LONG BEACH HERITAGE

Volume 18, No 2 Summer 2008

Save the Date!

Annual Meeting and installation of officers will be Sunday, July 27th from 2:00 to 4:00.

The location will be the historic Farmers & Merchants Bank at the corner of Third Street and Pine Avenue. Reservations are necessary by July 23rd and may be made by calling the office.There is no charge and your guests are welcome.

Last Chance for the Hollywood Bowl

As I write this, there are only a dozen spaces left for our Hollywood Bowl/Casa Alegre Summer Social on Saturday, August 30th. Don't be disappointed — make your reservations NOW! Tickets are $98 per person for members and $108 for non-members. It includes chartered bus transport from Long Beach, dinner, open bar, home tour and Bowl tickets to see mainliner Hollywood Legend John Williams. Our wonderful hosts, Rick Hobbs and Brad Seeley guarantee this, being their 'decade" of hosting, will be the best ever. Reservations can be made by sending your check to the LB Heritage, PO Box 92521, Long Beach 90809. All guests are welcome.

Dues, Dues, Dues

Thank you to everyone who renewed their membership during our recent membership drive. If your name is missing from the July membership list, please check and be sure you remembered to mail your dues. If you think it is our mistake, don't hesitate to call the office.

Gift Card Drawing

As an added incentive for the current year, those who renewed or initiated Long Beach Heritage memberships at or above the $100 level were offered the opportunity to win a $100 gift card. The drawing took place on May 19, 2008 and we are thrilled to announce that the winners were Marlene and Don Temple. We extend our congratulations to Marlene and Don and thank them, as well as all of our other members who renewed or initiated Long Beach Heritage memberships. The number of members at the $100 level increased approximately 30% this year. Thanks to all of you for your continuing support and participation in Long Beach Heritage's stewardship of the architectural and historic fabric of our unique and wonderful city.'

Farmers and Merchants Bank of Long Beach

Curlett and Beelman, Farmers and Merchants Bank, 1922-23.

By Louise Ivers

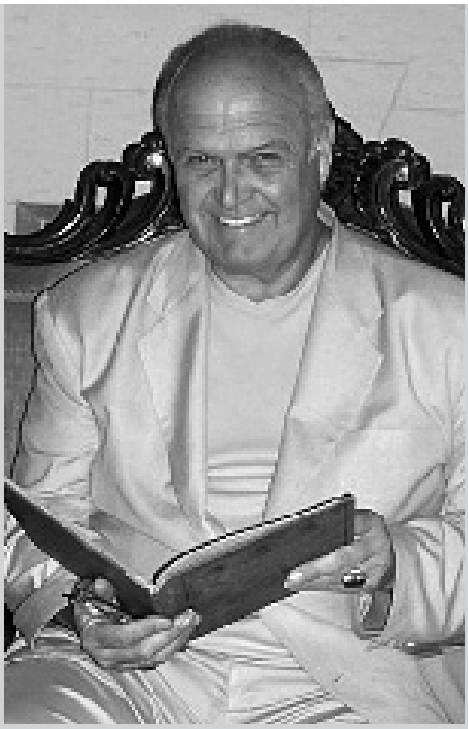
The Farmers and Merchants Bank is one of the most notable institutions in the city of Long Beach, not only because of its commitment to sound financial practices, but also because of the opulent architecture of its headquarters. Throughout its lengthy history, the prosperity of the bank has been guided by three generations of the Walker family. The founder, Charles J. Walker, opened a real estate office in Long Beach after he married Carrie Zeigler in 1895. Always involved in charitable endeavors, C. J. Walker was on the Board of Directors of the Y.M.C.A., as well as that of the Methodist Church. In 1900 he was elected President of the City Board of Trustees and then became Mayor. In addition, he was a major investor in the Long Beach Land and Navigation Company, which owned the future site of the harbor, and the Mercantile Company, which later became Buffums Department Store.

C. J. Walker's first foray into the banking business occurred when he became a member of the Board of Trustees of the First National Bank. Located at the southwest corner of Pine Avenue and First Street, the brick building was designed in 1902 by Train and Williams and had a distinctive clock tower, which was incorporated into the 1906 remodeling by the same firm. Gables and finials adorned the top of the tower of the original bank building and a two story oriel window projected from the oblique corner of the structure. In 1907 an anonymous group of Los Angeles investors took over the First National Bank and appointed C. J. Walker as President. He saved the institution from a run on its money and soon founded the Farmers and Merchants Bank in November 1907.

