Wisteria Cottage Re-Opens After Restoration
Society Celebrates 50th Anniversary
Climate Change: Midcentury Modern La Jolla Debuts in New Galleries
Executive Director’s Message

As we go to press with this issue of Timekeeper, the Society is poised at a watershed moment in its history. For much of the organization’s fifty-year existence, a nomad, wandering the streets of Girard, Prospect, and Eads in search of a permanent home. And now, thanks to many generous capital donors, we have one, just in time to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Society! The first week of May we re-open Wisteria Cottage with inaugural celebrations for capital campaign contributors, members of the Society, constituency groups, and the general public. We look forward to welcoming our members, supporters, and the community back to campus!

We are extremely grateful to Drew and Tim Nelson at Willis Allen Real Estate and to Ryan Hill at Hill Construction Company for their generous sponsorship of our 50th Anniversary inaugural celebrations and underwriting for two 2014 exhibitions. Thanks also to Peyton Cabano at Willis Allen Real Estate for her gracious assistance. A very special thanks to our 50th Anniversary Committee for their work organizing our year-long celebrations: Connie Branscomb, chair, Ruth Covell, Ann Craig, Diane Dawson, Meg Davis, Seonaid McArthur, Pat Miller, Dori Robbins, Melesse Traylor, Nell Walz, Penelope West, and Ann Zahner.

The approach to the Wisteria rehabilitation was to historically preserve the exterior to the period circa 1910, when Virginia Scripps owned it and Irving Gill remodeled it, and to adaptively reuse the interior for exhibition gallery space. The exterior renovation follows the best practices of historic preservation set forth by the standards of the Secretary of the Interior, and the interior follows best practices set forth by the standards of the American Alliance of Museums (formally the American Association of Museums). The exterior of Balmer Annex has been historically preserved to the period of the late 1940s, when it was built for the school that operated on the property at that time. Our sincerest congratulations and thanks to architects Ione Stielger and Siavash Khajezadeh, to the great team of professionals at Hill Construction Company, to all the contracted craftsmen and tradesmen, and to the Society’s Facilities Committee. The latter is chaired by Jim Alcorn and includes members Laura DuCharme-Conboy, John Peek, Angeles Leira, and Bob Taylor.

We are very proud to present Climate Change: Midcentury Modern La Jolla as our inaugural exhibition in the Wisteria galleries. Curated by Dave Hampton, the exhibition and accompanying catalog explore the cultural changes that emerged in 1950s and 1960s La Jolla with the introduction of modernism in art, architecture, and design. You can learn more about the exhibition from Dave’s article in this issue.

Our major community events for 2014 are upon us! The 10th annual La Jolla Concours D’Elegance and Motor Car Classic, led by Mike Dorvillier, is scheduled for the weekend of April 11-13. The 16th annual Secret Garden Tour, chaired by Sharilyn Gallison, is on the calendar for May 17th. Both of these events are supported by generous volunteers working to make them memorable and fun-filled occasions, and to whom we extend our heartfelt gratitude. Please plan to join us for these extraordinary community celebrations!

Finally, I would like to recognize and thank several members of our Board of Directors who have completed their terms of service: Leslie Davis, Jennifer Harter, and Kari Searles. We also welcome two new Directors to our Board: Elizabeth Thiele Barkett and Carol McCabe. We are extremely grateful to all our Board members, former and current, for their dedication and service on the Society’s behalf!

This year of 2014 is filled with great exhibitions, programs, and events. We look forward to welcoming the community back to campus in May, and to seeing all of you at the many activities scheduled throughout the year. We are extremely grateful to all our members and contributors for your ongoing support! Thank you!

Heath Fox
Executive Director

New Board Members

Elizabeth Thiele Barkett is the principal and owner of Ross Thiele & Son Ltd. She is a third generation family member in the business started by her grandfather Ross Thiele, in 1932. She has been an interior designer with the company for almost 30 years. She and her husband, John Thiele, worked together in the business until shortly before his passing in 2012. Elizabeth was born and raised in La Jolla and attended La Jolla Elementary, Muirlands Junior High and La Jolla High School. Upon graduation she attended Arizona State University, with one year studying abroad in San Miguel d’Allende, Mexico. She is also a graduate of Design Institute of San Diego and is a member of ASID. Elizabeth has one child and four step children. She and her husband Ronald, who is a retired San Diego County Administrator, live in Bird Rock.
The theme for this year’s April 11-13 Concours d’Elegance will be “Celebrating European Race History,” a throwback to the grand days of automobile racing on the Continent in the early 1900s. The first international race series in history was the idea of an American, James Gordon Bennett Jr., the eccentric millionaire owner of the New York Herald newspaper, who offered a trophy to the Automobile Club de France for the first motor race in 1900 from Paris to Lyon. It was won by a Frenchman named Fernand Charron, driving a Panhard-Levassor.

In 1906, the Targo Florio road racing event was founded by Italian race driver Vincenzi Florio and held around a 72-kilometer course in the mountains of the Circuito Piccolo delle Madonie. An ambitious Peking to Paris race was undertaken in 1907 spanning two continents and 15,000 kilometers. After months of arduous pushing and pulling (the route crossed the Gobi Desert) an Italian car sputtered into Paris as the winner 15,000 kilometers. After months of arduous pushing and pulling (the route crossed the Gobi Desert) an Italian car sputtered into Paris as the winner after months of arduous pushing and pulling (the route crossed the Gobi Desert) an Italian car sputtered into Paris as the winner driven by Prince Scipione Borghese.

The Concours d’Elegance in La Jolla will celebrate these early European race trials with displays featuring the marques of Bentley and Ferrari. Numerous events are being featured over the April 11-13 weekend, culminating with the events in May officially celebrating the La Jolla Historical Society’s 50th anniversary.

