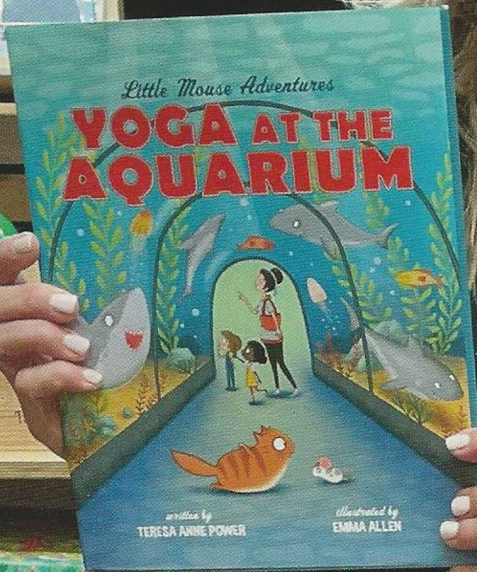


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A Famed Newport Playground Turns 75

Museum's newest exhibit, event celebrates Balboa Bay Club

BY PETE WEITZNER - BALBOA ISLAND RESIDENT AND EXECUTIVE PRODUCER, "THE GOLDEN AGE OF NEWPORT HARBOR"

This spring the Balboa Island Museum Newport Beach installed an upfront Gallery Exhibit: "Celebrating 100 Years - Theodore Robins Ford." Hard to imagine today, that the first Ford dealership in Orange County sprang out of a body shop on the Balboa Peninsula in 1923. It's been a big hit with visitors.

And so...

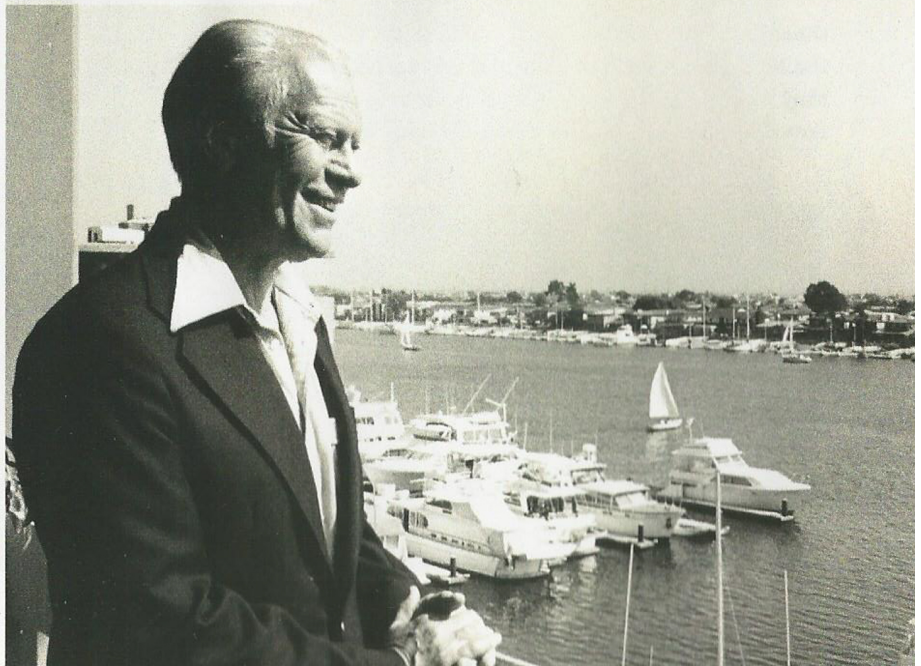
"We're kind of on a roll with anniversary exhibits," Museum Executive Director Tiffany Pepys Hoey said. "So what better anniversary to commemorate than the 75th anniversary of the **Balboa Bay Club** - Newport's playground."

The exhibit was installed in late June, a little over 75 years after the Balboa Bay Club & Resort opened its doors in March 1948. It soon emerged as a lynchpin of Newport Beach cultural life. The museum exhibit will feature the celebrities, the colorful owners, and all the nostalgia that Balboa Bay Club represents for Newport Beach. The exhibit will also detail perhaps the less-appreciated role it helped play in Newport's development.

Revered Newport Beach Journalist and Philanthropist James Felton wrote about that key role in 1984, in his book, *Host of the Coast: The History of the Balboa Bay Club* :



Young President Ford at Balboa Bay Club



“(In 1948) Newport Beach, California was a sleepy summer resort city built around a natural bay. The city’s wartime industry had withered up...the municipal treasury virtually empty. Many homesites were sold for taxes. Since then, the city of Newport Beach and the Balboa Bay Club have grown and matured together.”

