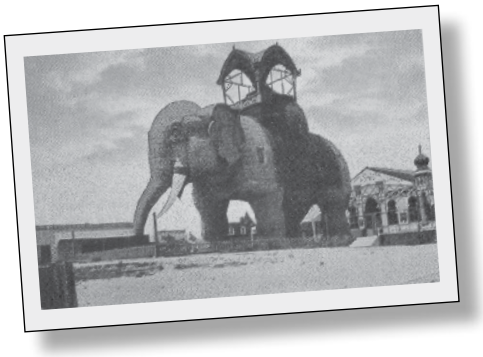
LONG BEACH HERITAGE

Volume 24, No. 2, Spring 2014

Programmatic Architecture in Long Beach Comes Under Fire

Lucy (below) built in 1881 in Margate, New Jersey, is now listed on the National Register of Historical Places. The huge fiberglass donut on East Seventh Street (right) was built in 1958 for Mrs. Chapman's Angel Food Donuts. (Photo by Louise Ivers)



The original Coffee Pot, built in 1932 (left), is a city landmark. The Wigwam Motel in Rialto (below), dates from the 1950s. (Photos by Louise Ivers)

By Louise Ivers

Programmatic, sometimes called theme, buildings once dotted the landscape of southern California. However, many of these whimsical structures have disappeared over the years as restaurants have gone out of business and land values escalated. A programmatic building is one that literally advertises the product sold inside of it, such as the huge frankfurter that encompasses the Tail o' the Pup (1946) on San Vicente Boulevard in Los Angeles, which is the purveyor of famous hot dogs. Other theme buildings have gigantic sculptures of creatures, for example, Hoot Hoot I Scream (c. 1930) in South Gate, which is constructed in the form of a large owl. In this case, the name of the business is linked to the image of the structure. The earliest extant programmatic building in the United States is Lucy, the immense elephant of 1881 in Margate, New

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Endangered Avalon

By Tami Dowgiewicz

Our neighbors across the sea are experiencing some major changes in their historically significant structures. Almost all of the commercial buildings in Avalon are owned by the Santa Catalina Island Company (SCICO). The recent major remodeling of one of Avalon's landmarks, El Encanto, has caused many to shake their heads in disbelief. El Encanto is listed on the city's survey as a building of historic significance. This building should have been repurposed with the utmost care and consideration in order to protect its historic integrity and original tiles. El Encanto's tile murals have been removed, along with the historic charm the building once held. David Malcolm Renton's vision for the building and the courtyard, Paseo del Encanto, in 1933 was to create the atmosphere of old California on Catalina.

Other buildings in Avalon are slated for demolition or remodeling as well. Joe's Place Restaurant on Crescent Avenue will be demolished. The entire frontage of the block on Crescent from Catalina Avenue to CC Gallagher's is owned by SCICO and originally had Catalina tile on all of the facades. Moreover, the historically significant Catalina Country Club is slated for major additions called

El Encanto is listed as a building of historic significance.

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Programmatic Architecture Under Fire (Continued from page 1)

Jersey, which is now listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Jim Heimann has written two copiously illustrated books about programmatic architecture titled *California Crazy, Roadside Vernacular Architecture* and *California Crazy and Beyond*.

Around 1930 the TeePee Barbecue opened on East Second Street in Belmont Shore in Long Beach. Shaped like a huge portable Plains Indian dwelling, the popular TeePee was demolished a number of years ago. On the other hand the Wigwam Motel (c.1950) in Rialto, which consists of a group of separate conical structures for rent by the night, still stands in faded glory on Foothill Boulevard near the border of San Bernardino.

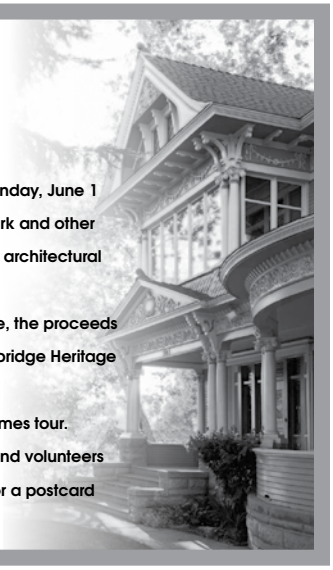
In Long Beach, however, another quirky example of programmatic architecture is threatened with possible demolition due to neglect by its owner. This is the former Hot Cha at 957 East Fourth Street, which was built in 1932 and designated as a Long Beach city landmark. The original name of this restaurant was the Coffee Pot, due to the large sheet metal percolator placed atop the hexagonal front of the building and the fact that it was a coffee shop. Circa 1934 the name was changed to Hot Cha Café and it remained the same until 1982, although around 1970 it morphed into a beer joint. The building became a classroom in 1982, a barber shop in 2006, and it has lost some of it historic integrity since then. It originally had a row of horizontal windows with stained glass borders in the octagonal area between the two roof slopes and larger stained glass windows with hexagonal motifs below. These have all been removed and the front of the building is painted in garish red and green.