Another new series of features begins with “The Last Picture Show” – a pictorial article spotlighting images from the archival collection of more than 20,000 photographs that have seldom, if ever, been reproduced. It will appear each issue on the last page of the newsletter. The first subject is an Italian American named Domenico Cencio who made his living in the early 1900s as a La Jolla beekeeper. He is photographed proudly displaying his hives and boxes on Ravina Street. Today, when honey comes in jars and seems practically divorced from anything to do with bees, we can only imagine the joy he felt delivering his honeycombs as delicious bounty for everyone’s sweet tooth. Let’s hope Domenico averted any bee stings!

IN MEMORIAM: Charles Snell
Born in La Jolla in 1928, Charles Snell grew up in the Wind ‘an’ Sea beach area where his grandfather operated the Wind ‘an’ Sea Hotel. He died a day shy of his 85th birthday last year in Trinidad, CA., where he and his wife, Barbara, lived since the late 1960s and operated a small family business called Sea Around Us. Snell graduated from La Jolla High School in 1947, developing a life-long fascination with the Pacific Ocean.

IN MEMORIAM: Martha Longenecker
An internationally known ceramicist, founder of the Mingei Museum and a long-time La Jolla resident, Martha Longenecker died suddenly late last year. Longenecker taught ceramics at San Diego State University for many years. She founded Mingei International in 1974 as a foundation to encourage contemporary craft. It opened first in University Towne Centre and later moved as a museum to Balboa Park. Longenecker had lived in La Jolla since 1961 and counted many artists among her best friends, including the late Nikki de Sainte Phalle.
Modernists in La Jolla faced an uphill battle. Despite remarkable advances in technology and a prospering postwar economy, social, racial and aesthetic attitudes were notoriously repressive in the 1950s and much of the 1960s. On the aesthetic front, qualities associated with midcentury modernism—like a flat roof on a residence, or a painting without representational subject matter—were likely to be met with suspicion or hostility, even denounced as subversive and anti-American. But this could be said of many places across the country.

What was unique to La Jolla was a small minority group who rejected what was perceived as conventional or traditional in favor of contemporary thinking in the arts and architecture. From the late 1940s through the 1960s a culture of modernism in La Jolla took shape around a community of architects, artists, museum professionals, gallerists, design retailers, scientists and others whose aesthetic stance affected the look and life of the town.

The convictions that helped to define La Jolla modernists and strengthen their resolve, clashed with more conservative practices and entrenched traditions. Long-time arts and architecture writer James Britton frequently and colorfully characterized La Jolla as a battleground—more specifically a beachhead—where the advancing forces of midcentury modern architecture, art and design, inexorably gained traction.

Selling modern art and design in such a climate was a dicey proposition, but some of La Jolla’s most visible modernist standard-bearers were retail spaces, commercial galleries, and the Art Center in La Jolla. The Art Center, now the Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego, was easily the most important symbol (if not the backbone) of La Jolla’s modern art and architecture scene in the 1950s and 1960s.

The La Jolla Historical Society’s exhibition, Climate Change: Midcentury Modern La Jolla, opening May 3, centers upon objects that are known to have been exhibited or otherwise displayed in La Jolla showrooms or galleries, along with ephemeral evidence of these circumstances: Printed exhibition labels, catalogs, announcements and advertisements. Such printed materials deserve attention as works of period graphic design, while they also document the exhibition life of an object and record a business’ activities. Certain objects that appear in photographs of La Jolla modern interiors or in period advertisements were singled out for their ability to illuminate relevant personal connections and histories. In cases where a specific, unique work was not available, or when an object was produced in quantity, a similar or representative example has been included.

Learning about key venues where people encountered the work of local modern designers and artists is just one way to introduce the changing climate of modernism in La Jolla, but it is an illuminating approach. Artworks and design objects in the exhibition were made primarily by San Diego residents, many of whom lived in La Jolla for some length of time. Furniture, craft and design items by Harry Bertoia, Ellamarie Richter Interiors and Dean Marshall Interiors. Painters and sculptors such as Russell Forester, Ethel Greene, Richard Allen Morris, John Baldessari, Guy Williams, Karen Kozlow, Fred Holle and Sheldon Kirby also will be represented in the exhibition; all of whom were represented back in the early 1960s by one or more of La Jolla’s most dedicated contemporary art galleries – the i Gallery, the Sander Gallery and the Jefferson Gallery. Lynn Fayman, Fred Hocks, Sarah Roberts, Wenetta Childs and other artists, whose work was sold at the Art Center as part of its Art Rental Service, will also be featured.
This primary area of attention – La Jolla's landscape of modern commerce – is augmented by several case-studies of individuals and couples who embody vital aspects of La Jolla's overall culture of modernism. Period photographs of interior and exterior spaces that help create a sense of time and place are also included.

For a long time, the period of the late 1940s to late 1960s has been consigned to a kind of historical limbo – part of the recent past that remains too close to living experience to seem particularly important to many of those who lived through it. A good deal of the period, while distant enough to be forgotten, was not quite old enough to be considered historic (until recently). This situation has resulted in records of the period being lost and vital memories left undocumented, not to mention the loss of significant objects, artworks and buildings.

It is hoped that this limited study of some of La Jolla's most distinctive modern businesses and galleries, and their relationships with the Art Center, will serve as a portal into the larger culture of modernism in La Jolla and help make a case for its continued exploration.

Maurice Martine, Side Chair (produced by Martine Designs), c. 1948, maple, oak, aluminum, 29" high x 22" x 21". Collection of Steve Aldana. Gilbert Watrous, Floor Lamp (produced by Heifetz), 1951, steel, brass, enameled shade, magnet, 45" high x 40" x 14". Collection of Todd Pitman and Carmen Pauli. Photo by Chip Morton. Both of these examples of classic American postwar design were carried by Armin Richter Interiors on Girard Avenue and were used in the homes of Russell and Eleanor Forester.


