



The Mysterious History of the Leeway Sailing Center



By Louise Ivers

The impending demolition of the Leeway Sailing Center at the corner of Ocean Boulevard and Bay Shore Drive has stirred up a great deal of controversy. Some local residents want to save and restore the building, while others are enthusiastic about the plans by Gotama Building Engineers for

a new and larger "zero energy" classroom/office structure. The Leeway Center provides sailing and aquatics instruction for Long Beach youths under the auspices of the city Parks and Recreation Department. It has been in business for a long time. An article published in the May 27, 1934 Los Angeles Times said that the first annual "half-pint" cham-

pionship races were held the day before in Alamos Bay and that thirteen year old Charles Davis of the Leeway Sailing Club won first place. The Leeway Sailing classes were first held at the Alamos Bay Yacht Club, which was also the owner of the present structure at Ocean and Bay Shore when it was moved from the port to its Ocean Boulevard site in 1948.

The 1948 building permit stated that the four room club house was formerly a water taxi station and that a new foundation was constructed for it, but that this wood framed building was not altered after it was moved. A certificate of occupancy was issued on January 25, 1949. The water taxi station measured 35 by 37 feet and had a porch running the length of the Ocean Boulevard façade. The

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1949 Automated Light House in Long Beach to Be Demolished



Although it has been somewhat altered, the "Robot Light House" on the Middle Breakwater was the first of its kind on the west coast.

Jergins Trust Finials

Jergins Trust Finials
Installed in Willmore
Heritage Garden
on August 11. Photo
by Chris Launi





Message from the President

By Melinda Roney

It is an honor and privilege to be your president for another year. We have many prior Board Members returning to their positions or taking different ones.

We also have some new faces. Kathy Fry is our new Membership Chair. Janice Furman is in charge of General Meetings. Maria Price is the new VP of Fund Development. Chris Hogan is still VP of Education as well as Co-VP with Charlotte Mitchell of the Bembridge House. Charlotte wishes to retire next year and was very gracious to stay on for another year. Stan Poe will remain our President Emeritus as well as Special Activities Chairman. Wendy Harn will remain as VP of Advocacy. Wendy has done a phenomenal job in this position and Mary Ellen Mitchell and Neil Schneider will join her committee as new members.

Continuing Advocacy committee members include: Louise Ivers, Karen Highberger, Stan Poe, Craig Arnold, Dave Waller, Emily Tanaka, Maureen Neeley, Renee Simon, and Rachael Rifkin. Dave Waller will remain as Advocacy and Advisor Co-coordinator. Thank you Dave for all that you do. Karen Highberger will remain as Neighbor Outreach liaison. Karen has made great progress in bringing our Historic Districts together. Julie Nemechek will take over as VP of Public Awareness. She was previously the Public Relations director and she did a great job. Rachael Rifkin had to retire due to family concerns. We hope to see her back in the future.

Louise Ivers (thankfully) will remain as Newsletter Editor. Thank you Louise for all that you do. Diane Jordan will remain as VP of Membership Development. Bobbi Burket will continue as Secretary and be in charge of Volunteers and Docents. Bobbi has done a Herculean job in this endeavor. Sasha Witte will continue her work in Board Development. Thanks to Sasha for the composition of our new Board. Cheryl Perry will remain as our Treasurer. Cheryl does so much that it is hard to call her "just Treasurer." Her constant work in the Wilmore District as well as for LBH is greatly appreciated

Historic District Leaders Planning Meeting Scheduled for September 29

By Karen Highberger

The Advocacy Committee of Long Beach Heritage is happy to report that a meeting has been scheduled with city staff and Historic District leaders for Saturday, September 29. This meeting is in preparation for a city-wide open event for residents concerned with preservation and our Historic Districts which will be held in October of this year (to be finalized at the planning meeting). Please check back on the LBH website and Facebook page for details.

