

BALBOA



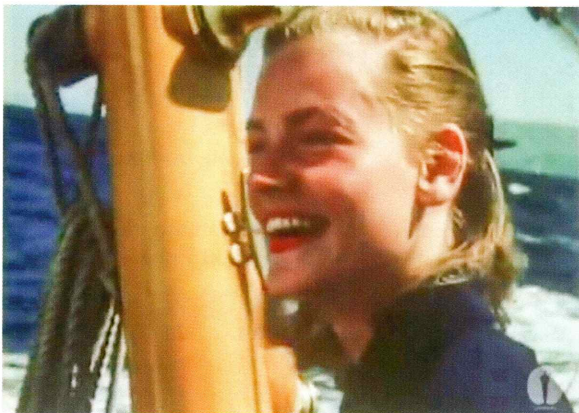
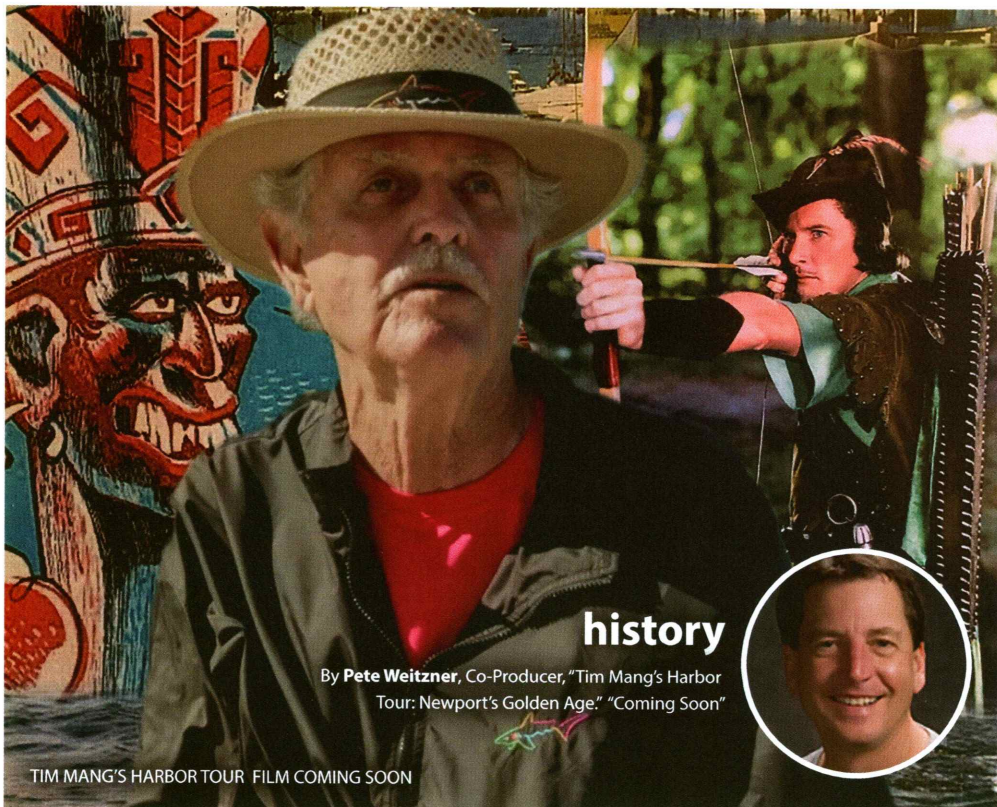
ISLAND  
LIVING

A PRIVATE SOCIAL PUBLICATION EXCLUSIVELY FOR THE RESIDENTS OF BALBOA ISLAND • September 2020

meet the  
**Euseys!**

YOUR STORIES • YOUR FAMILIES • YOUR COMMUNITY

*Turville*  
PHOTOGRAPHY



was a bestie of Dorothy Yardley, the first social director of The Balboa Bay Club.

Mang's stories are endless, his recall uncanny. He'd have more – but he was too young to throw down at Christian's Hut or The Castaways Club, the celebs two most-favored, public watering holes.

Christian's was named for Fletcher Christian, Clark Gable's character in *Mutiny on the Bounty*. Gable is rumored to have crashed upstairs at The Hut, owned by buddy Art LaShelle, a legendary cad who stole Johnny Weissmuller's girlfriend – while LaShelle was married.