Wenetta Childs, The Story Teller, 1964, welded brass, enamel, 11.5" high x 11" x 6". Private Collection. Photo by Chip Morton. Childs, a Solana Beach artist, studied enameling at the Art Center in La Jolla and this example of her work could be purchased or rented through the Art Center’s Art Rental Service.

Maurice Martine, Side Chair (produced by Martine Designs), c. 1948, maple, oak, aluminum, 29" high x 22" x 21". Collection of Steve Aldana. Gilbert Watrous, Floor Lamp (produced by Heifetz), 1951, steel, brass, enameled shade, magnet, 45" high x 40" x 14". Collection of Todd Pitman and Carmen Pauli. Photo by Chip Morton. Both of these examples of classic American postwar design were carried by Armin Richter Interiors on Girard Avenue and were used in the homes of Russell and Eleanor Forester.

Climate Change exhibition curator Dave Hampton is a San Diego native and grew up in Bird Rock. He has curated exhibitions for Mingei International Museum and The Oceanside Museum of Art, and writes about San Diego's midcentury art community for the KPBS Culture Lust Blog. In 2012 he received the Ruocco Award for innovation in the arts and architecture by the group Citizens Coordinate For Century 3.

Major funding for this exhibition provided by Willis Allen Real Estate, Hill Construction Company, Dave and Sandy Coggan Erickson with additional support from: James and Barbara Alcorn, John and Diane Kane and modernsandiego.com.
The LaCrosse Cottage is one of La Jolla’s few existing resources of Victorian Stick architecture still remaining in the immediate village at 1261 Cave St. It also is known for its association with La Jolla’s first kindergarten run by Grace Kinne, a La Jolla transplant from Iowa skilled in music who opened her school in 1913 in an adjacent cottage and for many years was close friends of LaCrosse residents, Ida and Elizabeth Specht.

The LaCrosse story is not without a few familial entanglements. The Specht sisters were the adopted daughters of Henry Hier who named the cottage after LaCrosse, Wisconsin, from where he had immigrated to La Jolla in 1904. Hier and his adopted daughters lived in the house for many years, often assisting Kinne with the running of the kindergarten next door. They became lifelong friends, all well-known in the community. In the early 1900s Hier was one of the few persons who retained a rain gauge in the village, inviting his neighbors to observe the virtually non-existing rainfall. Kinne entertained the community with theatrical plays at her school and produced operettas at the La Jolla Woman’s Club. The kindergarten grew to embrace five grades and once had more than 50 students.

The Hier stepdaughters continued to live in LaCrosse after their father’s death in 1970. In the early 1940s, however, they also purchased a summer house in Del Dios which Kinne enjoyed visiting before her death in 1943.

Today, the one-and-a-half story LaCrosse cottage – noted for its distinct gable roof and dormers – is retained as rental property. For many years owners have planned its removal to an alternative site, but the present time finds it still one of the very few remaining cottages on an original plot in the village.


day, June 14.

As in the past, there will be five distinctive appetizer homes, each of which will provide wine, sparkling water, and a variety of delicious hors d’oeuvres for a total of 24 people from 5:30 – 7 p.m. At the appointed hour, everyone (including the appetizer hosts and hostesses) will leave their designated appetizer home and depart for their randomly-assigned main course home. There they will meet a new set of guests and be served a main course with wine by one of the ten main course hostesses – who will have arrived back home from their appetizer course about 12 minutes before their 10 guests knock at the door.

Following the main course – and no doubt lively conversations – all will depart at approximately 9 p.m. for Wisteria Cottage where they will be offered coffee and a spectacular array of tasty desserts prepared by Girard Gourmet.

The homes for Feasting on History have been chosen for their distinctive architecture – some of which are historic – and their gracious hosts. For the appetizer course you might find yourself in a “Tudor style home built in 1925 by Robert Stuart Stewart with beautiful gardens” or a “charming English country style home designed in 1924 which has had only three owners.” For one of the ten main course homes, you may be in the “former Designer Showcase home designed by Tom Shepherd, beautifully appointed with antiques” or “the host and hostess of this early 1920s Spanish home – remodeled by Jim Alcorn – whose owners studied at the Culinary Institute of America.”

Approximately a week before the event, all participants will receive by mail the names and addresses of their randomly-assigned appetizer and main course hosts and hostesses, together with a map of La Jolla. The map will indicate the location of all the 15 beautiful homes – some of which have historical roots.

Feasting on History is limited to 120 participants – and judging from past experience, it is likely to sell out quickly. The cost for this progressive dinner feast – a benefit for the Society – is $225 per person. Invitations will be mailed in early May. Reservations will also be available on-line on the Society’s website.

Questions? Please call Chair Connie Branscomb at 858-454-6871.
Coast Walk: A Cultural Landscape Legacy
by Carol Olten

When Katherine Lee Bates wrote the lyrics for “America the Beautiful” in 1893 she could well have tossed in kudos for La Jolla’s own Coast Walk. With its high dramatic sea cliffs and views of mysterious ocean caves and marine life below, it ranks right up there with the nation’s natural splendors such as “purple mountain majesties” and the ubiquitous “fruited plain” – whatever that may be.

The impressionable scenic landscape along Coast Walk has been captured over the years by some of the leading California plein air painters such as Alfred Mitchell setting up their easels along the cliffs with dedication as certain as that of Albert Bierstadt trekking off into the Rockies in the late 19th century to record the wondrous interplay of rhapsodic natural settings with light.