The planning meeting will be attended by no more than two representatives from each Historic District, members of our Advocacy Committee and city staff. In the spring, representatives from the various Districts attended a meeting and filled out two questionnaires regarding their concerns, problems

and the relationship they have with the various Councilpersons. Copies of this information were passed onto Jill Griffiths of Development Services and helped to shape the agenda for both the planning meeting in September and the city-wide meeting in October. Issues being discussed include tightening the Long Beach guidelines for restoration of historic buildings and distributing information sheets at Development Services with details about acceptable windows and approved manufacturers, as well as appropriate paint color schemes for the various Districts, and updating the status of the Mills Act. In addition, we are working on a notification process for construction in commercial corridors adjacent to Historic Districts to encourage business owners to be respectful and cognizant of

the historic homes surrounding them. The commercial corridors are not included in any of the District boundaries, but most were originally developed around the same time. To promote improvement that reflects their surroundings is a win-win situation. Community outreach to the property owners is a way to achieve this.

Long Beach has budget problems that affect everyone. Forging partnerships among LBH, Historic Districts and Development Services should mitigate some of the budget cuts that affect preservation efforts in the city. Community involvement is the key to our success. Please plan on attending the October meeting to show your support for preservation in Long Beach.

Upcoming Event: The Intersection of Pine and Ocean



By **Laura Verbryck**
LEED AP BD+C, Assoc AIA

"Long Beach Heritage and the American Institute of Architects are hosting a series of events on current urban planning and architecture issues. The first is on the Long Beach Civic Center," I told a long-time Long Beach resident. "Where is that exactly?" he said. "It's where City Hall and the Main Library are: downtown." "Oh yeah, what's going on with the gardens above the Library? And the City Hall building... I just don't like it."

This event on September 10 was highly successful. Rick D'Amato, AIA, Principal at LPA, Inc., asked a panel of experts questions about how the Civic Center ended up where it is right now (did you know that there were two other locations and three different architectural styles before it ended up in its current location?). We also got an architectural history lesson about the style of Mid-Century buildings, plus heard from the last remaining member of the architectural team, Don Gibbs, FAIA. Ken O'Dell, SE, partner at MHP Structural Engineers, talked about the structural engineering challenges of the current site. Maureen Neeley, MLIS, a local librarian and historian, and Alan Pullman, AIA, senior principal at Studio One Eleven rounded out our panel of experts.

In the works is a follow up symposium where local architects will present their ideas for the Long

Beach Civic Center. Details will be posted at www.aialb-sb.org/events when available.

On October 24, at 7:00 p.m., also at the Aquarium, we will hear about a second issue, the intersection of Pine Avenue and Ocean Boulevard. It is such a critical intersection in the city - I've heard it called "the intersection of Main and Main." Some of the questions that we'll be asking the experts include "What's happening with the Ocean Center Building?;" "Why is the Jergins Trust site still

vacant?;" "Since RDA owned that site, what will happen now that RDA is no more?;" and "Why does the Downtown Plan only address half of the intersection?" With the intersection being so close to the Convention Center, its development is really critical to the future of Long Beach. Perhaps there are adaptive reuse incentives applicable to the Ocean Center Building. We'll also hear about upcoming plans for Pine Avenue.

Bembridge House to Participate in Long Beach Arts Month

The Bembridge House will offer two events that are free to the public as part of Long Beach Arts Month in October. The first one is a figure drawing workshop led by artist Jill Sykes on Saturday, October 13 from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m. Participants will draw from a nude model and must be over 18 years old. They must bring their own art supplies, as well easels or horses if they wish to use them. Only 10 spaces are available for this event, so make sure to reserve your place soon by calling (562) 493-7019.

On Saturday, October 20, prior to Halloween, retired Long Beach Librarian Claudine Burnett will recount some of the "ghostly happenings," as well as true tales of death and murder, that have occurred in our city over the years. Burnett is the author of *Haunted Long Beach*. Light refreshments will be served at this event and reservations can be made by calling (562) 493-1709. Attendees must be over 13 years old.

Uncovering Historic Facades Attracts Attention

By Maureen Neeley

Like an archeologist, a worker chipped away in June at the slatted siding which hung over the Latin Barbershop and Pho Hong Phut Restaurant for the past 60 years. Underneath were clues to an Anaheim Street of the past, one of the oldest and longest streets in what was once called Zaferia in East Long Beach.

