategic outreach, enhancement of our web site, continuous monitoring and updates about development that threatens historic buildings and focus on membership develop remain our immediate objectives. We will also continue to showcase the Bembridge House by hosting events, tours and educational outreach. We are determined to focus on the maintenance and construction projects for the Bembridge House and with the help of the Bembridge House Committee, I'm confident in many successes!

While contemplating our mission of education and advocacy promoting public knowledge and preservation of our historic and cultural resources, I would like to share my "Five Ps of Historic Preservation". I believe these "Ps" help focus our Board, Committees and Members to develop and sustain programs important to the mission and success of Long Beach Heritage.

They are:

Prepare: With assistance and support from our members and Board of Directors, we will work to develop and sustain active committees that will assist in the development of programs, projects and events that will educate our community, promote membership and provide revenue in the form of fundraisers.

Proactive: Through our Advocacy Committee, we will remain on alert for issues relating to historic preservation. Using our newsletter and web site, we will work to educate our members and the historic preservation community about issues of immediate concerns and call for input and, where necessary, call for action.

Position Papers: As issues are evaluated by the Advocacy Committee, position papers will be developed and made available for membership and the historic preservation community. With input from our membership and others, the Advocacy Committee will study issues and make sound, coherent and achievable solutions. We hope that with this approach of participation and inclusion, we will represent our cause for preservation effectively and achieve clear, definable and tangible success.

Partners: By soliciting input and participation from our members, elected and appointed officials and others in the preservation community, we will continue to develop and sustain strategic partners critical to our goals of realizing our mission in historic preservation. With the help and support of our Preservation Partners, we will achieve our objectives in educating the citizens of Long Beach about the importance of historic and cultural preservation.

Performance: Long Beach Heritage will only continue to grow if we all work together to reach our goals in historic preservation. A respectable performance in the eyes of our members and others in the historic preservation community will be a major objective of the current Board. We have many issues and opportunities ahead and must work cooperatively with everyone at "the table" and demonstrate a transparent public agenda for historic preservation.

I look forward to working with the wonderful members of our board, our committees and membership to reach our objective in educating the citizens of Long Beach about the importance of our historic and cultural resources and how they all play can play a part in this mission. Furthermore, we all must work to reach creative solutions and take every opportunity to grow Long Beach Heritage. Our membership and their participation will be the key to success in our mission!

— John Thomas

California Preservation Foundation Events to be Held in Long Beach

On Friday, October 17 from 6:00 to 7:30 p.m. the California Preservation Foundation will host a "Sunset Reception" at the Villa Riviera, located on Ocean Boulevard in Long Beach. It is both a local and national historic landmark. The Villa was designed by Los Angeles architect Richard D. King and completed in 1929. Built to resemble a French chateau, it has a high pitched copper roof, a tower, and grotesque creatures perched atop the walls.

On Saturday, October 18 from 4:30 to 5:30 p.m. a guided "behind-the-scenes" tour of the Queen Mary will be offered for those attending the Preservation Design Awards banquet on the ship. The dinner will take place from 6:00 to 9:00 p.m. The Queen Mary was launched in 1936 by the Cunard Line and plied the Atlantic Ocean between Southampton and New York before its move to Long Beach. It has stellar Art Deco interior elements. For ticket information call (415) 495-0349 (ext. 202) or access the website at www.californiapreservation.org.

LBH Online Services

Information & Public Awareness

Long Beach Heritage's website, www.lbheritge.org now offers email notification of architectural advocacy issues, volunteer opportunities, educational programs, Bembridge House news, member issue surveys and cultural events.

On-Line Payments

Online renewal of your LBH membership, donations, and event tickets purchases can be made online with a credit card. Mailed in ticket requests and membership payments will always be welcome. On our website, you can also find membership and ticket forms that can be printed, filled out and mailed.

Sign-Up

A sign-up form for email notification can be found at www.lbheritage.org.

