



# Imminent Demolition of Historic Los Angeles County Courthouse on Ocean Boulevard



Long Beach Heritage believes that the former County Courthouse is a significant cultural resource and that other avenues besides immediate demolition should be pursued. (Photo by Louise Ivers)

Building at the southeast corner of Ocean Boulevard and Pine Avenue. Long Beach Heritage believes that the former County Courthouse is a significant cultural resource and that other avenues besides immediate demolition should be pursued by the city. The County Courthouse may qualify for local Long Beach Landmark, California Register of Historic Places, and National Register status and can be adaptively reused for commercial or residential purposes. The Public Safety Building at 400 West Broadway, which was constructed at the same time as the Courthouse and was meant to visually complement it, was recently restored and is a great example of historic preservation in our city. Long Beach Heritage believes that the Courthouse can be adaptively reused for commercial or residential purposes.

The men who designed the former Los Angeles County Courthouse were Kenneth S. Wing, Sr. (1901–1986) and Francis J. Heusel (1906–1968), noted Southern California

*(Continued on page 3)*

**By Louise Ivers**

The City of Long Beach has commissioned an Initial Study by Terry Hayes Associates of Culver City for the demolition of the now vacant Los Angeles County Courthouse at 415 West Ocean Boulevard. This Initial Study merely states that the former Courthouse

will be demolished in order to reduce public safety hazards and eliminate maintenance costs for the city, as well as provide space for future development. No new plans for reusing the site are presently under consideration. Thus, it will merely become another gigantic hole in the ground similar to the one created by the untimely demolition of the Jergins Trust

# Annual Meeting in July at Miller Japanese Garden

**By Janice Furman**

Members are invited to our free annual meeting at the Community Cultural Center in the Earl Burns Miller Japanese Garden, located on the campus of California State University Long Beach. The meeting will be held at 2:00 p.m. on Sunday, July 20. Please RSVP by July 14 to the LBH office at (562) 493-7019 or email [preservation@lbheritage.org](mailto:preservation@lbheritage.org). You won't want to miss this unique opportunity to learn about this local treasure and to enjoy its summer beauty.

Jeanette R. Schelin, director of the Japanese Garden, will speak on its purpose of providing a place of refuge, knowledge, and enjoyment to all who enter its gates. She will also present a slide show of the garden,

its 33 year history, and future plans. There are 46 Japanese black pines pruned in traditional horticultural style, as well as approximately 70 other species of plants, such as camellias, azaleas, iris, and water lilies. A large koi pond provides a habitat for 300 colorful fish and aesthetically placed bridges can be seen as well. Guests can feed the fish and will be treated to Japanese refreshments.

Enter the CSULB campus, 1250 Bellflower Boulevard, at Beach Drive off Bellflower between 7th Street and Atherton. Then take



A large koi pond provides a habitat for 300 colorful fish and aesthetically placed bridges can be seen as well.

the first left turn (north) on Earl Warren Drive. Pass the second stop sign and the Japanese Garden is on your left. Park in Lot 16 directly across the street in either the metered spaces or purchase a permit from one of the yellow machines in the parking lot (you must use either a \$5 bill or a credit card). Carpool if possible to save money.

# An Enjoyable, Informative Harbor Tour

By Emily Tanaka

Long Beach Heritage members enjoyed a special Port of Long Beach Harbor Tour tailored to our interests on Easter weekend. We set sail for a lunch-time cruise aboard the beautiful ship *Triumphant* and were given a catered meal. We had a wonderful insiders' look at our port and were treated to informative stories about her history by Chris Berry. Congratulations to those who were awarded prizes for winning the surprise port trivia game. Long Beach Heritage is grateful to the Port of Long Beach for arranging this nautical history for us and we thank Chris Berry, John Pope, Mario Gonzalez and Jocelin Padilla for making the day a great success.



