

# Albany Historic Building News

MAY 2010

CITY OF ALBANY COMMUNITY

DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

## Albany's "Keyhole House" gets new life & owners

**What drew you to purchase the 1891 Hale/Andrus House on East 1st Avenue?**

I (Emma) was out exploring new areas when I first saw the "Keyhole House." The first element that grabbed my attention was the "keyhole windows." I had never seen this window style before! The original stucco exterior was another amazing feature—clean and timeless lines of the stucco were in perfect balance with the ornate carvings found from the eaves to the L-shaped front porch. It was perfect! It was a number of years and "stalking" before I approached anyone about the house. It was George Andrus, Jerry's 95-year old brother, who still lives next door. I had found two treasures and I was under the spell of both. George gave us the one room tour. It was one-roomed because it was full to the ceilings. I really thought that my husband would have me committed after seeing the "new" old house I wanted to save. But, he didn't say no, so I took that as a cue to move forward.

**Have you restored other historic homes?**

We restored a 1930s house in the Monteith District just prior to purchasing the "Keyhole House" aka "Castle of Chaos." It turned into a full house renovation by the time it was finished.

We also renovated a 1955 Ranch style house here in Albany prior to that home. We learned that there is not much renovation work you can't do yourself if you really want to, and that there are some types of projects that we are better at than others. Quite often our skill sets have proven complimentary. We also learned that just because you "can" do a job, does not mean you "should" do it!

**Tell us about the unique framing and stucco finish and special measures you had to take into consideration to design the restoration plan.**

We had not encountered this type of construction technique before. Most modern construction techniques basically involve building a box with interior walls and adding other boxes as desired for extra floors or wings, then covering it with some type of attached exterior siding or



The City is grateful to Emma and Jacho Eaton for sharing their preservation story and for deciding to restore one of Albany's most unique houses and home of the late famous magician/illusionist Jerry Andrus. They hope to start major restoration in May and finish in November. The FULL interview is available here: [www.cityofalbany.net/comdev/historic/](http://www.cityofalbany.net/comdev/historic/).

covering material such as brick. This home is more like a house within a house. The wooden inner shell was built as a freestanding structure. The wooden structure was built with continuous runs from foundation to roof instead of the stacked box approach in the more modern technique. Then the brick outer shell was built and the two were attached together using metal pins. The final masonry exterior was finished with stucco. With all of the foundation damage, our Architect recommended an engineer to recommend an appropriate solution. Preserving the stucco finish on the exterior, and reinforcing the brick from the inside have presented challenges of their own.

**Why did you decide to list the house on the National Register for being associated with a significant person, Jerry Andrus, a famous magician?**

As anyone that has experience with old houses can tell you, they all have stories to tell. For the last 120 years our house has been the site of lives and families coming and going. The original builder, a contractor/bricklayer, experienced hardships that led to the home being foreclosed. A.H. Hale, publisher and owner of the People's Press, a socialist weekly newspaper raised his family here in the late 1890s. Generations of families have shared good times and bad while living in this house.

We did not purchase the property with any advanced knowledge about Jerry Andrus, and with no particular interest in magic. Doing the research on him was not a focus for us until the decision was made to use his significance as the reason for listing the property on the National Register. Research on Jerry Andrus has been an interesting process.

The first and best source of information has been our good friend and neighbor George Andrus. We purchased the property from George and have the privilege of spending time with him and just listening. What an amazing family! This house has been the Andrus family home since they moved here in 1928. George has given us firsthand knowledge of how Jerry and the Andrus family lived and used the home for the last 82 years. His help and continued involvement in the renovation project is a key to the success.

Another excellent source of information has been Jerry's friends and fans. There is a formal group organized as "The Friends of Jerry Andrus" that have a large archive of information about Jerry's life and his contributions to magic and illusions.

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**INSIDE:** Preservation Month Activities, The Ranch Style, & Lead Safety



## NEW LEAD-BASED PAINT REGULATIONS

### What you should know

New federal requirements for lead-based paint safety went into effect April 22, 2010, to ensure that any activity that disturbs paint in pre-1978 housing or child-occupied facilities done by a person working for compensation be done safely.

#### When do these standards apply?

When compensating someone for repairs, exterior painting, electrical or other work, including window repair or replacement that might disturb more than 6-square feet per interior room or 20 square feet on the exterior, make sure your contractor or property manager is trained or certified. They will give you a copy of the Renovate Right pamphlet available at [www.epa.gov/lead/pubs/renovation](http://www.epa.gov/lead/pubs/renovation).

#### When do the standards NOT apply?

- To homeowners who do work on their own dwelling.
- The owner signs a statement verifying no children under age 6 or pregnant woman reside there.
- Painting a surface that is not disturbed by sanding, scraping or other activities that may cause dust.