The Farmers and Merchants Bank opened on the first story of a remodeled commercial building at 227 Pine Avenue. Above the corner entrance a cornice supported by large brackets projected outward, but otherwise the structure was rather plain. The bank remained there until the present headquarters was built at the corner of Third Street. In Septem-

See Bank page 6

Message from the President



Writing my final message has caused me to reflect on the accomplishments of Long Beach Heritage over the last three years. Although I had worked with different groups within the organization for the previous decade, when first approached to be president, I had serious concerns about how I was going to handle all the facets of the group. Much to my relief I soon discovered that under the guidance of Mary Kay Nottage, my chief-of-staff as it were, all of my officers and committees knew exactly what to do and how to do it very well; it has been a real pleasure to learn from them. I have served as president of several organizations, but I have never worked with such proficient members. My thanks are extended to everyone involved.

Since assuming office I have seen the restoration of the Bembridge House become a reality. When we acquired the property it had been a victim of "deferred maintenance" for longer than I can recall. Foundation work, rewiring, plumbing issues, re-roofing, replacement of most of the expansive veranda, reconstructing the window frames and leading, restoring the entry, rebuilding the back porch, and restoration projects ad infinitum. The driveway was replaced, the carriage house restored, and a separate restroom and storage shed were built. Thanks to those who knew how to request grants and follow through on them, as well as money raised through tours and special programs, this has all come to fruition. It is amazing that it was done in such a relatively short time. The house and property look magnificent. It's the first place that I take visitors, and they always are duly impressed.

Our advocacy group has made great strides working with the City of Long Beach and other civic groups. A group of historic houses which would have been torn down were relocated by the Redevelopment Agency in the Willlmore City area with major effort by the Willmore City Heritage Association. Developing a good working relationship with city agencies in realizing our efforts toward preservation is the hallmark of advocacy within our group. A historic survey of the city to assess our resources outside of the historic districts, as well as within them, has been initiated. A Historic Preservation Element has also been integrated into the future plans for Long Beach.

We have held some very interesting general meetings at the Cooper Arms, the Gaytonia Apartments, and the Queen Mary, among other sites. All of these meetings have been attended by much larger numbers than in the past. Long Beach Heritage put on a salon at Rose Towers and a musicale at the Bembridge House. A number of interpretive tours at the Bembridge House had a positive and lasting impact on those who attended, particularly the children. Members also enjoyed a centennial celebration of the Bembridge House with a luncheon and historic fashion show.

The newsletter has expanded in scope to become a valuable educational tool with informative articles, as well as a voice for organizational activities. The last three Awards Banquets, which honored Mike Burrous, Maureen Neeley, and Richard Poper in that order, were hugely successful. The talents and efforts of the committee members were impressive, as well as

See President's Message page 4

Nominating Slate 2008

VP Education . . . . . Stan Poe

Walking Tours: . . . . . Open

Special Activities . . . . . Mary Lou Hauser & Judy Edson

General Meetings . . . . . Liz Handley

Membership Development . . . . Maureen Neeley

Board Development . . . . . Open

Volunteers/Docents . . . . . Bobbi Burket

Advisors . . . . . Ana Maria McGuan

Membership . . . . . Open

VP Advocacy . . . . . Open

Advocacy Coordinator . . . . . David Waller

Neighborhood Outreach . . . . . Layne Johnson

Redevelopment Liaison . . . John Thomas

Planning Liaison . . . . Jonathon Glasgow

City Council Liaison . . . . . Craig Arnold

Cultural Heritage Liaison . . . . . Stan Poe

Cultural Arts Liaison . . . . . Eve Kilger

Secretary . . . . . Bobbi Burket

Treasurer . . . . . Cheryl Perry

VP Public Awareness . . . . . Melina Roney

Newsletter Editor . . . . . Louise Ivers

Public Relations . . . . . Amy Bentley-Smith

Web Master . . . . . Kerrie Aley

Mailing Chair . . . . . Gary Roderick

Photographer . . . . . Chris Launi

Historian . . . . . Christina Yanis

VP Fund Development . . . . . Dianne Jordan

Awards Benefit . . . . . Patty Moore

Awards Jury . . . . . Layne Johnson & Jonathon Glasgow

Silent Auction . . . . . Open

Homes Tour . . . . . Mary Lou Martin

Hollywood Bowl . . . . Sandra DeDubovay

Loft Walk . . . . . Open

VP Bembridge House . . . Charlotte Mitchell

Long Beach Matters

Long Beach Heritage is pleased to announce that May is National Preservation Month sponsored by the National Trust for Historic Preservation (NTHP). Since 1971, during the month of May, the NTHP has promoted various educational opportunities and week-long events designed to educate Americans and preservationists about historic preservation trends, advocacy and development models.

