



Belmont Plaza Olympic Pool to Be Demolished



PHOTOGRAPHY BY LOUISE IVERS

The Belmont Plaza Olympic Pool complex was built in 1967 in anticipation of the 1968 Olympic trials.

In 2012 another study determined that the natatorium might not be repairable after an earthquake measuring five magnitude or higher. This building, which measures 224'x148,' was constructed with a shear-wall frame, cast in place reinforced concrete columns, and prestressed concrete girders. It has a 23' high glass curtain wall below a 25' high precast concrete shear wall. In 1968 this type of construction clearly met the code requirements, but today, more stringent rules are applied to such buildings. According to the latest seismic report, some cracks have appeared in the natatorium and the walls appear to be deteriorating.

When completed, the Belmont Pool measured 50 X 75 meters, had eight lanes ranging from 3½ to 12 feet deep, six lifeguard towers equipped with television monitors, and movable plastic panels in the roof that could be opened to allow the sun to shine on the swimmers. A computerized scoreboard provided extremely accurate recording of athletes' prowess. Bleachers seated 3,500 spectators and a press box with the most modern equipment was located above them. All of these features added up to a state of the art natatorium that hosted the 1968 Olympic trials from August 21 through September 3. In 1969, the building won an award from the Portland Cement Association for its versatile use of concrete in "structural, architectural and economic solutions" (Independent-Press-Tele-

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By Louise Ivers

In January 1967 plans were approved for a group of structures at Belmont Plaza, a site west of the pier on the beach in Belmont Shore. Francis Heusel and Frank Homolka, noted Long Beach architects, and Bole and Wilson, local engineers, designed the complex, which included an Olympic size indoor pool, a community/private event building, and a locker room. The pool was built in anticipation of the 1968 swimming, diving, and water polo trials to pick the United States' Olympic team. According

to the *Los Angeles Times*, Mark Spitz, Don Scholander, and Charles Hickox set men's records during these trials. During the 1975 Olympic development meet, Shirley Babashoff took first place in the 400 meter freestyle event and in 1976 she broke the record for the women's 100 meter freestyle competition in the Olympic trial at the Belmont Pool. After the trials, the pool was opened to the public for recreational purposes.

In 2008 the city hired a consultant to make a structural and seismic evaluation of the Belmont Plaza Olympic complex and, more recently,

Buffum's Marina Store Will Be Drastically Remodeled

By Louise Ivers

Buffum's Department Store, a major Long Beach company, traced its roots back to 1904, when Charles A. and Edwin E. Buffum came to southern California from Illinois and bought Schilling Brothers' store on Pine Avenue. They gave the business a new name, The Mercantile Company, and in 1911 commissioned W. Horace Austin to design a new building at the southwest corner of Pine Avenue and Broadway. The Buffum brothers prospered and in 1924 a new six-story addition, also by Austin, opened on Pine Avenue. By this time the company was called Buffum's and a younger generation of the family ran the store. Harry Buffum was president in 1950, when a branch was constructed in Santa Ana, and in 1960 he announced plans for a "spe-

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PHOTOGRAPHY BY LOUISE IVERS

Architect Hugh Gibbs designed the Buffum's store located at Second Street and Pacific Coast Highway.



Message from the President

By Melinda Roney

The 25th Silver Anniversary Awards Gala was a tremendous success. . I believe that Paul Tay's acceptance speech made the evening. What a very nice man! His enthusiasm for returning to Long Beach warmed all of our hearts. Unfortunately, his wife could not come to the Benefit, but she sent a message to us: "I was there in spirit and had a wonderful time. Hugs, Ruth." Many thanks go to Karen Clements and her Awards Jury for their fine selections this year. Mary Ellen Mitchell did an excellent job on the silent auction items and their presentation; and Mary Lou Martin and Chris Launi entertained us with beautiful pictures of the awardees and their accomplishments. Thank you to Patty Moore, Mary Kay Nottage, Bobbi Burket, Jean Shapen, Jill Black, Charlotte Mitchell, Maria Price, and the many others who worked to make this a very successful event.

We all enjoyed our Loft Walk and Big Red Bus Tour in March. Thanks to Laura Verbyck and Anne Marie Ashley for organizing the event; John Thomas for his very informative Art Deco Tour of Long Beach; and Dan and Peggy Peterson for sharing their beautiful penthouse with us. As usual, there were many more people who contributed to the success of this event.

Be sure and follow LBH on Facebook and check our website (www.lbheritage.org) for more information. This year has many great events coming up. Be sure and mark your calendars. We hope that you can join us in some or all of them.

Quilters Carry On

By Bobbi Burket



Marion Nickle with Elena Levine.