Emails are a way for LBH to economically increase membership involvement and advertising. Online ticket sales will be beneficial tools to assist our hardworking volunteers organize our many events. Please take advantage of our online services.

419 Daisy Avenue – The "School House" Project

In 2002 the Long Beach Unified School District acquired and scheduled for demolition all the houses between Maine and Golden, Broadway and Third Streets in order to make room for a new elementary school.

Thanks to the support and efforts of our 1st District Council Office, one home out of this block was saved—the 1904 Foursquare house at 249 Maine. In 2003 the house was moved by the Redevelopment Agency to a temporary location a block away on Third Street and Willmore City Heritage Association was invited to submit a proposal for the restoration/renovation of the house. The Redevelopment Agency owned two small adjacent lots in the Willmore City Historic District which were ideal for the house. WCHA secured a loan from the National Trust for Historic Preservation in Washington, D.C. In July of 2006 the house was again moved—this time to its current and hopefully final location at 419 Daisy Avenue.

419 Daisy Avenue circa 1904.

After almost a year getting plans approved, construction of a new foundation began. Once that was completed and cured for

See The Schoolhouse Project page 6

Membership Report October 2008

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Save the Queen

Sustainer
The Ackerman Family

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Mark Wheeler
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Christina Yanis
David York

What's Up at the Bembridge Heritage Homesite

At last the ADA accessible bathroom and the storage room are finished. We are all so pleased at how well this wonderful addition looks and how it blends in with the historic fabric of the carriage house. Magnum Builders, Inc. under the supervision of James Leonard and Mike Burrous , our advisor, has done an outstanding job.

May Day was again a very successful event with over 300 adults and children touring the house. The theme this year was 1943 with docents dressed in clothes of that era. The Carriage House was decorated as a USO and items in the house were representative of that year. The activities in Drake Park included dancing, games, face painting, May Day crafts and storytelling.

We were very pleased that the Friends of Languages Associate Group, which operates under the auspices of Long Beach City College Foundation, decided to have their spring fundraiser at the Bembridge House. There were over 65 guests at this event which included tours of the house led by our outstanding docents. The Language Associates raise funds to support the Foreign Language and English-as-a-Second –Language Departments through scholarships, grants, and special projects. They enjoyed seeing the house and socializing in the lovely surroundings.

Thanks to all the dedicated volunteers at the Bembridge House who are so very busy keeping the house in order, giving tours, gardening, sorting the collection and archives and seeing repairs are taken care of when needed. We all enjoy our volunteer hours at the house and invite you to join us in any of the activities that would interest you.

—Charlotte Mitchell

If This Shawl Could Talk

Working as a volunteer at the Historic Bembridge Homesite is a wonderful life experience for me because the people are friendly, the board members are wonderful. In the past two years I have been spending many hours cataloging many textiles, clothing and accessories which belonged to the late Rankin and Bembridge families. I was also a co-organizer of "100 years of Fashion (1906-2006): Bembridge Centennial Celebration" in 2006. Vintage clothing has been my passion for quite a long time. I believe costumes are three-dimensional objects that are allied to the other decorative arts, but combine both function and beauty. Depending upon its cultural context, a costume can reveal the age, sex, religion and the marital, political, and socio-economical status of the wearer. Considered within its aesthetic and cultural context, a garment can give us vivid and intimate glimpses both the creator and the wearer.

When cataloging clothing and textiles at the Bembridge Homesite I came across many interesting garments dating from the mid 1800s to the late 1990s. One day a volunteer found a large piece of fabric which she believed to be an old table cloth. She asked me to examine it because she was not sure it was worth saving, but when I saw the piece I knew exactly what it was. It was hidden at the bottom of a box in a dark corner of the sewing room closet for quite some time. I immediately took it out and was thrilled to find that it was an antique Paisley shawl from the Civil War period or 1860s.