Relax, rejoice and revel in the extraordinary sounds of music on *Saturday, July 12*

## Festival on the Green at Santa Anita Race Track



Join Long Beach Heritage for a summer evening filled with music and magic at the historic Santa Anita Race Track in Arcadia. Relax, rejoice and revel in the extraordinary sounds of 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, friends, a world class orchestra and the beloved Maestro Victor Vener.

We will be experiencing "Cowboys and Copland." This is America's unique story that has inspired composers worldwide. Whether it's the unforgettable sound of Ennio Morricone's music from *The Good, the Bad and the Ugly*, Elmer Bernstein's thrilling theme from *The Magnificent Seven*, Aaron

Copland's ballet *Billy The Kid* or the stirring strains of *How the West Was Won*, composers have given voice to our country's heritage and landscape. And what's an evocation of the Old West without a trip south of the border? *El Salón Mexico*, Copland's musical depiction of a village bar and its compelling dance rhythms is a perpetual delight. This musical journey across America ends with a trip from the small towns of Illinois to the battleground of Gettysburg as we are treated to a performance of the *Lincoln Portrait*, Copland's heartfelt tribute to one of our greatest presidents, with a special guest narrator.

You will be surrounded by the lush infield of Santa Anita Race Track and against a breathtaking unobstructed view of the San Gabriel Mountains as you are transported to a unique place and time where music and memories come alive. The second-to-none atmosphere enhances the experience allows you to enjoy the best in live music while you feast on a delicious dinner while sitting under the stars at a comfortable table.

Tickets for this special event are \$85 per person (\$80 for members). The ticket price includes the concert, dinner (choice of three options), and bus transportation to and from Santa Anita. Our seats will be at comfortable tables of 10. Call the LB Heritage office at (562) 493-7019 for reservations.

# Spring and Summer Bembridge News

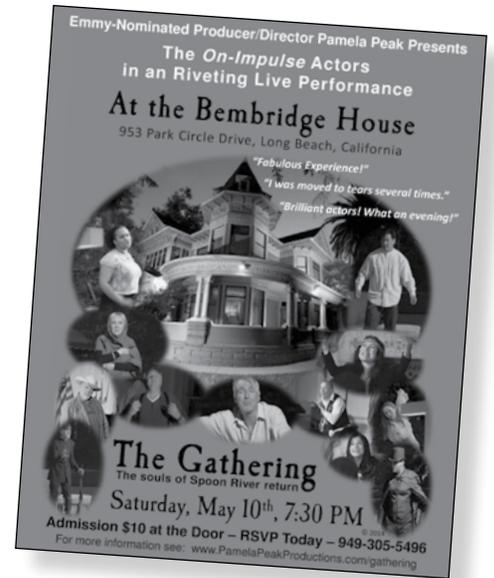
By Chris Hogan

Yes, late spring/early summer is in the air at the Bembridge House! Despite the recent record-breaking heat waves, the rose, shade, and vegetable gardens are growing, growing, growing. The rose blossoms are once again especially gorgeous! Of course, the succulent garden is doing fine, too. Thanks to all the volunteer gardeners who have been busy pruning, mulching, weeding, and doing lots of extra watering to ensure that all the plants survive during the extreme weather. The gardens also have some new features, so please come to enjoy them on one of the House's scheduled open afternoons (Tuesdays and the fourth Saturday of each month).

In early May, the Bembridge House hosted Orange County's On Impulse Acting Troupe for its unique performance piece, "The Gathering." And what a memorable evening it was! Based on the 1915 book *Spoon River Anthology* by Edgar Lee Masters, the show consisted of monologues, or character sketches. Some 30 deceased residents of the fictional town came back to life to speak of their regrets, lives, and loves, and at the end, their wishes to be remembered. With such electrifying performances, they will be remembered! Led by award-winning

producer/director (and fellow actor) Pamela Peak, the actors roamed from room to room to room downstairs in the House to create their indelible characters. The performance also included dance, piano, and songs (not to mention delicious homemade refreshments). With a combined cast and crew of over 25 and almost 70 people in the audience, it truly was a packed house! Kudos again to all the hard-working actors and crew members who gave everyone present that night at the Bembridge House such a treat. (Another big thank you is in order to the *Long Beach Press Telegram* for their wonderful press coverage.) Let's hope there is a return engagement of the On Impulse Acting Troupe to the Bembridge House!