Nine women, trying not to squabble too much over decisions and procedures, are "in stitches" on Saturday afternoons at Bembridge House. Their most recently completed project, a quilt in the chim-

ney patch block pattern—a design that has been traced at least as far back as the Civil War—started with a quilt top that was purchased at an estate sale by Marion Nickle. The Carriage House Quilters, using only hand stitching, finished it over the course of several months, and raffled it off at the January 27 General Meeting at Rancho Los Alamitos, with proceeds going to the coffers of the Bembridge House. The winner, Mary Ellen Mitchell, generously donated it to the Heritage Awards Benefit, so that it could be offered there in our silent auction, bringing in more funds for the house. The current project began from donated fabrics and is completely hand stitched.

The stitching at Bembridge House all began with Marion and Elena, and they are currently joined by Elaine Bauer, Bobbi Burket, Shirley Doo, Sally Innes, Peggy Kozlowski, Sherron Leno, and Ellen Zapeda. The women are often at work when tours come through, offering a reminder of aspects of the past that merit preservation and pride.



Keith Nottage

We are sad to report that Keith Nottage, a long time, loyal volunteer for Long Beach Heritage, passed away in February, while in the care of the VA Hospice. Keith lived in University Park Estates for the past 45 years with his wife, Mary Kay (our Executive Director) and worked at most of the top accounting firms throughout his career in finance. He also volunteered as treasurer at the Long Beach Art Museum and Alamitos Bay Yacht Club and was active in several mystery writers' groups and art clubs. Keith was a fixture at our LBH events, often helping Mary Kay as her supporting cast with ticket sales and coordination, and we will miss him. In addition to Keith's four amazing grandchildren, he leaves behind his son, Doug, and his daughter, Cindy. A private ceremony will be held at Fort Rosecrans National Cemetery in San Diego in April. In lieu of flowers, Mary Kay suggested making a donation to Long Beach Heritage in Keith's name. "He would have really liked that," she said with a smile. "He really loved this city and our LBH community."

What's Up at the Bembridge House

By Charlotte Mitchell

All of us at the Bembridge House have been very busy in the past months keeping up with all the jobs big and small in a historic house that is over 100 years old and open to the public. Tours have increased in number as we now have a Facebook page and an updated website. Almost all of our volunteers took part in helping make the Awards Dinner such a success. The garden committee donated six arrangements of succulents that added to the wonderful look of the auction.

A few organizations have taken advantage of a tour and a box lunch combo that we now offer to small groups. Our fantastic docents give the tour and then the members of the new hospitality committee serve the luncheon. These groups have been very pleased with the augmented tours.

In the coming weeks the third grade school children will be keeping the docents busy. The garden committee will be getting the garden in shape after the winter for the May Day event and the roses will be in bloom for all of us to enjoy. Come visit and bring a friend.

Call for Board Members for 2013–2014

By Sasha Witte

Would you like to get involved with something meaningful and spend time with a wonderful group of people while you are doing it? Then consider joining the board of directors of Long Beach Heritage! We are always looking for new and good people for our board and past experience is not necessary, only an interest in historic preservation and the desire to further its exposure to the community. If you want to help promote preservation in Long Beach don't be shy about putting your name on the straw ballot that will be mailed out to members in April. Also feel free to contact me by email at sasha@sashawittedesign.com to let me know if you would like to throw your hat in the ring.

I hope that all existing board members will be staying with us for another exciting year. If your life requires a change please let me know as soon as possible. Thanks again to all of you wonderful people who step up to make a difference.

Santa Anita Racetrack Event on April 20



Join us for an exciting day at the historic Santa Anita Racetrack in Arcadia.

Join Long Beach Heritage for an exciting day at the historic Santa Anita Racetrack in Arcadia and see thoroughbred horse racing at its finest on Saturday, April 20 at 9:30 a.m. Make sure to arrive promptly in order to take the tram tour, which will be followed by a short walking tour of the stables and jockeys' room. After this, we will proceed to our luncheon and spend the afternoon watching the exciting races, one of which will be named for LBH. You may

have your photo taken in the Winners' Circle as well.

Tickets are \$50 for Long Beach Heritage members and \$55 for their guests. Your ticket includes parking at Santa Anita (you must use your own transportation to get there), admission to the track, extensive guided tram and walking tours, a racing program, and a delicious two-course lunch. Purchase tickets at www.lbheritage.org or call us at (562) 493-7019 and they will be mailed to you.

Fifteenth Annual Hollywood Bowl Concert and Dinner



The 2013 Hollywood Bowl concert will again include dinner at Casa Alegre, the historic Spanish Revival home of Rick and Brad Hobbs-Seeley.