One of the attractions of Coast Walk – the most dramatic of which stretches along the ocean from the foot of Cave Street to join Torrey Pines Road at the opposite end – is that it offers diverse pleasures to be enjoyed in different seasons. In spring, the hillsides are covered with splotches of pinkish lavender sea fig and bright yellow-orange nasturtiums. The summer offers golden afternoons to view garibaldi floating along on the ocean floor. The fall reveals tiny gray ground squirrels scurrying into nests for the aftermath of winter storms. And, finally, in the months of December and January there are often bright blue skies and magnificent crashes of surf against the cliffs.

Now, you are going to say that all of this is splendid, but thanks to certain indelicate deposits by an overpopulation in recent times of comorants and sea lions, Coast Walk stinks. So? If you want another Shamu show, go south. Disneyland beckons conveniently north. Coast Walk remains a show of nature – beautiful, raw and brutal. Appreciate.

The bluff-top dirt pathway about a hundred feet above the shoreline was given historic designation by the City of San Diego in 1990. It is believed to have first been used as a hunting trail by Native Americans in pre-historic times with archaeological findings having been discovered along the site. In La Jolla’s pioneer days of the 1880s and 1890s, Coast Walk was considered a tourist attraction by real estate and railroad companies. Its high alignment above the shoreline lead to the earlier name of Angel’s Walk, also, perhaps, a counter to the area known as “Devil’s Slide” gorge which offered a muddy descent from the top of Park Row in the La Jolla Park Subdivision of 1887 to the beach.

In 1899, the railroad built a steep wooden stairway from the top of Devil’s Slide to the bottom to provide a more civil access to the caves and abalone beds below. (Today the gorge is spanned by a footbridge providing access to either side of the pathway.) Other exploitive practices along Coast Walk were undertaken in the early days to attract tourists and sell La Jolla land and real estate: Horace Poole was hired to make breathtaking dives from the cliffs on the Fourth of July; professor Gustav Schulz tunneled under his La Jolla Cave Store to expose what he named the Sunny Jim Cave to be viewed for tuppence after descending 102 slippery steps; and other entrepreneurs offered buckets with ropes to anyone adventurous enough to be dangled over the cliffs to look inside the mysterious seven caves.

Legends grew over time about La Jolla’s “Seven Caves,” the most remarkable being that of the “White Lady” whose seeming silhouette of a bride suggested the story of a young woman trapped inside by the sea before her wedding. Early in the 1900s, the popular American storyteller L. Frank Baum used one of the caves as a setting to begin a story called “Sea Fairies” in which a wizened old sea captain and his child companion row into a murky black darkness to be met by mermaids who take them on an underwater adventure.

Today, one of the visual enjoyments along Coast Walk, too, are the multi-colored kayaks which row along the coast and can be viewed from on-high as guides inform viewers of Coast Walk’s history. They tell tall tales of the area being used to smuggle in coolies for labor to build the Hotel del Coronado and opium dealers setting ashore their cache. Such tales seem to become more elaborate with each telling. Best stick to Baum: He’s a far better storyteller and, admittedly, his sea fairies fiction!
To celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the La Jolla Historical Society, the completion of the restoration of Wisteria Cottage, and the inaugural exhibition Climate Change: Midcentury Modern La Jolla, the Society Board is inviting LJHS members, and those involved in several organizations which are interested in, and supportive of the Society, to a series of events during the first week of May.

Connie Branscomb is the general chairman.

May 1 (Thursday)
Golden Anniversary Dinner
Place: Wisteria Cottage
Time: 6:30 p.m. – 9 p.m.
Invited guests: Contributors of over $25,000 to the Capital Campaign.
These guests will receive a written invitation.
Event organized by Ann Zahner

May 3 (Saturday)
Luncheon on the Lawn
Place: Under a canopy on the front lawn of Wisteria Cottage
Time: 11:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.
Invited guests: Contributors of $10,000 - $25,000 to the Capital Campaign, Board Members, Past Presidents, Capital Campaign chairs Ann Zahner and Melesse Traylor, and several others who have been instrumental to the success of the restoration. These guests will receive a written invitation.
Event organized by Connie Branscomb and Melesse Traylor

May 3 (Saturday)
Members Reception
Place: Wisteria Cottage and the Lawns
Time: 5:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.
Invited guests: All members of the Society. They will receive an on-line invitation.
Event organized by Ann Craig and Dori Robbins

May 4 (Sunday)
Special Reception for the La Jolla Village Merchants Association, the La Jolla Real Estate Brokers Association, La Jolla hotel concierges, special event professionals and community organization representatives.
Place: Wisteria Cottage and the Lawns
Time: 5:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.
Guests will be invited by on-line invitations.
Event organized by Penelope West and Meg Davis

May 5 (Monday)
Special Reception for La Jolla educators and librarians and San Diego arts and culture professionals
Place: Wisteria Cottage and the Lawns
Time: 3:30 p.m. – 6:30 p.m.
Guests will be invited by on-line invitations.
Event organized by Seonaid McArthur and Pat Miller

May 4 (Sunday) - May 11 (Sunday)
Public Open House
Place: Wisteria Cottage
Time: 12 noon – 4:00 p.m.

Major funding for these celebrations provided by Willis Allen Real Estate and Hill Construction Company with additional support from the City of San Diego.
Secret Garden Tour on May 17th Illustrates Ever-Changing Landscapes  
by Linda Marrone

Carved into the plaza floor at the entrance to the Getty Museum’s main garden are the words, "Ever-changing, never twice the same." This quote is from artist, Robert Irwin, who created the garden as an ever-changing, living work of art; his description not only applies to the Getty garden, but to all gardens.

For a variety of different reasons, the gardens on this year’s May 17 Secret Garden Tour have all evolved over the years; two of the gardens were featured on the 2002 & 2004 Secret Garden Tour. Revisiting the gardens will demonstrate how gardens are an ever-changing work in progress and are always evolving.

Changes to a garden’s appearance can be as natural as how the light changes its appearance throughout the day or its appearance during each season. Our lifestyles, interests, the environment, weather, age and health can all create change as well.