Paisley shawls debuted in Western Europe in the last quarter of the eighteenth century, and became a popular item at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Early paisley shawls were made of cashmere which came from the Kashmir region in the northwestern India, where the short soft hairs of the mountain goats were home-spun into yarn and then woven into woolen cloth. These shawls became a major industry in France and England, but there are records showing that until 1840s the best quality shawls were made in Lyons.

Early paisley shawls were much smaller and rectangular in shape to accommodate simple empire-waist chemise dresses. The European winter was too cold for the thin material of the chemises, so cashmere shawls were wrapped

Photos: The shawl being displayed over a period Civil War crinoline dress.

around the shoulders. Cashmere shawls from India are said to have caught on when Napoleon brought them back to France following his Egyptian campaign in 1799 because of the exotic patterns and appealing polychromatic colors. However, they were very expensive at that time, and had significant enough value to be recorded in wills. By the 1840s huge shawl industries had sprung up in both France and England to serve the demands of the general populace. In Lyons luxurious products were made with superior materials, while less expensive woven and printed imitations were mass-produced in the Scottish town of Paisley. The term "paisley" became synonymous with the cone pattern.

The vogue for paisley and cashmere shawls continued until the Second Empire (c.1852-1870), when an oversized version worn with crinolines became the dominant style. After the 1850s, crinoline petticoats with cage frames constructed of wire or whale baleen were common. Skirts took on extraordinary width and shawls became larger as well. Therefore, the oversized shawl found at the Bembridge Homesite is dated around 1860 and was possibly imported from Scotland. The body of the shawl is made of black cotton and the borders are woven with vibrant colored cashmere in a paisley motif. It was meant to be folded in a triangular shape and worn over a crinoline dress. If this shawl could talk I wonder what kind of exciting stories it would tell us.

—Christopher Myint

Meet the 2008-09 Board Members

Board photo: Bobbi Burket, David Waller, Cheryl Perry, Liz Handley, Mikle Norton, Stan Poe, John Thomas, Gary Roderick, Charlotte Mitchell, Maureen Neeley, Melinda Roney, Louise Ivers, Diane Jordan and Kerrie Aley. Not pictured: Judy Edson, Amy Bentley Smith, Marshall Pumphrey, Ana Maria McGuan.

Civic Center cont'd from page 1

set up along one side of the park where the vendors sold foods of many nations. The 1899 City Hall was moved across from the 1923 building and was used as offices for the Public Utilities department.

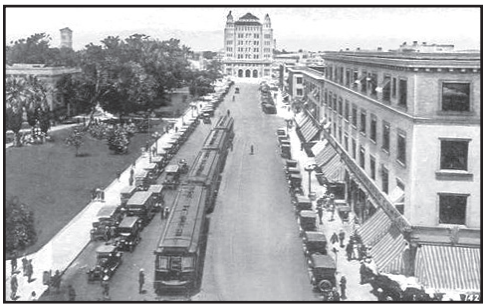
By 1947 the city was experiencing growing pains again and Hugh R. Davies, another noted Long Beach architect, proposed a design for a sixteen story City Hall. His project was a Modern glass skyscraper that was four times as large as the remodeled building by Schilling and Walles. However, it was not constructed.

In 1973 the city commissioned a consortium of local firms headed by Hugh and Donald Gibbs and called the Allied Architects to design a new Civic Center. The present City Hall and Library, completed in 1976-77, are examples of Late Modern architecture. These types of buildings were an extension of the "ideas and forms of the Modern Movement… exaggerating the structure and technological image of the building in [an] attempt to provide… aesthetic pleasure," according to Charles Jencks in his seminal book, Late-Modern Architecture.

Other examples of Late Modern architecture include John Portman's Bonaventure Hotel of 1974 in Los Angeles, William R. Pereira's Transamerica Building of 1968-72 in San Francisco, and Gibbs and Gibbs' Terrace Theater of 1978 in Long Beach.