The original owner of the Hot Cha Café was E. C. Steuber , who lived next door at 955 East Fourth Street in a house built in 1909, which is also in dilapidated condition. Behind this Edwardian style home, which has classical columns, is a boarded up Craftsman residence constructed in 1913, and at the back of the property is a duplex dating from 1936. All of these buildings are part of the same parcel and need some proverbial tender loving care. The Department of Development Services notified the present absentee owner that the Hot Cha has numerous code violations, but he failed to fix the problems and did not appear at the hearing on January 13 of the Board of Examiners, Appeals and Condemnation. Development Services staff state that they are trying to nudge the owner into restoring the Hot Cha, but the alternative to this is demolition. However, the coffee pot cannot be demolished without permission from the Cultural Heritage Commission, so it has some protection. This author hopes that someone will buy it and restore it to its former appearance by removing the ugly red paint and replicating the stained glass windows and geometric patterned roof shingles.

Although the forlorn Hot Cha is in dire need of rehabilitation, the huge fiberglass donut at 5590 East Seventh Street has been saved. In 1958 a Mrs. Chapman's Angel Food Donut shop was constructed on this site. Altogether, four of these drive-in doughnut stores were built in Long Beach for Jack Chapman. The other three, which have smaller versions of the doughnut, are still intact and are located at 1907 East Carson Street (1954), 3657 Santa Fe Avenue (1956), and 3860 Long Beach Boulevard (1960). The two earliest doughnut shops were designed by John Duffy (1910-1991), an architect who had an office in Long Beach in the fifties and sixties. Although no permit for Mrs. Chapman's on Seventh Street can be found, all of these shops look alike, so it was probably designed by Duffy. Also, the Alamitos Heights Liquor Store at 5560 East Seventh Street on the same property as Mrs. Chapman's was designed by Duffy in 1958. In a *Los Angeles Times* article about doughnut shops in the southland, Reba and Bonnie Churchill stated that Mrs. Chapman's on Seventh Street was leased by Delbert and Dee Doeding for eighteen years and that their son, Don, was the operator in 1982. "The name angel food describes the raised glazed doughnuts, which are light and fluffy inside, just like angel food." (March 2, 1982, I 28).

The doughnut shop is now named the Original Grind and the liquor store has been closed for a couple of years. Frontier Real Estate Investments of Newport Beach is buying the property, building a new restaurant, and leasing it to Dunkin Donuts. At first, the developers declined to incorporate the large iconic doughnut into their design, although city staff had urged them to do so. A public outcry against demolishing the doughnut on Facebook and other social media, as well as articles in various newspapers, caused the developers to have a change of heart and decide to keep the fiberglass doughnut in a revised design. Numerous people testified at the Planning Commission meeting about the importance of the remaining few programmatic structures in Long Beach, including members of the Cultural Heritage Commission, the former Historic Preservation Officer, and representatives from the Los Angeles Conservancy and Docomomo. Saving Mrs. Chapman's Angel Food Donut is an example of democracy at work in Long Beach.

Great Homes of Long Beach!



The 2014 "Great Homes of Long Beach" docent led tour will take place on Sunday, June 1 from 12:00 until 5:00 p.m. This year's tour will feature homes in Naples, Bluff Park and other sections of the city. We are targeting six homes, each of different and unique architectural character, to be open for viewing.

While the tour fulfills the educational objectives of Long Beach Heritage, the proceeds of this event are dedicated to the restoration and support of the historic Bembridge Heritage Homesite, a landmark owned by our organization.

Each year Heritage volunteers work for weeks to develop the Great Homes tour. Please remember 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!

Bembridge News

By Chris Hogan

The best ever Holiday Season happened at the Bembridge House!

December's Victorian Christmas was a huge success – the House's premier event had the greatest-ever attendance! Yes, close to 200 people toured the beautiful rooms and grounds. At the same time, more historic neighborhoods, groups, and individuals were on hand to decorate the House than ever before. Singers from the South Coast Chorale again thrilled the crowds with their renditions of holiday carols. One of the multi-talented docents even serenaded visitors with an impromptu violin concert! The House gardeners created many handsome planters with succulents, selling all but a few. Of course, the perfect Long Beach weather helped out, too! Thanks to everyone who contributed - Love in the Mirror, the Long Beach Firehouse Museum and its vintage fire engine, the South Coast Chorale, Santa Claus, and all the countless volunteers & docents who made the 2013 Victorian Christmas the best yet!