"This Place Matters" is the theme for May 2008 and the theme is very appropriate in the current historic preservation climate in Long Beach. Through the efforts of the Advocacy Committee, Long Beach Heritage continues to work with City leaders, staff and members of the City Council to address concerns and issues and develop responsible public policy positions related to historic preservation.

The objective of the Advocacy Committee is to educate and advocate for current historic preservation models and apprise policy makers in Long Beach about opportunities to enhance and further develop practical and proven historic preservation programs that will further the cause of historic preservation. In order to maintain our precious historic resources, the Advocacy Committee continues to encourage our elected and appointed officials to protect and preserve current incentives for responsible historic preservation.

To this end, Long Beach Heritage would like to encourage our local elected and appointed officials to seriously consider the following:

- Continue to offer incentives for thoughtful historic preservation by immediately re-establishing the Mills Act for qualified properties. In spite of the current economy, all cities offering the Mills Act have not suspended or discontinued the program.
- Revisit the recent fee increase for historic preservation related processes that results in discouraging volunteer compliance of the preservation permitting process.
- Support the current outreach process for the Historic Preservation Element of the City's General Plan.
- Support efforts toward an Adaptive Reuse Ordinance similar to the successful model established by the City of Los Angeles.
- Support Long Beach Heritage and groups who advocate for the reuse of existing commercial buildings which are deemed historic or potentially historic rather than continuing the practice of default demolition.
- Continue to fund the Historic Prevention Office as needed, to ensure effective customer service to homeowners and commercial developers alike.
- Support the growth and development of historic neighborhood districts by expediting services for Certificate of Appropriateness permits and increase code enforcement in those districts.

Recently the City has promoted many "Green" and "Sustainable" building initiatives. Long Beach Heritage would like to suggest to our elected and appointed policy makers that the best way to "go green" is to reuse existing building stock.

While we celebrate across the country the National Preservation Month theme "This Place Matters", let us be thankful that we in Long Beach still have historic and cultural resources such as our historic Ranchos and the Villa Riviera that have not gone the way of the Pacific Coast Club. We should all work collectively as partners in preservation to establish responsible and effective historic preservation public policies!

Remember, "Long Beach Matters!"

— John W. Thomas
Vice President for Advocacy

Membership Report July 2008

Benefactor
Save the Queen

Sustainer
The Ackerman Family

Sponsors
Kenneth Walker – F&M Bank

Patrons
Mike & Andrea Burrous
Bill Garlin, Jr.
Mary Lou Martin & Chris Byrne
Patty Moore & Jean Shapen
Melinda Roney & Walter Wojak

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Dawna & Gary DeLong
Bob & Nancy Foster
Jack & Carol Frank
James Hayes & Catherine Keig
Layne Johnson
Jonathan & Lynn Mott
Maureen Neeley & Dan Roberts
Meg O'Toole
Jenny & David Shlemmer

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Sherron Leno
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Tim & Marie Price
Arthur Radin
Patricia Randolph
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John Royce & Kent Lockart
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Ruth & Kenneth Schwartz
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Pamela Seager
Renee Simon
Matthew Sloan
Jean Bixby Smith
Mary Sullivan & John Sanders
Betty Sunofsky
Marlene & Don Temple
John Thomas
Randy & Brenda Turnbow
John & Patricia Walker
David & Susan Waller
Dorothy & Fred Wise
Christina Yanis

Everything is Coming up Needle Art

The needle art classes at the Bembridge House were very successful and ended on such a positive note that almost all of the original participants are returning for the second session. A second series of needle art classes will begin on September 6th and continue for six consecutive Saturdays from 1-3 p.m.

As in art classes in general, fundamental techniques are important for continued success in needle art. The first classes consisted of the basic elements of beginning embroidery. In the second session the class will construct three different Victorian evening bags that are highly embellished, thus making use of the skills acquired during the first class.

The classes are open to people of all ages and no experience is necessary. The sessions will include beginners and those who have learned the fundamental techniques of needle art. We have found to our delight that not only have the students learned a great deal, but they had fun doing it.

There is a fee of $30 dollars for participation in the class. Many of the supplies will be provided. For reservations or more information contact the office of Long Beach Heritage at (562) 493-7019.

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 carriage house. Magnum Builders Inc. under the supervision of James Leonard and Mike Burrous , our very own valuable member and advisor, has done an outstanding job.

May Day was again a very successful event with over three hundred 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 in keeping with that year. The activities in Drake Park included dancing, games, face painting, May Day crafts and storytelling.