Constructed in the 1920s, these two buildings located on the corner of Coronado (at 3235 and 3243 Anaheim) got a makeover, courtesy of the (now-defunct) Redevelopment Agency (RDA). The funds were allocated years ago and the project is finally underway with Howard CDM, contractor, and Interstices Architects.

To enhance the façade, the first order of business was to remove the slatted siding that, according to permits, was probably first installed in the 1950s, and then replaced in 1978. The siding served two purposes: to unify the storefronts and to unwittingly preserve the signage posted there when they held Andy's Liquor Store and Chere Amie Beauty Salon. Over the past 90 years, this corner has been the business address for Bear State Lumber Co., various insurance agents and lawyers, as well as a drug store and a restaurant.

The original cast concrete design over Louis' Latin Barber Shop is now seeing daylight again. Although this building was erected in 1920, it appears



to have outwitted the 1933 Earthquake which decimated so much of Anaheim's commercial structures. With detailed pilasters and a band of stylized chevrons, the old façade is much more interesting than the band of molded stucco found next door and certainly an improvement on the diagonal

green slats.

What is it about old buildings? People are fascinated with the real thing. This façade improvement has garnered much interest, with people stopping to take pictures and wondering at what else might be unearthed on Anaheim Street.

Membership Report — September 10, 2012

PRESERVATIONIST MEMBERS AND ABOVE

Beginning with this issue of the newsletter, we will list your membership expiration date on the right hand side of the mailing label.

BENEFACTOR

RMS Queen Mary

SUSTAINER

The Ackerman Family
Melinda Roney & Walter Wojak

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Kathleen Bursley
Marsha Jeffer
Geraldine Knatz
Mary Lou Martin & Chris Byrne
Kevin & Ana Maria McGuan
Patty Moore & Jean Shapen
Kenneth Walker, F&M Bank

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James Hayes & Catherine Keig
Chris Hogan
Louise Ivers & Allen Guerrero
Nancy & Bob Latimer
Kelly Sutherlin McLeod
Maureen Neeley & Dan Roberts
Jenny & David Shlemmer

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Sasha Witte
Christina Yanis
Joe Zieba

Leeway Sailing Center *(Continued from page 1)*

rear of the building faced Alamitos Bay, where the sailboats were moored. Today this shingled structure has a gabled roof, Craftsman style window frames, a small porch with chamfered posts, and a brick chimney and fireplace. The interior has been remodeled to accommodate a classroom and office.

Exactly where the former water taxi station that was converted into the Leeway Sailing Center was originally located remains a mystery, but it probably served one or more of the notorious gambling ships anchored off the coast of Long Beach between 1928 and 1946. A brief history of these ships and their water taxi stations may shed some light onto the location of the yet unknown site where the Sailing Center was constructed.

The first gambling ship was named the Johanna Smith and it was an aged, converted steam schooner that once carried lumber coastwise. It was anchored fourteen miles from the Long Beach harbor and seven miles from Seal Beach. Prospective gamblers reached this luxuriously appointed party boat via water taxi from the Long Beach municipal pier at the foot of Pine Avenue, but the City Attorney declared in July 1928 that any boat using this wharf must have a permanent berth and ticket booth. The owners of the Johanna Smith maintained that the ship was beyond the jurisdiction of city and county authorities, but the Long Beach vice squad was dispatched by the City Attorney to look into the matter. The police soon arrested several water taxi operators, but other ones began to take on passengers at less well lit areas of the inner harbor, such as the Pacific & Orient Line landing at 501 Pico Avenue. On August 23, 1928 the Johanna Smith was raided and towed to the West Basin.

However, a new "pleasure barge," a former wooden fishing boat, called the Monfalcone was being retrofitted by October 1928 in San Pedro. It opened in November off the coast of Long Beach and water taxi passengers were not taken directly to the gambling hall, but rather to an offshore fishing barge, and then transported by the barge to the Monfalcone. This subterfuge worked for a while, but by December the City Attorney had prepared an ordinance that prohibited speed boat operators in Long Beach from soliciting persons in the city to visit gambling ships anchored offshore. City officials subsequently arrested more water taxi drivers.