The following weekend, Love in the Mirror (a charity to help the homeless organized by a local grade-school boy) held its annual toy give-away at the Bembridge House. For the first time, hundreds of boys and girls lined up along the driveway and sidewalks to see Santa in the Carriage House and receive a cherished toy. There were lots of joyous smiles recorded in photos! It was a heart-warming day for all and was even featured on one Los Angeles TV news program.

"Busy, busy" seemed to be the watchword. Scores more people toured the House during December. In fact, all Tuesday and Saturday afternoons were booked solid! The House also had more photo shoots and recognition in Long Beach newspapers.

As outreach to the community, Long Beach Pride purchased 100 Victorian Christmas Tour tickets. These tickets were distributed to needy families and individuals, people who would not otherwise have the opportunity to view the Bembridge House. The Bembridge House is very grateful to Long Beach Pride for its vision and support.

The final event of the Holiday Season, the Volunteer Thank You Party in early January, was also well-attended. Our generous Volunteer workers from the Bembridge House shared delicious potluck-foods with the holiday helpers and decorators. Everyone was having such a grand time that the evening ended much later than expected!

This column can't close without one more appreciation. The Carriage House Quilters also deserve a special "Thank you!" from the Bembridge House. These ladies worked together to design and sew a splendid nine-patch quilt, which was recently given away in an opportunity drawing at the Long Beach Heritage General Meeting. They also have been creating spectacular "crazy quilt"- inspired pillows, table runners, and wall hangings for sale. All proceeds from their handicrafts at the weekly quilting sessions benefit the Bembridge House.

Membership Report— March 2014

PRESERVATIONIST MEMBERS AND ABOVE

BENEFACTOR

The Ackerman Family
RMS Queen Mary

SUSTAINER

Kevin & Ana Maria McGuan
Melinda Roney & Walter Wojak

ASSOCIATE

Bob & Nancy Latimer

PATRON

Mike & Andrea Burrous
Kathleen Bursley
Marsha Jeffer
Geraldine Knatz
Mary Lou Martin & Chris Byrne
Patty Moore & Jean Shapen
Marsha Naify
Terry & Anna Ulaszewski

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Norbert Schurer
Iris & Dick Schutz
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Matthew Sloan
Jean Bixby Smith
Julie Stindt & Jim Meznek
Michael Stugrin
Marlene Temple
John Thomas & Chris Launi
John & Patricia Walker
Joan Wells
Sharon Westafer
Linda & Morgan Wheeler
Dorothy Wise
Christina Yanis

President's Message

The Gala Awards Banquet was a great success in every way! There are many people to be thanked: **Karen Clements** and her Awards Jury did an excellent job in selecting this year's recipients; **Patty Moore** and her committee planned a beautiful evening; **Mary Ellen Mitchell and Javier Gonzalez** worked very hard to achieve a successful Silent Auction; **Mary Kay Nottage** toiled tirelessly to coordinate all aspects of the evening; **Bobbi Burket** wrote the great script for the evening; **Mary Lou Martin and Chris Launi** produced a beautiful visual program; **Jill Ann Black** did a fine job of coordinating her wonderful group of young people to help with the auction; and **Jean Shapen** created our beautiful floral arrangements. There were many others who donated time and hard work to achieve success for the evening. Many thanks to all of you!

Long Beach Heritage is working with the City of Long Beach to bring back the Mills Act. This is very important to homeowners with historical properties as it could reduce their property taxes. See our website, lbheritage.org, for more information. We are also working to bring back the position of Historic Preservation Officer in LB. Many thanks to **Maureen Neeley** who has spent a great deal of time and effort these issues.

We have several fun and educational events coming up in the future. On **April 5, 2014**, we have the very popular **Loft Walk** at the Walker Building combined with an Art Deco Bus Tour with John Thomas as our guide. This event sells out very fast so don't delay in purchasing your tickets. On **April 19, 2014**, the **Port of Long Beach** has invited us to a narrated boat tour of America's busiest port. POLB will furnish lunch. This is a free event. A donation of $5.00 to LBH is suggested. Only 130 will be accommodated so make your reservation early. Friends and family are welcome.

On **June 1, 2014**, we will have our **Annual Great Homes of Long Beach Tour**. We have 6 beautiful homes for you to tour this year. This is another event that could sell out so buy your tickets early.

Have an enjoyable spring.

Melinda Roney

Melinda Roney

Endangered Buildings Wanted!

