



Celebrating Peace & Goodwill at the Berkeley City Club

REGARDLESS of one's religious affiliation, the holiday season is about coming together and celebrating peace, hope, and love. The events of 2011—political violence, social upheaval, and an economy in disarray—make it difficult to reconcile the holiday spirit with what is going on in the world. In times like these, it is easy to slip into a state of nostalgia and long for years gone by, when the world was less corrupt, things were simpler, and life was good. The problem with memories is that we often have difficulty separating fantasy from reality. Let's take a look back and see how the founders viewed this time of year.

Every December since the Berkeley Women's City Club was founded, the women commemorated Woodrow Wilson's birthday. This seemingly insignificant event filled pages in scrapbooks. At first glance, it seems that surely Wilson's role in advocating for suffrage and child labor laws must have been the reason for celebration. But this was not the case. The women identified Wilson as the man who had ended WWI. To them, Wilson was the image of peace. One newspaper even proclaimed that Wilson was "the one who saw the need for a united world." When the women celebrated his birthday, they were not only honoring the man, they were also celebrating the idea of peace. The women understood the necessity for actively searching for **peace** in the world.

The Berkeley City Club stands as a testament to these



Julia Morgan-designed ceiling light fixture in BCC dining room.

women's unwavering hope. The San Francisco Examiner aptly dubbed the clubhouse as the place "where dreams will rise." Despite signs of a disintegrating economy, the women were resolute in their plans. Not even two months after the stock market's collapse, they had their groundbreaking ceremony. By banding together, they took the first steps in constructing their "little castle." It could be said that the Berkeley Women's City Club served as a symbol of **hope**, a place where a better tomorrow could begin.

When the clubhouse finally opened in November 1930, the pangs of the Depression were beginning. Unemployment was on the rise and the needs of the community were becoming more apparent. One of the first meetings hosted by the clubhouse was to address the growing crisis. At this meeting, an appeal was made for "every clubwoman in the county (to) give employment to at least one man or woman for the winter months, one month, one week, or even one day." The women signed pledge cards promising to provide employment. In that dark hour, they were not only offering support, but they were also pledging to be agents of **light and love** in their community.

It is easy to look at current events and feel overwhelmed and powerless, to accept that the "holiday spirit" has become a thing of the past. Yet the founders of the Berkeley City Club show us what this season is about: in depressing circumstances, it is up to us to seek out peace, to create hope, and to be love in action.

LHF has initiated an internship program this fall. Jennifer Barton, a senior at UC Berkeley studying history, has been reading our old scrapbooks and uncovered material for this story about the earliest members of the Berkeley Women's City Club and how they celebrated the holiday season over eighty years ago.

NEWS FROM THE CASTLE FALL 2011

News from the Castle is the official newsletter of the Landmark Heritage Foundation. The Foundation is a tax-exempt charitable organization dedicated to the preservation of the unique Julia Morgan-designed building that is home to the Berkeley City Club.

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The Julia Morgan Preservation Fund Committee of the LHF meets monthly to approve projects and disbursements.

The LHF Board meets bimonthly.

All persons are welcome at these meetings; to attend call
(510) 883-9710.

Free public tours are jointly sponsored by the LHF and the Berkeley City Club the fourth Sunday of every month except December. For public tour details or information on group tours, contact the Landmark Heritage Foundation.



LANDMARK HERITAGE FOUNDATION

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LHF Office is staffed
Tues., Wed. & Thurs. 10am–2pm

MYSTERIES OF THE CASTLE: WOOD PLUGS

TILE EXPERT Riley Doty happened upon a mystery while doing some grout work on the lowest section of the Grand Staircase. He tells the tale here:

“In cutting out the grout material I began to notice that every so often I encountered a wood insert. It turned out that these spots of wood occurred at approximately six-inch intervals. They existed only on the central five feet of the stairway, not on the far left or right sides. I began to realize that there had once been carpet on the five-foot wide central part of the stairway.

“My initial conclusion was that the wood inserts were part of the original construction. I was quite excited about that because it seemed to prove that Julia Morgan’s intention had been for carpet to run down the center of those stairs. The plugs likely existed for the purpose of tacking down carpet; if the wood plugs were original where would that directive have come from? Surely from the architect, I assumed.

“But then I thought otherwise. The plugs are about 2 3/4” long and tapered, indicating that they were made to be pounded into holes that were drilled into the mortar. Had the plugs been integrally installed in the mortar bed, I don’t think their shape would have been tapered.