Three years later in 1931 the Johanna Smith, along with another ship named the Rose Isle, resurfaced off the coast of Long Beach. The water taxi pilots had appealed their cases and gambling boat patrons were again ferried to the floating pleasure palaces from the P & O dock in May. On June 20, 1932 a building permit was issued to Guy Sutherland to construct a waiting room at 1315 West Seventh Street which measured 70 by 70 feet. It was completed in seven days. Southland newspapers advertised dining, dancing, and sportive games aboard the Johanna Smith anchored off

Long Beach and gave the water taxi address as 1315 West Seventh Street. Although it is tempting to conclude that this structure was the Leeway Sailing Center, Sutherland's waiting room was twice the size of the present building. Matchbook covers and other ephemera from the Johanna Smith, Rose Isle, and Tango list 1415 West Seventh Street as the water taxi address, where a chemical laboratory owned by the Wilshire Oil Company was located in 1940. Perhaps this lab was originally a water taxi station. The P & O building at 501 Pico Avenue was demolished in 1955 and there is no record of its be-

ing moved anywhere.

In July 1932 the Johanna Smith caught fire, a fate that beset the Monfalcone earlier. The owners immediately rebuilt the Johanna Smith, but it was raided again in September 1933, as was another ship called the Monte Carlo, whose proprietors soon obtained an injunction against the Long Beach police from interfering with their business. However, the police arrested a number of water taxi operators and patrons again in July 1935 who were headed for the Monte Carlo and the Tango,

(Continued on page 7)

A Classic Great Gatsby Garden Party!



July's Great Gatsby Garden Party at the Bembridge House was a rip-roaring success! At the scene were flappers, dapper dans, high-society ladies, and gangsters, and a grand time was had by all. Games of chance in the elegantly decorated Speakeasy, croquet on the front lawn, house tours, fortune-telling sessions, listening to period music, and fabulous food and drink were elements of this stunning summer evening. Chris Hogan gave a touching dedication of the backyard fountain in honor of his late partner, Layne Johnson. Peppertree Court was showcased as the perfect new venue for special events.

Teak Catering made the garden supper and refreshments. The prohibition Punch was killer. The appetizers, fruit, and cheese before the meal, the scrumptious roast beef dinner, and the tasty cheesecake desserts were all wonderful. Kudos to the bar and wait staff, too, for their excellent service.

Special thanks must be extended to so many people: Don Henry displayed his vintage motorcar and truck, adding just the right touch of ambiance



Gary Roderick and Jill Black (above left) and Chris Hogan, Beverly Bennett and George Eales (above right) at the Great Gatsby Garden Party.

to the party's entrance – everyone enjoyed posing for their souvenir photos in front of the vehicles! Tar-of-reader Blue told fun and prophetic fortunes. The Jazz Trio played beautiful music. Scores of generous donors provided prizes and opportunity drawing gifts. The tireless volunteers gave their time. The hard-working committee began planning over a year ago and ensured the Great Gatsby Garden Party was such a memorable evening.

Another stellar event at the Bembridge House and Peppertree Court is already in the works for next year. Watch for it – you won't want to miss out!

The Curious Development of Belmont Shore



View of Belmont Shore from approximately 1930. The empty commercial lots are evident along Second Street. At the top left is the original Lowell Elementary School with a prominent pre-earthquake control tower. Central in the photograph is the storied Tepee restaurant (conical building on the north side of Second Street). It was the hangout for Wilson High School students.

By Stanley Poe

Belmont Shore is a unique community in Southern California. Its major development began in 1920, although the area had been a part of the Naples tract that was purchased in 1903 by Henry Huntington. Its official designation was West Naples and included a very interesting feature in the form of a large natural canal which paralleled Ocean Boulevard on the north side of the current alley. It extended from Alamitos Bay on the east to the land rise near Termino Avenue. It was created by the formation of a sand bar much like that of the Peninsula. Huntington's vision included dredging a similar canal to the north and returning to Alamitos Bay with waterfront lots lining it. Two large circular plazas were planned between the canals as well.