As our lives change, gardens will undergo changes to accommodate areas for children, grandchildren and pets. Children’s play areas will sometimes turn into adult entertaining areas when children grow and leave the nest. I fondly remember a friend creating a beautiful garden in memory of a beloved canine in its former dog run. The passage of time will change plants and trees as they age, grow and sometimes perish; accommodations need to be made for both growth and decline. Age also affects gardeners themselves and many of us make changes to our gardens to make them easier to maintain as time passes.

Our environment affects changes to the way we garden. With less rainfall these days, many gardeners are incorporating succulents, drought tolerant and native plants into their gardenscape to cut down on water usage. Being more aware of our environment and how protecting it can benefit our health has made organic gardening very popular which is a very welcome change from the days when toxic pesticides seemed to be the only solution.

Today, we can find a multitude of organic remedies and beneficial insects in nurseries that help to wage war against pests. Overtime, the change from using chemicals to organic products allows the true ecosystem in the garden to take over and the change benefits both your and your garden’s health.

The desire to know where our food comes from, not to mention the thrill of harvesting and eating something you have grown is helping to restyle gardens into edible landscapes. More and more people are planting vegetable gardens, or incorporating vegetables, fruit trees, edible-fruit bearing vines and herbs into their landscape. Adding outdoor cooking, dining and entertaining areas to a gardens is always a welcome change. The gardens on this year’s tour again will offer interesting ideas for outdoor entertaining that have been styled by local designers.

The tour will be held from 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. May 17 starting with program and wrist band pick up at Wisteria Cottage, 780 Prospect St. A garden boutique will be open on the Wisteria grounds from 9 a.m. - 5:30 p.m.

Marrone is one of the founders of the Secret Garden Tour, now in its 16th year.

What’s In A Name? Draper Avenue

Draper Avenue has an illustrious pedigree: It was named for John William Draper, the first person to make a detailed photograph of the moon (1840), the first president of the American Chemical Society (1876-77) and author of one of most well-known books delineating the conflicts between science and religion in post-Darwinian thought circles (published in 1874).

Like many 19th century American scientists, philosophers and experimenters into the unknown, Draper was born and educated in England and emigrated with his family as a young man to Virginia in 1832. Five years later he took an appointment at New York University and became a professor of chemistry and botany, later president of the school and, then, a founder of the New York University Medical School.

Throughout his lifetime, Draper maintained interest a wide variety of subjects – photochemistry, astronomy, origin of species, medicine, radiant energy and light rays. His interest in photography led to making the first astrophotographs of the moon and making daguerreotypes showing new features of the lunar landscape in the visible spectrum. He carried his photographic studies to images of people as well, picturing his sister and a studio assistant in what became the first clear photographs of female faces (1839-40).

Draper died in 1882 at his home on Hastings-on-Hudson, N.Y. He was buried in Brooklyn. His home in Hastings, a modest two-story dwelling, was designated a National Historic Landmark in 1975. In 2001, Draper and the founding of the American Chemical Society were designated a National Historic Chemical Landmark at New York University.

What's in a Name? explores the famous individuals La Jolla's streets and avenues were named after during a sweeping name change of May, 1900.
When the firm that became Willis Allen Real Estate began business in 1914 La Jolla had hundreds of lots for sale and few houses built upon them. Today, thousands of houses occupy those lots and undeveloped land for sale is a total rarity. House prices have shifted from a couple hundred dollars to millions. The houses have morphed from two bedroom beach cottages to modest California ranchers and, now, mansions ranging up and over 10,000 sq. ft.

Clearly, much has changed in the La Jolla landscape and demographics as well as the real estate business. But some things remain the same. “We continue to market real estate – the houses on the market – not ourselves,” says Andy Nelson, president of the company and its owner since 1996, noting that the business is the lone remaining independent, born and bred in San Diego. The Willis Allen marketing philosophy also remains the same – “everything first class, not mediocre” – along with its commitment to the community – “if you get something, remember to give something back.” (Beneficiaries of company philanthropies have included the San Diego Humane Society, the San Diego Zoo, the Allen Field sports complex, a variety of Scripps Health entities and, most recently, the La Jolla Historical Society.)

Willis M. Allen, a renegade entrepreneur with a legendary love of polo ponies and cars with engines that could, brought those ideas to the company with his first involvement with partners. It had originally begun as an insurance and real estate firm founded by a San Diegan named Frederick Brown, eventually becoming a commercial entity known as the Percy Goodwin Company. Allen who had arrived in San Diego as a young man in 1932 with a couple buddies driving a 1930 Chrysler Imperial A Sport Phantom cross-country on an expedition with shades of Jack Kerouac’s adventures, bought the Goodwin company in 1940. He had already established himself as a savvy dealer in land, horses and cars. Renamed the Willis M. Allen Company, it was advertised as “a 100% La Jolla owned and operated institution. . La Jolla’s largest real estate and insurance agency” in a large building (still standing) at the corner of Prospect Street and Girard Avenue. Allen’s reputation as a sharp businessman grew not only in La Jolla, but throughout San Diego as well – in the late 1940s he sold the enormous parcel of land now called Clairemont and University City in a single transaction. Meanwhile, the legend of Willis Allen, himself, grew bigger than life. Before his death in 2004, Allen recorded some highlights of various escapades around race tracks, polo grounds and rodeos including a visit with a rodeo clown named Charlie Brown in Phoenix: “Charlie had a Brahma bull . . .and the bull, about 1,600 pounds of him, was tied up by a ten penny nail and a little piece of clothesline. Anyway, he performed (tricks) for us and then Charlie took me around the place and he showed me a little stall he had for Rosie Brown, his mule. . And he took me into the house, threw open a door and showed me his new wife, new blonde, because the other one shot him. And then, finally, he said, ‘you know, Bill, things have been good to you and good to me.’ And he threw open another door and said, "Look, I even got me one of those goddamn Cadillacs.”