“Only one somewhat flimsy bit of evidence still supports my original theory that the plugs were original to the construction: There was one plug near the intersection of joints between tiles and one plug near the center of each 12” tile. But some of the plugs were slightly off from the exact intersection of grout joints.

If they were drilled after construction, the natural course would have been to drill right at each intersection. The fact some were near the intersection makes me think that they might have been installed as part of the original mortar work, anticipating the position of the tiles but not quite being able to locate the plugs precisely where the tiles would end up being installed. That is very far from proof.”

We still do not know if the plugs are original to Julia Morgan’s design and the construction of the building, but one thing is certain: A 1931 photograph shows Persian rugs covering the first flight of stairs. Miss Morgan did indeed plan for rugs from the outset; perhaps she incorporated the plugs into her design as well. The rugs were probably removed when the current handrail was installed to accommodate persons with disabilities.



The Grand Staircase c.1931

Are there any questions about the Berkeley City Club building that you would like LHF to answer? Send them our way and we'll gladly try to unravel the mysteries of the castle.

POOL FILTER UPDATE

NOVEMBER 2011 – replacement of the pool filters begins! Thanks to many, many generous donors this much needed restoration is in process.

In February, the BCC pool filter committee chose a stainless steel tank replacement system and after a visit from the president of Natre Corporation, LHF ordered the manufacture of the filter tanks. In addition, Natre will provide a balance tank that will capture and re-circulate the gutter water that previously drained straight to the sewer line. This will produce water and energy savings.

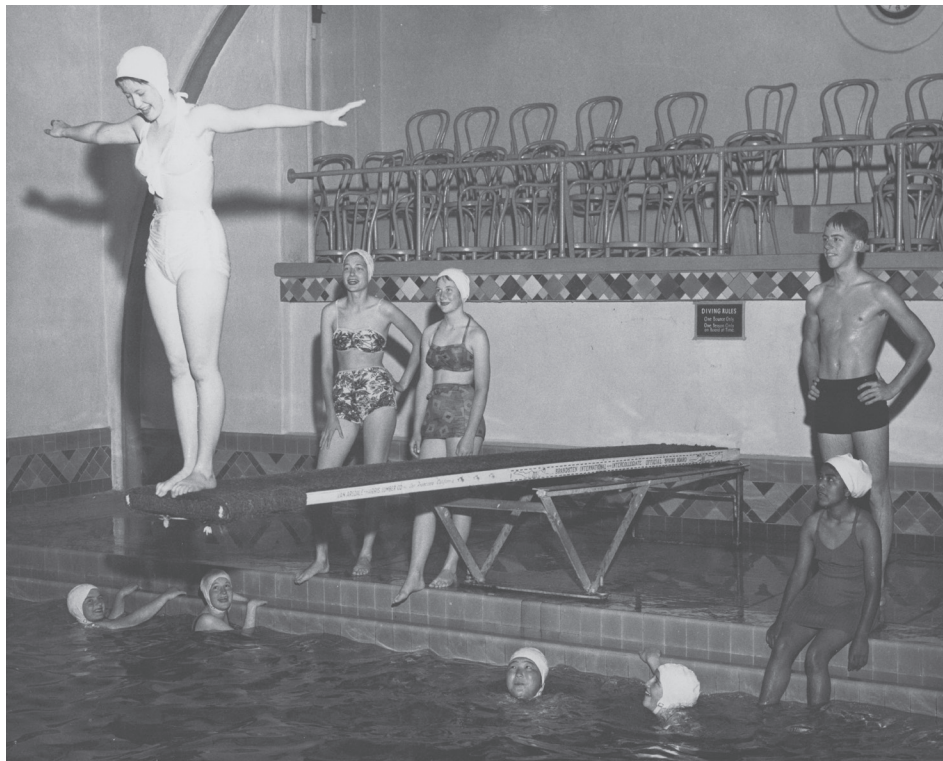
Fred Butler and the La Bella Pool Services team will assemble and install the new filtration system. Fortunately, the existing pool pump will remain. Butler will also secure all permits and approvals from the City of Berkeley. La Bella Pool Services is well known in Berkeley and Butler installed the anti-vacuum device required in the deep end of our pool a few years ago.

Every swimmer has seen the large tile “scar” in the shallow end of the pool. We have been able to include the replacement and repair of this area of the pool bottom. Other minor tile repairs will also be done during the shut-down. Riley Doty, Doty Tile (see tileheritage.org), will do the tile restoration. He is a fine craftsman whose work in the City Club includes elevator entrance work, front steps repair, dining room deck restoration, threshold restorations, staircase floor tile repair, and bathroom tile restoration.