The other big news is that the House received a grant from the Long Beach Navy Memorial Heritage Association! For 2014, the trust chose seven local organizations or building owners to get money for historic preservation projects. At the Bembridge House, the grant will be used for rehabilitating/repairing the entrance hall, the master bedroom and bath, and the downstairs and upstairs back bathrooms. Already, badly leaking plumbing has been fixed and a vintage toilet has been installed in the upstairs back bathroom. Happily,



the original bathtub faucet fixture, which had to be removed almost 30 years ago because of disrepair, was found, cleaned, and put back where it had been when the house was built! (Thank you, plumber Cris Robinetti!) The restoration work will continue in the months ahead. Long Beach Heritage and the Bembridge House are extremely appreciative of the Long Beach Navy Memorial Heritage Association for all the financial help they've given us throughout the years.

## Los Angeles County Courthouse

(Continued from page 1)

architects whose offices were located in Long Beach. Heusel partnered with Killingsworth, Brady & Associates in the creation of the Public Safety Building as well. The Courthouse was designed and built between 1957 and 1960 and was dedicated by Chief Justice Earl Warren in an imposing ceremony in December 1960. Wing and Heusel designed a six-story addition for the structure which was finished in 1969. In June 1957 a *Long Beach Press-Telegram* article stated that the building would "have a modern look expressed in concrete and steel framing with an external façade of porcelain enamel and glass in colored aluminum frames. It will have five floors, a penthouse and cost \$5,504,000." The Courthouse typifies Mid-Century Modern architecture with its sleek curtain wall of alternating horizontal bands of glass and

blue enameled panels. Pronounced vertical piers punctuate the façade and frame a recessed walkway in front of the building. Reinforced concrete walls at the east and west sides of the structure contrast with the shiny surfaces of the south and north façades. Many of the court rooms retain fine wooden materials, which can be saved for future adaptive reuse of the building.

The Los Angeles County Courthouse is not only important to the history of Long Beach, but also has distinctive character defining elements of Mid-Century Modern American architecture that should not be hastily demolished. Many fine Mid-Century buildings in our city have already been subjected to the wrecker's ball, including Heusel's distinctive Farmers & Merchants Bank branch on South Street and his uniquely

shaped Elks Lodge No. 888 on Willow Street. On the other hand, Wing's former Edison Building on Long Beach Boulevard is now undergoing adaptive reuse as residential lofts and will become a preservation success story. The site where the Jergins Trust was once located still remains vacant after thirty years and it would be unfortunate if the City of Long Beach creates another huge ditch on Ocean Boulevard. Long Beach Heritage advocates saving the former Courthouse and adaptively reusing it for another purpose. This structure and the Public Safety Building are part of a visionary plan for the Long Beach Civic Center by Francis Heusel and Kenneth Wing that they developed in the late 1950s and they exemplify a golden period in history when our city was experiencing tremendous postwar growth.

# President's Message



It has been very rewarding to serve as President of Long Beach Heritage for the last three years. The best part was being able to work with and learn from such great people. It would take up the whole newsletter to name each and every one of you and I would still inadvertently leave out a very important person to me. You all know who you are and how grateful I am to each of you. I will single out the most important person in Long Beach Heritage. She is the heart and energy of our organization. She is the one who is always there when we need her. She is available 24/7. Last year she endured a heart-breaking tragedy when her beloved husband Keith died and she was still there for us. Thank you Mary Kay Knottage, Executive Director of Long Beach Heritage, for all that you have done and will do in the future for us.

Continue to support and work for our mission. Let's make Long Beach the best "Little City in America." Support the cultural heritage of our wonderful city and it will support us in the future.