The Long Beach Heritage Advocacy Committee needs your eyes and ears! If you would like to propose an endangered building to be placed on our Long Beach Heritage Watch List, please contact Tami Dowgiewicz at kevindowg@sbcglobal.net with your recommendation. Please include a picture, address and why you believe this building should be added to our watch list. We look forward to viewing your suggestions and protecting our Long Beach treasures!

May Day in Drake Park

This year's May Day festival will be held at Drake Park, 951 Maine Avenue, on Saturday, May 3 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. and adults will be asked for a $2.00 donation. Children under twelve will be admitted free when accompanied by an adult. St. Mary Medical Center and other groups will offer free health screening services and information about their facilities. Other groups will provide a jumper, food, crafts, books and various activities for children.

Endangered Avalon

(Continued from page 1)

"Club Catalina", with three Olympic size swimming pools. There have been no specific plans presented about exactly how the existing buildings will be affected. The Catalina Country Club houses impressive tile installations and the buildings are historically relevant.

Furthermore, the current Inn at Mt. Ada will lose its lease in December. This notable structure is on the National Registry of Historic Places and is owned by the Trustees of USC. This is another historic structure that may be in jeopardy. This loss of lease opens the door for SCICO to utilize the structure and make changes. SCICO has plans to build a 120 room hotel slated to open in 2017 on the adjacent eucalyptus covered point, which will cause it to be dramatically reshaped. This point is where the Easter Sunrise Services are held and it contains the historic "Banning Bench." It is featured in many photos and in several plein air paintings.

On my family's last visit to Avalon, we were shocked and saddened to see that most of Avalon's historic tile installations have fallen into complete and utter disrepair, particularly Bird Park, the Chimes Tower and numerous store fronts. Vintage tiles have been removed or have fallen out of installations. Weeds, grass and saplings are growing up through the cracks of murals. Even the restored mural installation in the bus terminal has fallen on hard times. The fear is that many of these wonderful and historical works of art will not last another five years. Many of the original tile installations along Crescent Avenue have been replaced with reproductions, such as the beautiful tile fountain.

Catalina tile installation at El Encanto.

One of the most significant and magnetic attributes of Avalon is the sense that one is stepping back into 1930s California. Hopefully SCICO will cease demolition of historic structures so that the original charm and character of El Encanto and other buildings in Avalon will be preserved for future generations to enjoy and treasure.

Save the Date

Saturday, July 12, 2914
Festival on the Green at Santa Anita Race Track

We are sorry to announce that we will not be able to offer the Hollywood Bowl event as Rick and Brad are selling their lovely home. Now for the exciting good news We would like you to join Long Beach Heritage for a summer evening filled with music and magic at the historic Santa Anita Race Track in Arcadia. Relax and enjoy the extraordinary music that will fill the air performed by the acclaimed California Philharmonic.

It's the perfect way to spend a Saturday summer evening with your family and friends, a world class orchestra and the beloved Maestro Victor Vener. The performance is "Cowboys and Copland" and will include pieces such as; The Cowboys Overture • The Good, The Bad & The Ugly • The Magnificent Seven • How The West Was Won • Rodeo • Billy The Kid • El Salón México. In addition, there will be a special guest performer yet to be announced.

You will be surrounded by the lush infield of Santa Anita Race Track with a breathtaking view of the San Gabriel Mountains. We have arranged for five tables of ten on the grass of the infield in section B which is very close to the stage. There is also the opportunity to enjoy a variety of pre-concert family friendly activities and live jazz.

We are still working on the details of this event but we know there will bus transportation to and from Santa Anita We just wanted you to know about this wonderful concert so you can save the date and your place on the bus. Several of us have attended this concert in previous years and had a great time.

FREE
LBH EVENT
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Port of Long Beach Boat Tour
SATURDAY, APRIL 19

Come aboard and share your Port stories.
Learn about the Port's history: past, present, and future.
For more info and to RSVP call 562.493.7019.

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Calendar

Loft Walk	April 5
Port of Long Beach tour	April 19
LBH Executive Committee	April 28
May Day at Bembridge	May 3
LBH Board (date change)	May 19
Great Homes Tour	June 1
LBH Executive Committee	June 23
Annual Meeting	July 20

Walking tours

East Village at 10:00 a.m.	April 12
	May 10
	June 14
Downtown at 9:00 a.m.	April 19
	May 17
	June 21

Long Beach Heritage

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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 Student/Senior $ 30
- ❑ Heritage Friend $ 45
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- ❑ Heritage Patron $500
- ❑ Heritage Associate $750
- ❑ Heritage Sustainer $1,000
- ❑ Heritage Benefactor $2,000
- ❑ New member _____

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