The work schedule has included weeks of planning, followed by the demolition and removal of the three steel tanks that have served the pool since 1930. Shannon Fontan, Fontan Building Demolition, is an expert at removal of obsolete equipment. He oversaw the removal of the original large water tank that was located in the elevator machine room which hadn't been used in decades. Most people did not even know this difficult job took place! Fontan is very sensitive to noise and disturbances in the building so he will be using a special cutting device to disassemble the old tanks and no welding will be necessary.

“Day after day, the three Berkeley City Club swimming pool filter tanks continue to leak and rust.”

—from *News from the Castle*, March 2011



Thanks to your generous donations, replacement of the pool filters is underway, and the Plunge will be ready for all to enjoy in January 2012.

Next, the installation of the new system will begin with testing by one of Natre Corporation's specialists. The goal is to keep the pool closed as short a time as possible with its reopening set for January 16, 2012.

The total cost of this project is estimated at \$75,000. (This estimate is \$25,000 below

the original \$100,000 price tag.) The CCHE grant allowance of \$14,000 plus LHF's fundraising of the additional \$61,000 will hopefully pay all of the costs!! **Thank you for your ongoing support.**

For more details, please feel free to call Mary Breunig, CCHE project manager at (510) 549-0689.

Sarah Gill & The Berkeley City Club Gardens

Thanks to the generosity of Sarah Gill, the photography phase of our HALS project documenting the Gardens can proceed with gusto! Although we'll postpone the photographing until the full bloom of spring, we want to acknowledge our gratitude to Sarah now.

In addition to her membership in the Berkeley City Club and on the board and Docents roster of Landmark Heritage Foundation, Sarah has a profound connection to landscape architecture: She is the great-granddaughter of the renowned Frederick Law Olmsted! In a future issue we will explore Sarah's affiliation with the Berkeley City Club and Landmark Heritage Foundation, her accomplishments as an art historian, and her connection to America's most famous landscape architect.

We'll be planning a Garden Party to recognize Sarah and the work of the HALS volunteers as well as to help launch the statewide “Julia Morgan 2012” festival celebrating another great lady. **Thank you, Sarah.**



LANDMARK HERITAGE FOUNDATION

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☾ HAPPY HOLIDAYS ☾

Hanukkah • Winter Solstice • Christmas • Boxing Day • Kwanzaa • New Year's

Why Give?

Our CCHE grant, which funded the facade restoration and long-awaited installation of the second elevator, has been exhausted. We have dedicated funds to pay for the HALS photos (see related story) and dedicated funds to pay for new pool filters. But preserving our Julia Morgan gem is a never-ending project -- and never cheap. Please consider making a contribution to our unrestricted fund so that we can attend to these many projects, small and large. If you would like to know what projects need attention and/or dedicate funds to a specific restoration project, feel free to contact the LHF office.

PLEASE VISIT

landmarkheritagefoundation.org

for more project pictures and click on "Support Now" to make a secure online donation during the month of December. *Thanks!*

WAYS TO SUPPORT BCC BUILDING PRESERVATION

ONE: A bequest to the Landmark Heritage Foundation can be included in a will or living trust and can be for any dollar amount. The usual wording is: "I give to the Landmark Heritage Foundation the sum of \$_____ to be used as directed by the LHF Board of Directors." Such gifts can be directed to the LHF Endowment Fund or the Unrestricted Fund. Bequests can also be designated for a specific project such as pool restoration, exterior, windows, furnishings or rug preservation, etc. Please contact the LHF office with any questions.

TWO: Late in 2010 Congress reauthorized a tax provision which, until the end of 2011, allows donors over 70 ½ years of age to transfer any amount up to \$100,000 from an IRA account to fund a gift without having to include the transferred amount in their taxable income. (401K, 403B tax deferred pension plans, etc., do not qualify). Because such transfers are not included in the donor's taxable income, transfers are not eligible for the taxable income tax deduction. (You cannot double dip.) To be eligible, transfers must be made no later than December 31, 2011, and must be made directly to LHF from the IRA custodian. Check with your tax consultant to see if this program is beneficial to you and do the math.

THREE: LHF accepts and acknowledges honorary and memorial donations. We recently received donations to commemorate a person's milestone birthday.

FOUR: Become a docent and introduce Julia Morgan and this beautiful building to visitors. Or volunteer to help organize the archives for a greater appreciation of what is so worth preserving.