*Melinda Roney*

Melinda Roney

# City to Pursue Landmark Nominations

By Maureen Neeley

In March this year, Nancy Latimer, Long Beach Heritage advisor, hosted a joint group of LBH Advisors and Advocacy committee members. This meeting resulted in many positive outcomes, one of which was the desire to see more Long Beach buildings nominated for landmark status. In the 1980s and 1990s we lost many significant structures to ill-conceived planning. The Jergins Trust, Heartwell, Omar Hubbard, Barker Brothers, and Pacific Coast Club were just a few of the icons that were razed in the face of misguided property tax codes and unenlightened earthquake retrofit techniques. At the same time, the demolitions ignited a fire under many residents who understood that losing our unique historic fabric was short-sighted economic policy.

To that end, our city's Historic Preservation Officer, Ruthann Lehrer, enlisted several preservationists to help identify and nominate scores of buildings throughout Long Beach. Although not a guarantee that a building would be untouched, historic landmark status does provide a great deal of protection against demolition. Today, the city's Development Services website lists 131 landmarks, several of which — unfortunately — have been demolished. The last structure to be landmarked was the Palace Hotel in 2009.

At our joint Advocacy-Advisors meeting in March, several buildings throughout the city were identified as potential landmarks.

At the April Cultural Heritage Commission meeting, Long Beach Heritage Advocates Maureen Neeley and Tami Dowgiewicz made a brief presentation

requesting that the city activate this core function of our Historic Preservation Element, one that contributes to our eligibility as a Certified Local Government. The commissioners positively received the presentation, directing staff to bring nominations back to the commission, thus requiring that each building be assessed vis-à-vis the city's landmark criteria. This process has begun and a report should be available at either the July or August CHC meeting. With current staff shortages, this nominations project has become inter-departmental. Development Services has "borrowed" a city librarian to conduct the research and complete the forms. Using local staff will aid in outreach to local resources.

So, which buildings are top on the list? Although there are many, many worthy candidates, the committee had to start somewhere. In an effort to select potential landmarks in several districts, and to provide city protection for some that are already



Alamitos Branch Library at 1836 East 3rd Street is one of structures under review for landmark status. (Photo by Louise Ivers)

on either the state or national register, the following structures are under review for landmark status:

- Fire Station No. 12** (6509 Gundry Ave.)
- Alamitos Branch Library** (1836 E. 3rd St.)
- Forest Lawn Mortuary** (former Sunnyside Mausoleum, 1500 E. San Antonio Dr.)
- Federal Post Office** (300 Long Beach Blvd.)
- Jennie Reeve Spec House** (1265 Chestnut, moved from 316 Cedar)
- Former California Automobile Club Building** (757 Pacific Ave.)
- Edison Theatre** (formerly the Nippon Pool Room, 213 E. Broadway)
- Former Santa Fe Train Depot** (now in the city yard on San Francisco Avenue, soon to be moved to Willow Springs Park)

We are hopeful that all of these will soon become Long Beach City Landmarks, continuing to serve residents, workers and visitors to our city for years to come.

# Point Fermin Lighthouse—A Local Gem!



PHOTO BY LOUISE IVERSIN

Victorian architectural mode and was simpler in design than buildings of the high Victorian period. It is characterized by gabled roofs, vertical board and batten siding, decorative cross beams and hand carved porch railings.

The lighthouse was staffed by federal employees of the Treasury Department and regulated by the

U.S. Lighthouse Board. These employees were called lighthouse keepers. It was their job to keep the light visible as a beacon for ships, maintain the lighthouse lens, and attend to the general upkeep of the building. Point Fermin's first lighthouse keepers were women, Mary and Ella Smith. Captain George Shaw was hired for the lighthouse keeper position shortly after the Smith sisters' resignation in 1882. The Austin family moved into the lighthouse in 1917 to become the last keepers of the Point Fermin Light. Between the years of 1927 and 1941, the beacon was electrified and managed by the city. On December 7, 1941, Pearl Harbor was bombed and the

coast was blacked out so it would not be visible to enemy ships and planes. Sadly, the light was never to be lit again.