The Bay Club has always been known for its amenities, its elite marina, where some of the region’s best-known yachts were moored. It’s also been the place of refuge for so many famous entertainers and all-around celebrities – the perfect place to celebrate the good life in the safe harbor of Newport Beach – a good thing as the Bay Club parties are part of the legend.

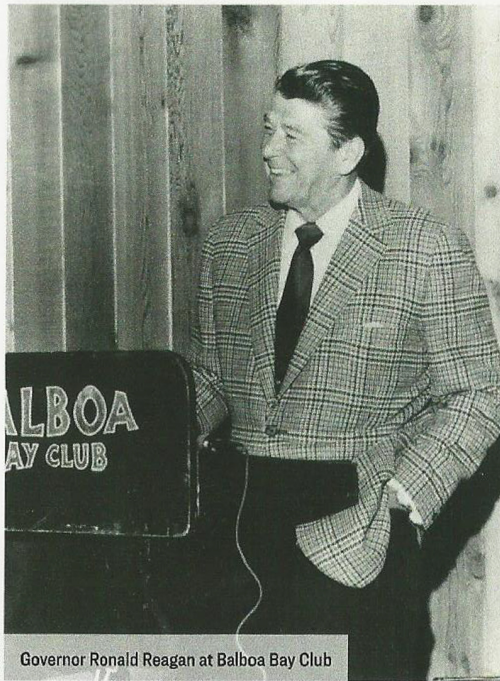
Any list of Bay Club A-Listers starts with **John Wayne**, includes **Greta Garbo**, **Jascha Heifetz**, **Humphrey Bogart** and **Lauren Bacall**, **Victor McLaglen**, **Art Linkletter**, **William Holden**, and **Bing Crosby**. The pols included **President Gerald Ford**, **President Ronald Reagan**, and **Senator Barry Goldwater**.

The exhibit will also detail the various owners of the Bay Club: **Manhattan Real-Estate Heir Ken Kendall** was the BBC’s first owner in 1948, followed by **Oilman and Dallas Cowboys Founder Clint Murchison**, **Film & TV Producer Jack Wrather (Lone Ranger, Lassie)**, **Developer William Ray** and his wife **Beverly**, and current principal owners the **Pickup-Martin family** and **Eagle Four Partners**.

As it often does, the Museum augmented the BBC exhibit by hosting a special evening on July 20, “Celebrating the 75th Anniversary of Balboa Bay Club.” The guest panelists were **General Manager Leticia Rice**, **Club Events and Member Relations Director Aaron Trent** and **Board of Governors Chairman John Wortmann**.

The Balboa Bay Club Anniversary Exhibit is in the center of the museum and will be up through the summer.

Visit Balboa Island Museum Newport Beach. We’re open daily. Free general admission. Become a member. balboaislandmuseum.org/become-a-member



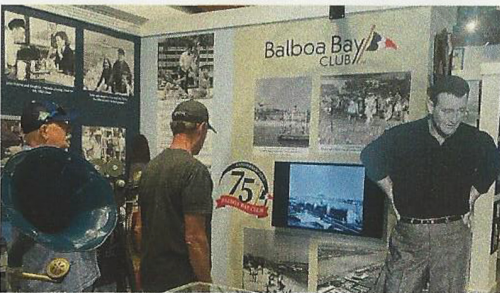
Governor Ronald Reagan at Balboa Bay Club



Art Linkletter sings with friends at BBC.



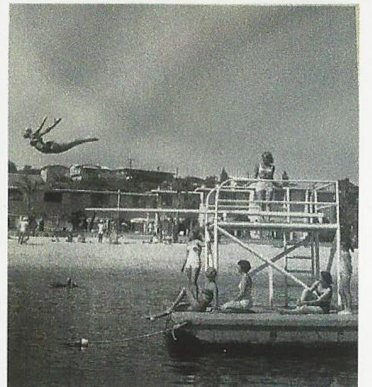
Balboa Bay Club today



The Balboa Bay Club Anniversary Exhibit will be on display at the Balboa Island Museum Newport Beach through the summer.



John Wayne receives an award at Balboa Bay Club.



“The Famous High-Dive on the Dock”
The BBC’s diving board that turned athletes into Olympians. Circa 1960s.