Allen died at age 91, survived by three children. Nelson began his career with the company in 1977. He recalls his interview with Allen: “I was nervous and I came to see him wearing a suit. I thought it was OK because it looked like he was wearing a suit, too. But then he stood up and I saw he had on levis and then I knew this was going to be OK. What I came to like best about him was if he made a promise, he stuck by it. A handshake was always a bond.”

Three years after he was hired in residential sales, Nelson became president of the firm. Anchored in its La Jolla location at the corner of Wall Street and Ivanhoe Avenue, the business now has five additional offices and employs about 200 agents.

“Our goal in this 100th year is to really make a point of being involved with the community,” says Nelson, “educating our agents to really know neighborhoods and give the best advice to anyone buying a house. Giving back to La Jolla is what we’re about.”

Carol Olten is the Society’s Historian
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Accessions

1. Linda Mann-Urmacher – $1000 toward the digitization of the Loundsbery home movie collection.
2. Steve Soule – Football commemorating La Jolla High School’s 1935 High School Metro Championship.
3. Arty Salcedo – La Jolla Elementary School class photo from the 1920’s.
5. Ellen Browning Scripps Foundation – A grant to purchase 10 books on modernism in design and architecture in mid-century California.
6. Barbara Goldberg – Two aerial view photographs of 6089 La Jolla Scenic Drive, circa 1970, a photo album detailing the construction of 6089 La Jolla Scenic Drive, circa 1960’s.
8. Debbie Buscham – A floral pattern dinner plate used by food service at Scripps Hospital, circa 1950’s, a copy of the journal Country Life, April 1959.
9. La Jolla Stage Company – Scrapbooks, playbills and photos from productions of the La Jolla Stage Company, 1980-2000, implemented by Leon and Mary Lou Campbell
11. Leta Teasdale – Copies of two letters from William Teasdale to his family written while he was stationed at Camp Callan in 1943.
12. Mary van Balgooy – Research material, including magazines, news articles and books, relating to the work of architect Cliff May, March 1936-1960.
13. Melinda Merryweather – Documents relating to public access of the Scripps garden at MCASD.
14. Byron King – Photos of “El Celeito” a La Jolla home once owned by his grandfather.
15. Robert Mosher – Copies of photos from albums detailing his architectural work in La Jolla.
17. Robert Collins – AAR map read highlighting the areas of San Diego developed by Carlos Tavares.

The La Jolla Historical Society has received a donation of four computers preinstalled with Windows 7 and one monitor from The Lancer Group, 888 Prospect St. The computers are a welcome upgrade to our office for use by volunteers, docents and interns. The donation also will help replace a laptop that was stolen. Thank you in particular to The Lancer Group for their generosity.
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In October, 2011, G. Michael Dorvillier attended one of our planning meetings to see how he could help our small community car show. Now three years later his passion and drive has helped catapult the La Jolla Concours d’Elegance into one of the premier events in Southern California. Under his leadership the La Jolla Concours d’Elegance has expanded into a three-day celebration of classic motoring and last year was named one of the top three car events in the world by Octane Magazine.

As a passionate classic car restorer and collector, Dorvillier has made a five-year commitment to oversee the further expansion of the La Jolla Concours d’Elegance.

Dorvillier grew up in Puerto Rico and spent his early adulthood in New England. Opportunity then brought him to San Diego where he has since built a very successful career as a Principal and Financial Advisor with LPL Financial; and as the Founding Partner of Symbio Financial Partners.

But business interests aside, he has always had a passion for classic cars. He explains: “As a child I was always attracted to old cars and in high school I would buy what I could afford and fix them up. My first car was a Ford Pinto Station Wagon and you could see the ground through the floorboards! I have always had a respect for old cars but it was my brother Andy who truly inspired me to follow my passion for classic cars. My first ‘real’ car was a Triumph Spitfire and under his guidance I was able to fix it up. However, I knew that I would never be as good as my brother so in college I started to purchase exotic cars overseas, ship them here, have people fix them up and then sell them for a nice profit. And, most important of all, I got to drive some very cool cars!”

His favorite day of the year is, naturally, the big Sunday of the Concours when all the vintage and classic cars are showcased in all their splendor at La Jolla Cove (this year April 13). It’s the culmination, he says, “of 365 days of hard work; there is a tremendous satisfaction when you see everything come together.” His favorite show car of all time was the Round Door Rolls-Royce Phantom from the Petersen Automotive Museum. “It is special to me due to its grace, elegant shape and the incredible craftsmanship that went into its creation,” he notes.

Volunteer Focus: Michael Dorvillier

Call for Volunteers

Like to spread the word about La Jolla’s varied and endlessly interesting history? Like to do research? Like to organize material? Like to greet people?

The La Jolla Historical Society has needs for volunteers in all of these areas, particularly as Wisteria Cottage gets ready to re-open this spring with an ambitious new exhibit program. A dedicated group of docents kept our Wisteria program going before we closed for renovation and rehabilitation. Thanks to all of you! We look forward to your return as we gear up after a brand new facelift.

As our programs and exhibits expand, we invite you to join our docent group. It presents excellent opportunities to meet interesting people, participate in educational programs in the community and learn more about the tremendous legacy of La Jolla history – its art, architecture, culture and the many diverse achievements in the fields of science, education, medicine and technology. Join us in the amazing exploration of yesterday, today and the future!

For information contact: 858•459•5335 or volunteers@lajollahistory.org

Archivist’s Notes

by Michael Mishler

A dance held on the tennis courts was part of the Grand Opening Celebration of the La Jolla Recreation Center, July 3, 1915. Ellen Scripps provided the money and the property to build and run the Recreation Center.