Don't miss our fifteenth annual Hollywood Bowl concert and dinner at Casa Alegre, the historic Spanish Revival home of Rick and Brad Hobbs-Seeley. This year we will be enjoying "Chicago—The Musical" on Saturday, July 27. We will meet at 4:00 p.m. to catch our bus to Hollywood and then enjoy a delicious meal prepared especially for us by Rick and Brad. Following dinner we will be off in our bus again to the Bowl, where we will be treated

to a performance of the award-winning "Chicago" which is set in the 1920s and has an all-star cast.

Tickets are \$99 for Long Beach Heritage members and \$110 for their guests. The amount of tickets is limited and are available through PayPal at www.lbheritage.org or by mailing a check to LBH, P.O. Box 92521, Long Beach 90809. After you have purchased your tickets you will receive information about the bus transportation to the event.

2013 Annual Meeting at the Queen Mary

Our Annual Meeting will be held on July 28 at 2:00 p.m. on the Queen Mary and we will find out about the recent preservation efforts that have been implemented on board the historic ship. These include the restoration of the paintings, "Birds of the Old World" and "Birds of the New World," in the Grand Salon, as well as the refurbishing of the Observation Lounge to its original aspect. After a lecture by John Thomas, Historic Resources Advisor to the Queen Mary, Long Beach Heritage members and their guests will take a tour of some of the preservation projects. Refreshments will be served and we will receive validated parking. **IF YOU PLAN TO ATTEND THIS MEETING YOU MUST R.S.V.P. TO THE LBH OFFICE IN ADVANCE.**

Please call (562) 493-7019 at least one week before the event.

A Long Beach Success Story



The former Ray Vines Chrysler Agency at the northwest corner of Lakewood Boulevard and Willow Street.

By Louise Ivers

The Google architecture of the former Ray Vines Chrysler Agency at the northwest corner of Lakewood Boulevard and Willow Street has been saved and the building will become a mini-mall in the

near future. A new car wash structure has been constructed on the property as well. Vines Chrysler was designed by Paul Clayton of Downey, who was famous for his eye-catching Harvey's Broiler (later Johnie's Broiler) in that city. Vines Chrysler was very similar to the demolished Simpson Buick Agency

at the corner of Firestone Boulevard and Dolan Avenue in Downey with its dramatically cantilevered roof of folded planes.

Ray Vines began his career as the owner of a small used car lot on East Anaheim Street, but by December 1963, when his new building was open for business, he owned three automobile dealerships in Orange County and income property in Garden Grove. In an advertisement in the *Press-Telegram* from February 1964, Vines Chrysler offered a Plymouth station wagon to prospective buyers for \$2,497. It had an automatic transmission, heater, defroster, tinted glass, and white sidewall tires.

This author is overjoyed to see that a Mid-Century Modern building is being adaptively reused and hopes that Clayton's striking design will continue to attract customers to the businesses at this prominent corner site in Long Beach.

Buffum's Marina Store (Continued from page 1)

cialty type sportswear store" at the new Marina shopping center (*Independent-Press-Telegram*, 23 October 1960).

Local architect Hugh Gibbs was the developer of the Marina center and he designed the store, located on Second Street at the corner of Pacific Coast Highway, as well as the adjacent Hof's Hut restaurant (slated for imminent closure) and the Lucky Market. The original interior, remodeled in 1976 by Hugh and Donald Gibbs when the building was converted into a bank and stock brokerage office, was designed by internationally renowned Edward Killingsworth in his signature style. Since the

store was in a suburban part of Long Beach at the time, Buffum's Marina had numerous free parking spaces for customers adjacent to the structure.

The store was constructed of concrete masonry, had a footprint of almost 17,000 square feet, and cost \$116,000. Although the projecting hoods over the large display windows that tempted prospective customers to purchase the latest styles of clothing on the Second Street elevation were removed when the building was remodeled, the distinctive series of barrel vaults that form a canopy over the entrance remain, as does the stone facing at the corner of the building. The exterior will lose these

Mid-Century Modern characteristics when it is converted into a CVS Drug Store in the near future.

When the construction of the specialty shop was announced in the *Independent-Press-Telegram* in 1960, Vice President Vaile G. Young stated that "the new Buffum's Marina will cater to men, women and children whose way of life is carefree and casual....Sportswear apparel, accessories and gifts featured will include domestic and foreign imports, with emphasis placed on the fine, well-known lines and exclusives." In the fifties the southern California lifestyle, with its emphasis on outdoor activities and absence of traditional formality, began to drive sales of sportswear upward. Many well known designers of casual clothing and swim suits were located in Los Angeles and Buffum's capitalized on this trend by opening stores devoted to sportswear (another branch designed by Killingsworth was built in Palos Verdes in 1962-1963). Boat owners and beach goers could conveniently shop at the nearby Buffum's Marina which was located near Belmont Shore and Alamitos Bay.