In 1972, a group of citizens raised funds and worked diligently to replace the lighthouse to its original glory for her hundredth birthday in 1974. The volunteers' efforts also placed the lighthouse on the National Register of Historic Places. The lighthouse was opened to the public on November 1, 2003 under the management of the Department of Recreation and Parks for the City of Los Angeles. Also, the Fourth Order Fresnel lens that served Point Fermin from 1912 to 1941 has been returned to the lighthouse. This original Fresnel lens, removed in the 1940s, had been missing for decades. After being identified in 2006, the lens was relocated to a display in the restored lighthouse museum from a real estate office in Malibu where it was found. Volunteers from the Point Fermin Lighthouse Society serve as tour guides and help to keep the building open to the public.

Our group truly enjoyed the tour. The Lighthouse was extremely well-kept and the docents were tremendously informative. The Point Fermin Lighthouse tour was a wonderful half-day get away. A local gem and definitely worth the trip!

## By Tami Dowgiewicz

On May 10, 2014 a group of Long Beach Heritage members attended an interesting and enjoyable tour of the Point Fermin Lighthouse just over the bridge in San Pedro. Built in 1874, the Point Fermin Lighthouse was the first navigational light into the San Pedro Bay. Paul J. Pelz, a draftsman for the U.S. Lighthouse Board, designed the Stick Style structure. This same design was used for six lighthouses built between 1873 and 1874 and three are still standing, East Brothers in San Francisco Bay, Hereford Light in New Jersey, and Point Fermin. The Stick Style was an early

# Dolly Varden Hotel Sign Restored



PHOTO BY MARK PERRY

employed in the rapidly growing city. What made it special was that, unlike other hotels that only had wash basins in the rooms with a common bath down the hall, the Dolly Varden had a "bath in every room," just as the sign announced.

The sign's design, materials and use of neon are typical of the period, but its unique feature is that it has a commercial message in addition to the name of the hotel. It has two sides, one facing north and one facing south so as to attract the attention of travelers from both directions. The sign was designated a City of Long Beach historical landmark in 1995.

Larry Black and his partner Charles Knowlton purchased the Dolly Varden Hotel in 2007 and have converted the interior into a beautifully modern boutique hotel while

keeping the original exterior aspect of its 1929 architecture. With the aid of a grant from the Long Beach Navy Memorial Heritage Association, Larry and Charles engaged the services of Artistic Sign Group to repair the signage. This was no easy task. It had to be removed from the top of the 3 story building and transported to a warehouse for the actual restoration work. During this process the company discovered that the original color of the sign was black with white lettering and with red and blue neon lights. Through careful repair and custom crafting of replacement parts for some pieces, the sign was completely restored to its original look and re-installed atop the hotel with the neon lights once again welcoming Long Beach visitors to the "Dolly Varden Hotel — Bath In Every Room."

## By Cheryl Perry

The iconic Dolly Varden sign that sits atop the hotel at 335 Pacific Avenue recently underwent a magnificent restoration. When the Dolly Varden Hotel was built in 1929, it was similar to other hotels in downtown Long Beach at the time that catered to the many visitors coming to this beach resort town and to those single working men and women

## Calendar

LBH Executive Committee	June 23
Santa Anita Concert	July 12
Annual Meeting — Japanese Garden	July 20
LBH New Board	July 28
LBH Executive Committee	August 25
LBH Board	Sept 22

### Walking tours

East Village at 10:00 a.m.	July 12 (sold out)
	August 9
	Sept 13
Downtown at 9:00 a.m.	July 19
	August 16
	Sept 20

## 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
- Heritage Household \$ 75
- Heritage Preservationist \$100
- Heritage Contributor \$250
- Heritage Patron \$500
- Heritage Associate \$750
- Heritage Sustainer \$1,000
- Heritage Benefactor \$2,000
- New member \_\_\_\_\_

Make your check payable to:

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