As Wisteria goes through its rehabilitation we have been able to keep up our exhibit program thanks to two collaborative exhibits with our friends over at the Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego (MCASD).

Our first exhibition, Scripps On Prospect: Evolution of Villa & Cottage, was a look at the history of Virginia Scripps’ Wisteria Cottage and Ellen Scripps’ South Moulton Villa. On display more recently at MCASD’s Jacobs Gallery was Scripps On Prospect: Cultural Legacy an examination of the important contributions of the Scripps sisters to some of La Jolla’s most significant cultural institutions such as the Bishop’s School, the La Jolla Financial; and as the Founding Partner of Symbio Financial Partners.

On a personal note, I would like to thank Associate Curator Jill Dawsey, Curatorial Manager Jenna Jacobs, and Assistant Registrar Allison DeFrancesco of MCASD for the opportunity to work with them and the staff of MCASD on these exhibits. It has been fun and a great learning experience that will help the Society as we move forward with future exhibits.

Mishler is the Society’s Archivist/Curator
It was only a matter of time before the La Jolla Historical Society and Hill Construction Company worked together on a landmark community project. These two entities share in the love and respect for the history and preservation of the La Jolla community, which makes this relationship a kindred match. Ryan Hill, Vice President of Hill Construction, remarked, “The Hill family has been consistently active in this community since its arrival in La Jolla over one hundred years ago. It’s an honor for Hill Construction to be part of the team that renovates and restores Wisteria Cottage and the Balmer Annex. We have a unified interest in having the project reflect the period in which it was built and preserving its unique heritage.”

Hill Construction Company has partnered with Willis Allen Real Estate to sponsor the La Jolla Historical Society’s 50th Anniversary and the grand re-opening of Wisteria Cottage. The celebration includes two exhibitions scheduled for 2014: Climate Change: Midcentury Modern La Jolla and The Irving Gill Photographic Project. The two companies will split the major sponsorship costs, each contributing $12,500. “Our corporate sponsorship of the La Jolla Historical Society is another way for us to continue our involvement in the community,” says Ryan.

In 1909 Robert E. Hill, Ryan’s grandfather, moved to La Jolla with his parents. He set his roots here and raised his family. He was a realtor and businessman and contributed to the La Jolla Historical Society newsletter in its early years. You can see him reminiscing briefly on YouTube by searching for “The Village: La Jolla,” a special collection of historical La Jolla photographs. His wife Patricia Howell Hill was an early member of Las Patronas and active in the San Diego Humane Society. Their son, Peter, founded Hill Construction Company in 1975. Pete’s son, Ryan, joined the family business six years ago.

The Hill company has built hundreds of custom homes throughout Southern California, many in La Jolla, and focuses on historical preservation and special projects. For more information on the Hill family or Hill Construction Company, please visit www.hillconstructioncompany.com.
Legacies

We have a continuing interest in building our files as complete as possible including copies of old newsletters that can prove valuable sources of reference. Our current collection is fairly complete, but a few holes exist. If you have any past issues and wish to make a donation, the missing links are the Fall issues of 1988, 1999 and 2005; the Winter issues of 1990, 2000 and 2004; the Summer issue of 1998 and all four issues of 1989.

The Society is grateful for your support! If we can assist you in any way, please contact us at 858-459-5335.
Louise Balmer: La Jolla Pioneer in Childrens' Education

L ouise Balmer was described as “a dumpling of a woman, sweet, soft and barely five feet tall.” As headmistress of La Jolla’s Balmer School from the 1920s through 1957, she was also assessed as tirelessly “dynamic, busy and in control.”

Her educational methods were highly progressive for the time, following the theories of University of Chicago professor John Dewey. Dewey, who championed physical activity along with book learning, commented that ‘school should be life, not a preparation for life.”

How did Mrs. Balmer incorporate Dewey’s ideas into her school? One colleague noted: “I didn’t see her teaching much. The whole thing in progressive education was not instruction. It was to bring out a person’s qualities and abilities.” Balmer was also influenced by the Winnetka System, pioneered in Chicago, that emphasized individualized learning. “Learning by doing” became the school’s didactic methodology, where children were encouraged to experiment as they learned at their own pace. To assess student progress, casual conversations with parents and students replaced standardized testing. In the recollections of both students and staff, it is unclear whether there were formal report cards.

Louise Congdon Balmer was born in Evanston, Illinois, where her family relocated after the great Chicago fire of 1871. The daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Charles B. Congdon, she was one of five children. Her father was a member of Chicago’s Board of Trade and a trustee of Northwestern University where Louise spent her freshman year of college. After graduating from Bryn Mawr College in 1908 with a degree in French and Latin, she married Julius Balmer, an advertising salesman. Mr. Balmer died of cancer in 1919, leaving Louise, age 33, a young widow with four children.

Having visited California prior to the loss of her husband, Mrs. Balmer decided to settle in La Jolla, where the family had spent several happy summers. La Jolla was also home to her sister, Dorothy, who worked at The Little Shop, an upscale fashion boutique on Girard Avenue. Louise helped the shop prosper, eventually putting up stocks and bonds as collateral for business loans. Despite her business savvy, she decided to return to graduate school, earning a teaching credential from San Diego State University in 1924. That summer she began tutoring students whose parents were vacationing at the new Casa de Manana resort hotel. In 1926, she decided to open her own school with four students — two boys and two girls...

An extremely petite and feminine woman known affectionately as “Balmy,” she was fond of music and flowers. Besides being a pioneer in early childhood education, she was also considered a genius in the kitchen. She was a voracious reader and also skilled at knitting – while reading! Running a business, teaching multiple subjects to a growing number of students and raising a family consumed much of her time. Nonetheless, she was also highly involved in her adopted hometown of La Jolla. A devout lifelong Christian Scientist, she led services at the La Jolla Congregation on Herschel Avenue. In 1955, when she received a 30-year pin for service to the Junior Red Cross, it was noted that all the students at the Balmer School were Red Cross volunteers whose primary contribution was packing Christmas boxes for children in disadvantaged areas of the world.