We were very pleased to have the Friends of Languages Associate Group, which operates under the auspices of Long Beach City College Foundation, decide to have their spring fundraiser at the Bembridge House. There were over sixty- five guests at this event which included tours of the house led by our very outstanding docents. This group raises 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

President's Message continued from page 2

those of the volunteers who have helped to "launch" every one of our endeavors. The Great Homes of Long Beach tour was another activity which took months to plan and innumerable meetings, but operated flawlessly on tour day. This tour provided educational glimpses into many architectural examples in the city with a varied selection each year.

As a retired teacher and published historian, I have always held education as my primary goal as president, closely followed by advocacy and plain old-fashioned fun. I can reflect on the past three years and appreciate that those goals have been met, and I feel sure that John Thomas will be a great successor. I fully intend to continue in an advocacy capacity and serve on several committees. I hope to see some of our members get more involved in the programs. They are a swell bunch of people. William Faulkner wrote, "The past is never dead. For some it's not even past," and I think that suits me just fine!

—Stan Poe

Brownie Troop 809

Ten girls from Brownie Troop 809 and five of the mothers arrived at the Bembridge House at 9:00 A.M. ready and eager to pull weeds in the garden. They first had a tour of the house and then settled down to work. It was such fun to see how serious they were about their task and hard they worked for two hours. One of the girls declared after they finished that she didn't know how hard gardening work was and another said she just loved pulling weeds. We at the Bembridge House appreciate all of their hard work and hope they will return another time.

Summertime Social and Band Concert at Bembridge House

Join us on Saturday, July 19th, as we listen to the Long Beach Community Band concert in Drake Park from our vantage point at Bembridge House.

Last year's participants chose listening spots on the porch, the front lawn, and in the back yard. Socialize with friends, snack on our munchies, and indulge in a little (or a lot) of ice cream, with music in the background.

Last year's social was a big success, so be sure to order early as ticket numbers will be limited. Now, dust off that folding chair and find your favorite sun hat!

For Heritage members
and their guests
Saturday, July 19th
3:30 pm to 5:30
Tickets $7.50
(includes refreshments
To order phone
(562) 493-7019

Bembridge House Gardening Committee is Looking for Volunteers

The Bembridge House Gardening Committee has been working hard on the landscaping of the Homesite. In addition to the 1943 Victory Garden completed in 2007, this spring the hard working volunteers began planting flower beds along the periphery of the back fence. All of the soil, fertilizer, and plants were generously donated by the Orange County Farm Supply and the Long Beach City College Horticulture Department.

The Gardening Committee is chaired by Linda Renner and Elisa Trujillo. Linda was president of the Orange County Rose Society from 1996 to 1998 and has attended numerous Rose Conferences as far away as New Zealand. Elisa is a longtime resident of Willmore City and has spent the past 19 years designing and landscaping her own property. Both women are serious gardening enthusiasts!

Gardening at the Bembridge House provides both the novice and experience horticulturist with a wonderful opportunity to enhance their knowledge about planting and growing flowers, herbs, and vegetables. It is also a great place to meet other gardeners with similar interests. At the Bembridge House we know that a great house with a beautiful garden is a true asset to the community.

Upcoming plans for the Bembridge Heritage Homesite include designing and planting both herb and historic rose gardens. The Gardening Committee also plans to take field trips to other significant gardens in the area, as well as attracting speakers to focus on related topics of interest.

For more information on becoming a volunteer or on Gardening Committee activities, contact Linda or Elisa at (562) 590-5900.

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First Street circa 1905

ber 1921 the East Long Beach Branch opened on Anaheim Road at Obispo Avenue in a striking neoclassical structure with engaged Corinthian columns on high pedestals supporting a cornice with dentils.

In 1922 C. J. Walker commissioned noted Los Angeles architects, Aleck Curlett and Claud Beelman, to design a new flagship for the Farmers and Merchants Bank at the northeast corner of Pine Avenue and Third Street. The Daily Telegram reported that it would "be built of reinforced concrete, with brick and terra cotta trim. It is the intention of the owners to make it pleasing to the eye and a credit to Long Beach." Ground was broken on 12 July 1922 and the grand opening took place on 7 April 1923. The public banking room in the lower portion of the structure at the corner retains its red Italian marble entrance with double doors of brass-plated steel. Inside are a pink marble floor; marble benches for customers; original metal teller's wickets; terra cotta friezes with classical motifs on the mezzanine walls; twelve brass chandeliers with inlaid designs in turquoise enamel; and skylights of amber stained glass. The massive vault is reached by marble stairs leading down to the basement. On the exterior of the banking room giant Ionic columns support an entablature topped by a cornice with dentils. The ten story office tower has an entrance on Pine Avenue behind the public banking room and relief panels of urns with plants flank the attic windows. Acroteria line the roofs of both structures. The Farmers and Merchants Bank has recently undergone an impeccable restoration and is the only bank building in the Pine Avenue business district that remains intact.