The Long Beach City Hall and Library complex was innovative for its time. The former structure contains fourteen stories of tinted glass supported by paired concrete piers at the corners and the latter once had rooftop planters and grass berms above reinforced concrete walls, retaining the park like aspect of the former Civic Center. The Allied Architects, Gibbs and Gibbs; Wing and Wing; Killingsworth, Brady and Associates; and Homolka and Associates, combined concrete, glass, and steel, as well as landscaping, in a design that spoke the language of Late Modernism.

Each of the Civic Center designs represented the best work of local architects over the years: from the late nineteenth and early twentieth century Neoclassicism, to the Art Deco mode of the 1930s, to the Late Modern trend of the 1970s. The Long Beach architects of each period contributed imaginative solutions to the urban planning of Pacific/Lincoln Park, as well as signature buildings in and around it.



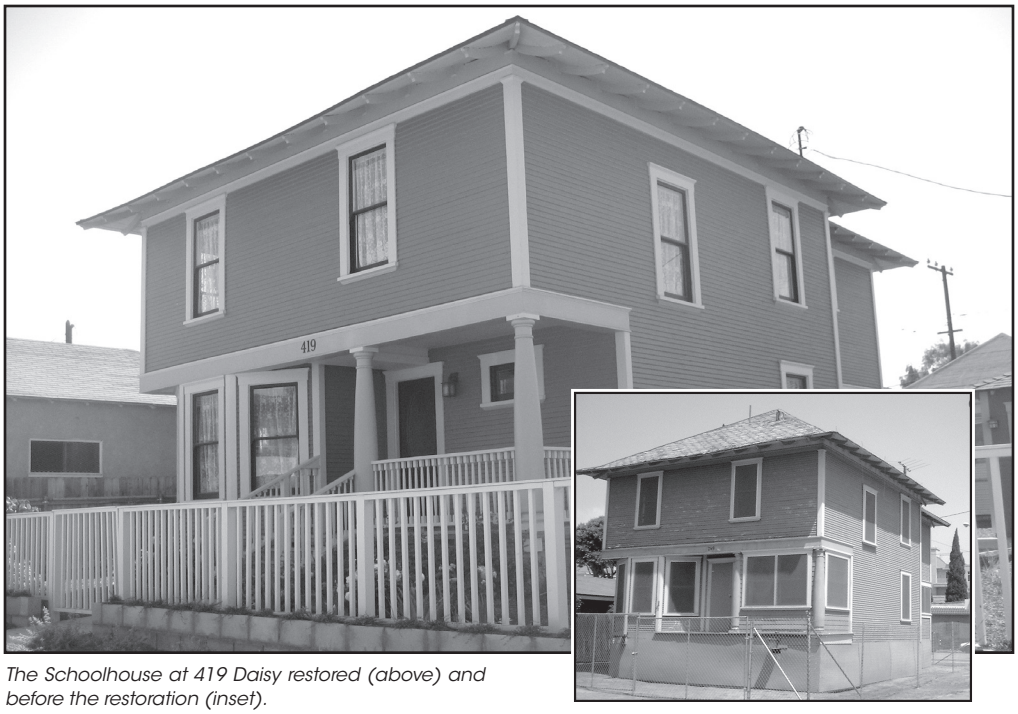
The Schoolhouse Project cont'd from page 3

30 days, the house movers came back out and set the house down on its new foundation. After that, the General Contractor Glen-Built Construction began the time consuming process of uncovering the hidden beauty of this century old gem.

Some of the moldings downstairs had been torn out after the first move before the house was secured and thus had to be milled to match the rest of the house. The stair banister also had to be recreated but fortunately we had a picture of what it originally looked like, thanks to the Hunter sisters who lived there years before. The front porch had been closed in at some point and was re-opened back to its original design.

With the support of Long Beach Heritage and the Central Project Advisory Committee, WCHA encouraged the RDA to allocate funds to save a few additional houses from the West Gateway project area. Redevelopment agreed, and a total of 5 turn-of-the-century homes have been saved and will be restored.