Unfortunately that plan never came to fruition. Due to the extensive cost overruns and unforeseen problems associated with the development of the Naples district, the Belmont Shore project languished until 1920 when Huntington was approached by developers McGrath & Selover with the intent to develop Belmont Shore as a premier recreational and residential area that would be affordable to young families. The biggest problem was the fact that it was under water to varying degrees depending on the tides. There were also vari-

ous meanders through the swamp which hindered development. Mr. Huntington doubted the developers could support their plan. His concerns were expressed in a letter to which Selover responded: "We will be able to finance our project, and you, Mr. Huntington, have a lot of nerve questioning us when most of what you are selling us is under water more than half of the time!"

Originally, The Toledo was to have been the main street next to the canal. One commercial building, Myer's Meat Market, was constructed there, but has been remodeled into an apartment building. Due to the fact that the Pacific Electric tracks were located on Livingston Drive, Second Street became the primary commercial street. Pacific Electric tracks were laid down the center of the street, which continued to Naples and Seal Beach. Most of the streets in Belmont Shore were named after inland communities with hopes of luring buyers from those areas. The 320 acres which comprised Belmont Shore received a great deal of "fill" and extensive grading to raise it above high tide. Long Beach was eager to provide support for the area, although it was not annexed to the city until 1926.

Oil was discovered on Signal Hill in 1921 and resulted in an astounding demand for inexpensive housing. Most houses in Belmont Shore were Spanish

style bungalows with just enough arches to deserve the designation, built on 30' x 80' lots which were more generous than most seaside developments. With a modest setback from the street and three feet on each side, the homes included living room/dining room combinations with kitchens/ breakfast rooms, and laundry rooms behind. These houses generally had two bedrooms and tiled bathroom off small halls. Interspersed among the bungalows were larger, more architecturally significant two-story homes on double lots. Numerous duplexes were also built. The livability of these homes is reflected in the fact that the majority of them still exist. There has actually been little redevelopment in Belmont Shore compared to other seaside communities.

One of the most significant concepts was that the homes were built first and the commercial lots were vacant until it the community decided which types of businesses they really needed and would support. That was a successful formula and continues to this day, making Second Street a thriving business district. Belmont Shore remains a vibrant, homogenous community with high real estate values and a population that includes doctors, lawyers, and sundry professionals from all walks of life. Part of its desirability is the true community feeling due to its active and concerned residents.

Karen Bertram honored as Volunteer of the Year



Bobbi Burket (left) honors Karen Bertram (right) as Volunteer of the Year.

By Bobbi Burket
LBH Volunteer Coordinator

A friend recently told me that, sadly, she just doesn't have a green thumb. My suspicion is that her garden, like mine, suffers not for lack of a thumb, but from a shortage of good, hard labor. The sorry truth

that all gardeners know is that you have to break your back and wear through a few pairs of gloves to make the garden glow. Fortunately for us, the garden volunteers at Bembridge House are on to that secret, and have worked long and hard to make it the showpiece it has become.

All of them were pleased to see Karen Bertram honored as Volunteer of the Year at the recent Heritage Annual Meeting in Peppertree Court. As the accompanying photo probably indicates, Karen was both surprised and touched to find herself acknowledged for her many efforts. Outside, she weeds, waters, plants, totes and hauls; tallest of the volunteers, she often takes on the more physically challenging tasks. And it was she who devised and produced a cover to protect the water in the garden fountain from the constant onslaught of peppertree leaves.

When she isn't wearing her gloves and sunhat, she is sporting an apron, serving and cleaning at a Bembridge event. If you ask her, she will come—and she will work. She has also said yes to being secretary for the Bembridge House Committee, as well as serving on the Great Homes Committee, where she helps find the homes, coordinates in the writing of the scripts, and functions as one of the docents.

Like other honored volunteers of the past—perhaps most notably Jill Black who has recently retired as Volunteer Chair of Bembridge House—Karen has trouble saying no. We have shamelessly taken full advantage of this felicitous glitch in their personalities, and we can only hope they realize how much we appreciate them.