Curlett and Beelman's design for the bank was typical of the early 1920s when financial institutions were mainly constructed in classical styles in order to present impressive facades to passersby. A bank that resembled a Greek or Roman temple connoted stability to potential customers. Curlett and Beelman also designed the Cooper Arms Apartments of 1922-23; the Security Bank Building of 1924-25; and the famed Pacific Coast Club of 1924-27 in Long Beach.

In 1937 Gustavus A. Walker became President of the Farmers and Merchants Bank, succeeding his father. Under his tutelage another branch opened at the northwest corner of American Avenue (now Long Beach Boulevard) and Fourteenth Street on 28 April 1941. Designed by Raymond A. Sites, a local architect, it had the first drive-in window in California and only the sixth constructed in the nation. The Streamline Moderne façade was clad in enameled metal tiles and the stainless steel doors were surrounded by glass blocks. No longer a bank, this distinctive building now faces demolition by the Redevelopment Agency.

By 1973, the Farmers and Merchants Bank had ten branches and in 1979 Kenneth J. Walker, grandson of the founder, became President. In 2007 the bank celebrated its one hundredth anniversary and published a handsome book to commemorate the Walker family. Due to its conservative financial practices, the institution will undoubtedly be around for another century to mark its two hundredth year in business. It is not only leader in the realm of finance, but also in historic preservation.

2008 LBNMHA Grants

In March, 2008 the Long Beach Navy Memorial Heritage Association (LBNMHA) made its annual grants to six projects that support a broad perspective on historic preservation in Long Beach. For those not familiar with LBNMHA, it was created in 1998 with a $4.5 million endowment as part of a mitigation agreement from the Port of Long Beach following the Port's acquisition and demolition of the Roosevelt Base Historic District at the Long Beach Naval Station. Income from the endowment is to be used to foster and support preservation and rehabilitation of historic resources within the municipal boundaries of Long Beach.

This year's awards, which were selected from among grant applications submitted in response to an annual request for proposals, totaled $207,000. They represent a broad range of projects.

- St. John's Missionary Baptist Church, $50,000, to complete the restoration of a 15-foot tall stained glass windows clearly visible to the public
- Historical Society of Long Beach, $40,000, for preserving, organizing, and exhibiting the work of local architects.
- Rancho Los Cerritos Foundation, $25,000, toward development of a Visitor Education Center project.
- V-Squared, LLC $25,000, for the renovation and restoration of the Art Theater in the 4th Street Arts District. The ticket booth will be restored to its original freestanding design and a small coffee shop will occupy one of the original two shops adjacent to the theater.
- CSULB Advanced Media Production, $50,000, to produce a documentary video of "Long Beach During World War II." The DVD can be used by researchers of the history and evolution of Long Beach at that time.
- Louise Ivers, $17,000, for the production of a book, "Long Beach: A History Through Its Architecture."

Mystery Houses?

Do you know where these buildings are? If so, call Louise Ivers (562) 436-2405.

Thank You Docents

As I write this, it's late May and about ten days before our Great Homes Tour. Yesterday I met at Bembridge House with three generous helpers to assemble and mail the docent instructions for the event. We put docents in each of the six houses, for two afternoon shifts, and–with substitutes for the several people who encounter family emergencies or illness during the last few days–the total number of people it takes to put on the tour is about eighty. That's a lot of stamped envelopes, a lot of people who say yes when I call and ask them to sacrifice part of a lovely Sunday afternoon in June.

This is our biggest fund-raiser of the year, biggest in revenue and biggest in overall, combined effort, and I am always grateful for the fact that so many people step forward to participate. It isn't always possible for me to speak to them personally, so I am taking advantage of the newsletter to thank all of you who will be making this tour a success on June 8th.

And yes, I will be calling on you again next spring!

Sincerely,
Bobbi Burket
Volunteer Coordinator

LONG BEACH HERITAGE

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CALENDAR

July 19	Bembridge Band Concert
July 27	Annual Meeting
July 28	Board meeting
Aug 25	Executive Committee meeting
Aug 30	Hollywood Bowl
Sept 22	Board meeting
Oct 19	California Heights Home Tour
Feb 19	LBH Benefit

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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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