In addition to the preservation of Long Beach history, the preservation of vintage homes is a perfect example of sustainability. As Richard Moe, President of the National Trust for Historic Preservation says, "what could be greener than reusing a building? Historic preservation can and must be a key component of any effort to promote sustainable development". How true! Let's continue this practice and encourage responsible sustainable development by preserving more of Long Beach's historic houses and commercial buildings.



The Schoolhouse at 419 Daisy restored (above) and before the restoration (inset).

Focusing on Chris Launi

Our story starts several years ago with—as they often do—a wedding. The very day before this particular event, the photographer cancelled. Let's just pause for a moment while many of us inevitably revisit harrowing events in our own lives—inept caterers, ill-fitting bridesmaid dresses, toppled wedding cakes, shotguns. In the ensuing panic and hoop-la, the bride's mother remembered her daughter's young friend Chris Launi and his single-lens reflex camera which, to her eyes, meant this was a guy who knew what he was doing. A startled Chris was pressed into service as a replacement photographer, and produced what he refers to as "a sack full of snapshots which seemed to make them happy." That was fifteen years ago. The good news is that the wedding was saved from disaster. The even better news may be that what was once a hobby now became an obsession, and the obsession led to great success and satisfaction.

In the 1990s Chris made several trips to Yosemite and took various workshops that were offered in the valley while his artistry steadily improved. Back in the days of film photography he taught several classes at the El Dorado Nature Center, and is now working up a new series of digital presentations. He says his favorite place to shoot is the coastline, and his favorite spot is the Point Lobos State Reserve in Carmel. "Reef and Surf below Cameo Shores" is his most prized photo, shot along the Orange County Coastline. His "studio" is a well-equipped home office.

In the daytime, this mild-mannered photographer functions as a retail sales manager for a home-furnishings company, sometimes doing collateral photographic material for them. His other activities are legion, and include being the staff photographer for Long Beach Heritage. He is known for his depiction of structures and architectural details, which add to a growing appreciation for architectural preservation, and for his photos in *Images of America: Long Beach Art Deco*, his collaborative work with John W. Thomas and Suzanne Tarbell (Arcadia Publishing, 2006). Chris has won various regional and national awards, which he was too modest to list for us, and has been published in *Westways Magazine, American Heritage Magazine*, and *National Geographic Traveler*.

At Heritage events he is the invisible man, anonymous behind the eye of the camera, and moving with the stealth of a panther. As a result, he is never in any of our pictures, so we felt it was time to shine a spotlight on Chris, whether he wants it or not, as a means of acknowledging his many hours of excellent work on our behalf. We were even able to find a photo of him, which, as you can imagine, is something of a rarity.

—Bobbi Burket

LBH Volunteers of the Year

The Long Beach Heritage general meeting in July is always the occasion for announcing the Volunteer of the Year. For the second year in succession we have decided to honor a pair of equally deserving volunteers, and once again both come from the Bembridge House team.

Elena Levine has assisted with the household inventory since the year 2000, and analyzed the details of the Bembridge clothing. Finding a quilt in the attic that was in pieces and badly torn, she took it to her quilting group and was told that the fabrics were from early 1800s. She was anxious to restore it, but wasn't able to take on the project until joined by Marion Nickle. The beautiful quilt required a full year of labor for the two women, and was displayed to an admiring crowd at the general meeting. After the repair was complete, Elena wrote a souvenir book for Bembridge house, detailing their efforts. The book may be purchased for twenty dollars.

Marion has also been interested in the sewing room of the Bembridge House, and was responsible for the repair of the

Volunteers of the Year Elena Lavina and Marion Nickle.

treadle machine in that room, as well as collecting the wealth of vintage buttons cached throughout the house. She put them into antique jars and displays them on a sunny window sill, to the delight of many visitors to the house.

Next this dynamic team put together a class in Victorian Fancy Stitching (embroidery), consisting of ten weekly lessons, which was so successful and popular that the students have prevailed upon them to start another series of lessons beginning in September. Students will craft Victorian handbags using the intricate stitches they have mastered, and beginners will also be welcome.