The Buffum's Marina store is a fine example of 60s architecture with its concrete construction and stone facing. Since it is over 50 years old, it should be subject to the Long Beach Adaptive Reuse Ordinance before new plans for the façade are finalized. Buffum's is an important piece of local history and this building is the only one of its former stores left in our city.

Belmont Plaza (Continued from page 1)

gram, 23 March 1969).

The two-story pool is flanked by a one-story locker room on the east and a two-story community building that can be rented for private events on the west side. The facades of these structures have a series of vertical concrete piers that support flat roofs with projecting eaves and pebble aggregate panels in between them. They display contrasting smooth and rough textures in a thoroughly modern manner, yet have a suggestion of classical arches below the roof line. The architects, Heusel and Homolka, designed many important buildings

in southern California, including the Water Department Headquarters in Long Beach, Harbor General Hospital in Torrance, and numerous Home Savings and Loan bank.

The Belmont Plaza Olympic Pool has been closed to the public since January 10, 2013 and critics state that it is outdated. Future plans may include building an outdoor natatorium in the present parking lot or possibly changing the location of the public pool entirely. It seems certain that the Belmont complex will be demolished soon and that its distinctive architecture will be lost forever.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY LOUISE IVERS

Membership Report — March 2013

PRESERVATIONIST MEMBERS AND ABOVE

SUSTAINER

The Ackerman Family
Melinda Roney & Walter Wojak
RMS Queen Mary

PATRONS

Mike & Andrea Burrous
Kathleen Bursley
Marsha Jeffer
Geraldine Knatz
Mary Lou Martin & Chris Byrne
Kevin & Ana Maria McGuan
Patty Moore & Jean Shapen
F&M Bank

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PRESERVATIONISTS

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Sarah & Craig Arnold
Leslie Arrington
Mary Anna Bailer
Teresa & Edgar Barbee
Barbara Barnes
Barbara Blackwell
Barry & Kathy Blodgett
Michael & Kathleen Bohn
Lynn Brandt
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Vicky Brunoan
Bobbi Burkett
Enid Busser
Betty Chaney
Karen & Dick Clements
Sherry Cragg
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C.J. & Dave Crockett
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Michael Stugrin
Betty Sunofsky
Judy Swaaley
Don & Marlene Temple
John Thomas & Chris Lanni
John & Patricia Walker
Joan Wells
Sharon Westafer
Linda & Morgan Wheeler
Dorothy Wise
Sasha Witte
Christina Yanis
Joe Zieba

Great Homes of Long Beach



PHOTOGRAPHY BY CHRIS LANNI

The "Great Homes of Long Beach" tour will feature six homes, each of different and unique architectural character.

The 2013 "Great Homes of Long Beach" tour will take place on Sunday, June 2 from 12:00 until 5:00 p.m. This year's tour will feature homes in Virginia Country Club, Naples, California Heights and other sections of the city. We are targeting six homes, each of different and unique architectural character, to be open for docent-led viewing.

While the tour fulfills the educational objectives of Long Beach Heritage, the proceeds of the

event are dedicated to the restoration and support of the historic Bembridge House, a landmark owned by our organization. Each year Heritage volunteers work for weeks to develop the Great Homes tour. Please know that we expect the event to sell out, with over 600 visitors and volunteers participating. Ticket sales will begin at the end of April, so keep an eye out for a postcard that will supply you with all the applicable details. You don't want to miss it!



The May Day Festival will be held at Drake Park on Saturday, May 4.

May Day Festival in Drake Park

This year's May Day Festival will be held at Drake Park, 951 Maine Avenue, on Saturday, May 4 from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. It will have two centers of activity. The Bembridge Heritage Homesite will offer tours from 1:30 to 3:30 p.m. for a \$2.00 donation from adults. Children under 12 will be admitted free when accompanied by an adult. The Willmore City Heritage Association will have a booth in the park offering information and items for sale. St. Mary Medical Center and other groups will offer free health screening services and information about their facilities. Friends' House at Drake Park will provide free books and other activities for children.

Calendar

Heritage Day at El Pueblo	April 14
Santa Anita Day at the Races	April 20
LBH Executive Committee	April 22
May Day at Bembridge House	May 4
LBH Board (date change)	May 20
Great Homes Tour	June 2
LBH Executive Committee	June 24
Hollywood Bowl	July 22
Annual Meeting	July 28
Bembridge Western-theme Party	September 21
Walking tours at 9:00 AM	March 16
	April 20
	May 18
	June 15

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 _____

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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
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- Heritage Preservationist \$100
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