Kane is an architectural historian and member of the La Jolla Historical Society’s preservation committee.

(Editors’ Note: This is one of several excerpts from studies done by Diane Kane on Wisteria Cottage and the Balmer School – now La Jolla Country Day – for a Historic Structures Report in connection with restoration of the building at 780 Prospect St.)
Youth Programs

Young Photographers Summer Camp

In collaboration with Outside the Lens
Back to the Streets: Street Photography 102
July 7th - July 11th
Incoming 6th - 8th graders
Half Day Sessions (9:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.)
Full Day Sessions (9:30 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.)
Aftercare available
Register: https://outsidethelens.org/programs/summer/

Join us this summer to enhance your cameras skills on a DSLR camera as you capture life in the public arena. You’ll be shooting like a pro with your newfound photojournalists skills that will help you capture the action of a bustling city. Then August 1st we’ll unveil your work at the Outside the Lens gallery space.

The Story Within Us
July 14th - July 18th
Incoming 6th - 8th Graders
Half Day Sessions (9:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.)
Full Day Sessions (9:30 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.)
Aftercare available
Register: https://outsidethelens.org/programs/summer/

Bring your camera and get ready to capture the best selfie ever. You’ll learn about studio lighting and natural lighting to photograph amazing portraits. Then interview and photograph locals in La Jolla to capture the true story. You’ll be feeling like a NY times photojournalist by the end of the week.

For more information visit the Education section of La Jolla Historical Society Website

Young Architects Summer Camp

Young Architects Camp 1
July 21-25, 9 a.m. – 3 p.m.
Entering 6th - 8th grade.

Young Architects Camp 2
July 28-August 1 9 a.m. – 3 p.m.
Entering 9th -12th grade

These week-long programs introduce Middle School (Week 1) and High School (Week 2) students to the principles of architecture and its role in the shaping of the community. The program, designed by architects and educators, combines walking tours with hands-on drawing, sketching, and computer-aided design (CAD) exercises, culminating with each individual designing and presenting a unique structure for a site centrally located in La Jolla. Participants will visit some of La Jolla’s more extraordinary homes, from historic preservation to cutting-edge design, followed by an inside look into the workings of a local architectural office. Classes are developed and led by noted local architects, including Laura DuCharme Conboy, Trip Bennett, and Pauly De Bartolo.

For more information visit the Education section of La Jolla Historical Society Website
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For more information, contact:
info@lajollahistory.org (858) 459-5335

“A good snapshot stops a moment from running away.”

~Eudora Welty

La Jolla Historical Society Image Collection

To order a reproduction from the Society's collection of over 10,000 images of historic La Jolla, call 858-459-5335 or visit www.lajollahistory.org
The Judkins/J.L. Wright House - Historic Site #432
by Linda Marrone

Located on an oceanfront bluff with mesmerizing views of the ocean, La Jolla’s dramatic coastline and the world-famous Cove, this International Modern Style home was designed by master architect John Lloyd Wright in 1946 and features walls of glass that frame the captivating views and invite you outdoors to enjoy the private .64 acre setting that boasts numerous outdoor living areas. The main 3 bedroom/3.5 bath home has been sensitively expanded and remodeled over the years, preserving the original design and its Mid-Century materials and features. A detached 1 BR/1BA guesthouse that connects to an artist’s studio was added at a later date.

The son of famed architect, Frank Lloyd Wright, John Lloyd Wright (1892-1972) developed his architectural principles and skills under the guidance of his father. The Judkins/J.L Wright House is an excellent example of the Wright School of Architecture that was developed by Frank Lloyd Wright in the first half of the twentieth century. Practiced by the senior Wright and both of his sons, the Wright School emphasized the use of horizontal lines, an adaption of the building to its setting and the blending of the interior and exterior spaces.

Expertly nestled into the hillside, the main living areas of the Judkins/J.L Wright House are oriented away from the properties entrance and towards the breathtaking oceanfront bluff setting and the outdoor living spaces. Another feature associated with Frank Lloyd Wright that the home boasts, is the use of cantilever construction that was used in his internationally famous design for the Pennsylvania home, Fallingwater.

Living in the shadow of his famous father was not always easy for John Lloyd Wright and at times their relationship was strained. John Lloyd moved to Del Mar, CA., in 1946 and practiced there until his death in 1972. Besides architecture, he invented the educational toy, Lincoln Logs and authored two books about his famous father.

This unique historic home is offered for lease, unfurnished at $8,500 per month.
For more info, go to: WWW.TheJudkinsJohnLloydWrightHouse.com
Thousands of old photographs have accumulated through the years in the La Jolla Historical Society archives. Many, such as the portraits of the Scripps half-sisters and iconic Irving Gill buildings, have been repeatedly reproduced over the years, thus developing an easy familiarity. This last page of The Timekeeper is devoted to those photographs in the collection that have remained largely outside the public eye.

In this picture, Domenico Cencio, an Italian American who listed his occupation in La Jolla in the 1920s as a beekeeper, was photographed with his hives and honeycomb boxes near Kline and Cuvier streets with the Bishop’s school tower in the background (upper corner, left). Information on the back of the photograph identifies him only as “a colorful character” and how or why he set himself up in a somewhat isolated beach community in the early 1900s as a beekeeper remains somewhat of a mystery. Dressed in a suit and bowler hat in the photo, he seems obviously proud of a rather serendipitous profession.
Additional funding generously provided by the City of San Diego Commission for Arts and Culture, Ellen Browning Scripps Foundation, Las Patronas, and San Diego County.