Iris Schutz, who works diligently at Bembridge and who has championed our awareness of the efforts and artistry of these two women, presented the award. Under the leadership of Bembridge House Vice President Charlotte Mitchell, our Victorian gem of a home is the recipient of the affectionate and energetic ministrations of a large troupe of volunteers, and while we extend our appreciation to Marion and Elena for the quality and extent of their work, we know they join us in applauding the entire Bembridge House team for another very productive year.

—Bobbi Burket

Advocacy Committee Report Sept 2008

While the Advocacy Committee continues to monitor several projects and programs that involve local historical and cultural resources, there are a few which are important enough to provide an update.

Historic Preservation Element (HPE)

The city is developing a Historic Preservation Element for the General Plan, This is the first HPE in the City's history and Long Beach Heritage played a critical role in highlighting the need. The city has held several public outreach sessions. During these sessions, work groups were formed to evaluate and discuss impediments to and programs for preservation of historic and cultural resources. The HPE will be the "constitution" developers and city staff will refer to when dealing with or assessing historic buildings and other resources. Members from the Advocacy Committee have attend each meeting and will monitor and announce future community meetings. We strongly encourage your input and attendance at the meetings to show your support of the HPE.

Julian Ship Supply Building

With the help and support of the Advocacy Committee, the Redevelopment Agency agreed to release a Request for Proposal (RFP) for the relocation and reuse of the Julian Ship Supply Building. The building is a significant historical and cultural resource. It continues to be threatened by the reality of a new court house development on the site. As of the date of this report, the proposals are being evaluated by the RDA. We will continue to monitor the process and stay tuned our web site for updates.

Civic Center/Court House

With the discussion of a new court house, the spot light has been focused on the Main Library, Civic Center (City Hall) and existing Court House. Members of the Advocacy Committee are interested in ensuring transparent process of determining the need to replace the Civic City Center and Court House and possible adaptive uses for the Court House in particular. We are currently reviewing documents and building/site analyses and we will begin to solicit input from our members and others. We will post a position paper on our web site once it is endorsed by the LBH Board. Stay tuned and monitor the web site for up to date information and an opportunity to share your views.

Mills Act

As reported in past Advocacy Reports, the Mills Act (MA) program was suspended for new applications early in 2006. The Long Beacg Office of Historic Preservation has been studyting other cities that offer the MA. The objective is to develop a comprehensive, fair MA Program which can be monitored to ensure that money saved in property taxes is reinvested in preservation /maintenance programs to secure the historic integrity of the property. However, during the outreach sessions for the Historic Preservation Element, we reminded the city officials that the need to offer the MA is vital as an incentive toward preservation. Members of the Advocacy Committee recently met with them and will continue to push to restore the MA program by the end of the year.

For more information on many projects and developments that the Advocacy Committee is monitoring which involve historical and cultural resources, go to the Long Beach Heritage web site and email LBH with your comments.

LONG BEACH HERITAGE

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CALENDAR

Oct 18	Restoring historic windows—Bembridge House 10 am
Oct 18	CPF Awards—Queen Mary
Oct 27	LBH Executive Committee
Nov 24	LBH Board
Dec 7	Victorian Christmas at Bembridge House 1-5
Jan	Rose cultivation seminar at Bembridge House—TBA
Feb 19	LBH Benefit – Queen Mary

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LBH Membership

Long Beach Heritage is a non-profit education and advocacy group promoting public knowledge and preservation of significant historic and architectural resources, neighborhoods and the cultural heritage of Long Beach. Dues are due on May 1st each year.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ Zip _____

Telephone _____

❑ Call me with information on how I can participate in LBH as a volunteer

❑ Heritage Friend	$ 45
❑ Heritage Student/Senior	$ 30
❑ Heritage Household	$ 75
❑ Heritage Preservationist	$100
❑ Heritage Contributor	$250
❑ Heritage Patron	$500
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