Castaways sat atop the Dover Cliffs. It was lost to a fire in 1956. Christian's Hut overlooked Balboa Bay. It burned down in '63. Over time, their stories smoldered as well.

"Not too many people know those stories, Mang said, that are alive."

Fewer still know about that private house on Collins.

There are varying accounts of ownership of both the house and the island. Some have Jimmy Cagney buying Collins Island for \$32,000 in 1938, home included. Others give ownership to brother, Bill Cagney, "Jimmy Steam's" manager. Legend has it that the brothers won the Island and the home in a poker game. Let's go with the legend. And the discrepancies are understandable – the brothers were spitting images of each other.

The Cagney Boys poker haul might be an embellishment. The camaraderie and debauchery that went on in the house on Collins, and all over Newport Harbor in the '40s, '50s, and '60s, was commonplace.

"They were all good sailors, and they were all very close, Mang said, and they had lots of time between films."

## If the House on Collins Could Talk ...

### *A Tale from Newport's Golden Age*

"Okay, here it is, this is the Cagney House," says Harbor Tour Guide, Tim Mang. He points to a home on the northeast edge of tiny Collins Island.

"Story has it, about four-to-five guys played poker there. They were all movie stars and they were all sailors, Mang said. They were playing poker ... and they'd put a real bender on. Some of the guys mentioned were Tyrone Power, Errol Flynn, Dick Powell,

Jimmy Cagney, Humphrey Bogart ... maybe, Frederick March."

Mang, 78, is the unofficial raconteur of the Golden Age of Newport Harbor. He grew up on Lido Isle, the preferred Hollywood hideaway on The Peninsula.

He was extra-privy to the celebrity stories, and later on to their circle, gaining entrée through his actress mom, Bethel Ruth Mang. Mrs. Mang



Pick a big name, the M.O. is the same. Errol Flynn?

“He was also a drinker and a gambler. And a good sailor, Errol Flynn was a heckuva sailor. And a good guy, party guy.”

The stars who helped shape The Golden Age of Newport, the giants at that poker game, were all lucky – they discovered the world’s biggest small harbor before it got crowded, before cell phones, and drones, and social media.

“They were left alone,” Mang said.

Good thing. Some of the habits at 6 Collins Island wouldn’t stand up to today’s scrutiny.

“They needed somebody to clean up the house, pick up after them, maybe cook for them a little bit, Mang recalled of the Collins Poker Gang.

And that woman was Betty Bacall. She was 18 or 19 years old. No other women were allowed in that house while the guys were there.”

Betty Bacall became Lauren Bacall, Bogart’s fourth wife. They met in 1944 on the set of Howard Hawks’ *To Have and Have Not*, partially shot on Balboa and Laguna Beach. They honeymooned at the new Balboa Bay Club, were together till Bogie died in 1957 of esophageal cancer. He was 56. Bacall 32.

The United States Coast Guard used Collins Island during World War II as an emergency center, and it was partly washed away in 1942. The ‘Cagney Syndicate’ sold it in 1948. Today, eight waterfront homes ring the Island.

But the home at 6 Collins remains. The house that can keep secrets.

“Single story, still there, Mang said. Starts right there goes around to the end. Can you imagine those guys in there playing poker?”

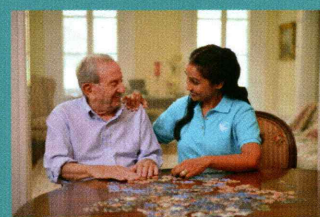


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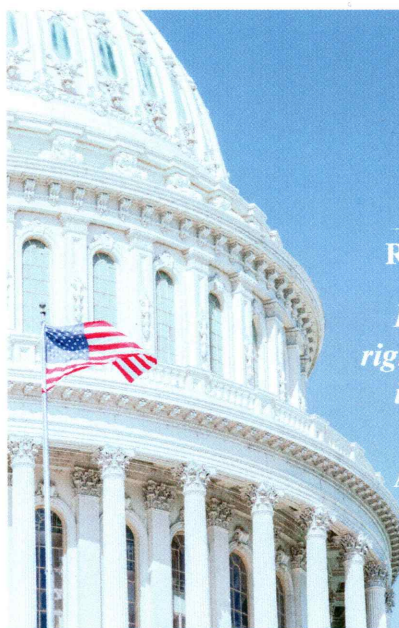
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(949) 579 - 0400 | 5790400@gmail.com  
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123 Agate | Suite C | Balboa Island, CA 92662