Leeway Sailing Center *(Continued from page 5)*

which had opened for business in May of that year. In November the Tango offices at the Sovereign Hotel were raided and Lawrence Keers was taken into custody. The gambling ships were magnets for all sorts of crimes, particularly theft, and James Fox, one of the owners of the Johanna Smith, was shot next to the Villa Riviera in 1933.

The Tango, owned by Tony Cornero, became a defense ship during World War II, as did the infamous Rex, the crown jewel of Cornero's gambling

operations off the coast of Santa Monica, which was put out of business by the authorities in 1939. After the war, Cornero, a former rum runner and Las Vegas casino operator, towed the derelict S.S. Aroostook to the Long Beach harbor in April 1946. He claimed that it was not going to become a gambling barge, but it was soon renamed the Lux and outfitted with gaming tables and slot machines for its grand opening on June 17. By August the police impounded eleven of Cornero's water

taxis, which were moored at a West Ninth Street pier. Perhaps that was where the Leeway Sailing Center originated. Or was it on West Eighth Street, mentioned in a September 15, 1946 Los Angeles Times article as littered with tacks to prevent people from driving to the water taxi station?

Governor Earl Warren declared war on gambling ships and on April 20, 1948 the United States House of Representatives passed a bill authorizing their seizure. This bill was crafted specifically to prevent the operation of the Lux and it also outlawed water taxi service to such vessels. The Leeway Sailing Center building permit was dated April 7, 1948, only a few weeks earlier than the House bill, and at the bottom was written "Hold until Moving Permit is ready to issue." The Craftsman style of the Sailing Center looks more like that of a structure from the twenties, or even the teens, rather than that of a building from 1932, when the water taxi station at 1315 West Seventh Street was permitted. Also the sizes of the two buildings are different, with the water taxi waiting room being twice the area of the Leeway Center. Quite possibly the city permit for the construction of the Sailing Center has been lost, or it was built at a still unknown location along the harbor. So its origin remains a mystery that has yet to be definitively solved.

2012 MARY LOU HEARD GARDEN TOUR

On May 6, 2012 the Bembridge Garden once again was a featured attraction on the annual Mary Lou Heard Garden Tour, a charitable event whose proceeds go to a local horticultural scholarship, as well as other deserving organizations. The tour at Bembridge began with the Victorian Rose Garden, then moved to the Fern and Shade Garden, and on into the Sitting Garden. As attendees walked down the driveway, they viewed the Cottage Garden, and lastly the new Four Square Herb and Vegetable Garden. The event also showcased the recently completed Peppertree Court at the rear of the Bembridge House, which is now available for weddings, parties, and meetings and includes a beautiful new memorial fountain dedicated to Layne Johnson. It was a lovely day and visitors sipped their lemonades in the midst of the Victorian gardens which wafted the fragrance of roses and other flowers throughout the grounds.

Calendar

October 22 LBH Executive Committee
October 24 AIA/LBH Discussion Forum on
Ocean & Pine
November 26 LBH Board
December 2 Victorian Christmas at
Bembridge
January 28 LBH Board
February 21 LBH Annual Awards Benefit
June 2 LBH Great Homes Tour
Downtown Walking Tours — Oct 20th,
Nov 17th, Dec 15th at 9:00 a.m.

Long Beach Heritage

Newsletter Editor: Louise Ivers
Layout: John Lionel Pierce
P.O. Box 92521, Long Beach, CA 90809
Telephone: (562) 493-7019
Email: preservation@lbheritage.org
Website: <http://www.lbheritage.org>

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 _____

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- Call me with information on how I can participate in LBH as a volunteer
- Heritage Friend \$ 45
- Heritage Student/Senior \$ 30
- Heritage Household \$ 75
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Make your check payable to:

Long Beach Heritage

P.O. Box 92521
Long Beach, CA 90809

Telephone/Fax (562) 493-7019
Email: preservation@lbheritage.org
Website: lbheritage.org