For more information on lead safety standards, including details on how to properly prepare and clean-up, please view this manual: <http://epa.gov/lead/pubs/sbcomplianceguide.pdf>.



### Energy Efficiency / Weatherization

- [www.preservationnation.org/issues/weatherization/](http://www.preservationnation.org/issues/weatherization/)
- [www.oldhousejournal.com/embracing\\_energy/magazine/1453](http://www.oldhousejournal.com/embracing_energy/magazine/1453)

### Sustainability/Reducing Carbon Footprint

- [www.preservationnation.org/issues/sustainability/](http://www.preservationnation.org/issues/sustainability/)
- [www.cityofalbany.net/comdev/historic/sustain.php](http://www.cityofalbany.net/comdev/historic/sustain.php)

## The Keyhole House, Cont.

As a prolific author of books and pamphlets about magic tricks and illusions that Andrus created, there are many copies of his work available on line and in print to use as reference. Jerry was the subject of a series of DVDs documenting and demonstrating his magic tricks and illusions. Two full-length documentary films on Jerry Andrus have also been excellent sources of information.

### What treasures have you discovered?

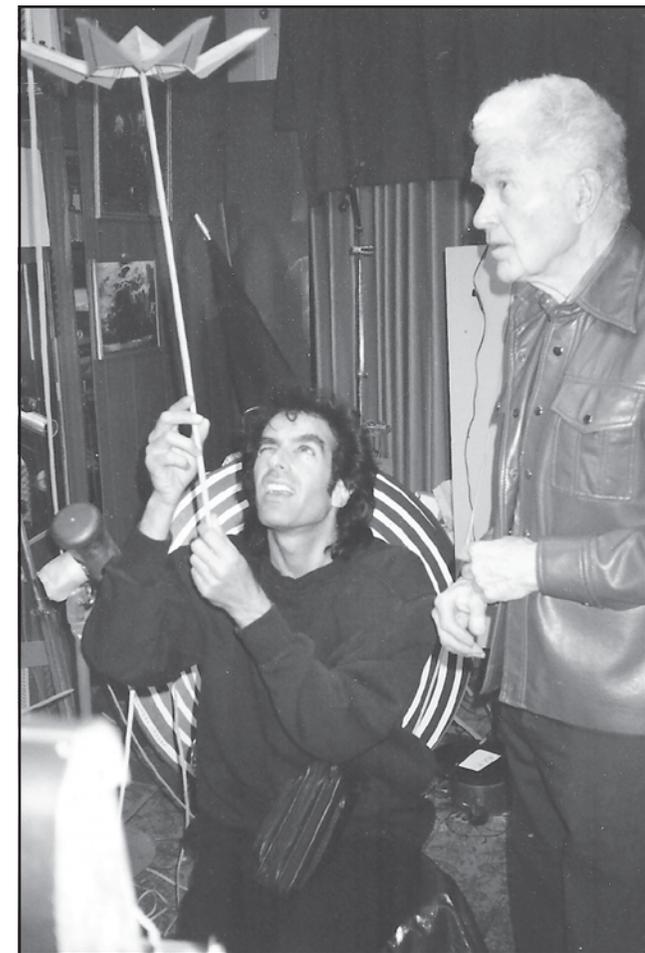
The “Castle of Chaos” was customized to fit the special needs of a magician, inventor and collector. Examples of unique features include a hand operated crane mounted on a boom that swung out over the staircase from the second floor, and a pressure mat such as those used to open automatic doors in grocery stores mounted on the floor of the entry emitted voices and sound effects. An entire room was taken up with a customized organ that Jerry continually wired with new audio and visual effects. A great number of magic tricks, photographic material, and manufacturing equipment to produce his illusions were with the house when we bought it. George has given us many of the tools that Jerry used to create his inventions. We plan to keep those with the house and to use some of them, such as the large lathe, to restore the house.

### What advice do you have for others?

Try some less extensive projects to see if you want to do any of the “hands on” work yourself. Don’t be afraid to try some progressively tougher projects. Start with some less costly but beneficial projects to get a feel for what kind of time, money and physical commitment is involved with completing a home improvement project. Adding insulation, or building a fence are projects that most people can do without a huge investment in tools and equipment. Even if you find that the “hands on” part is not for you, at least you will have a better understanding of what you need a professional contractor to do, and why.

That leads directly to the next most important tip: hire a professional when you should! A professional contractor that you trust is the key to getting work done correctly and they will help you make decisions on what to hire out. If contractors will do all of the work, it’s even more important that you find a general contractor that you can trust to supervise the job and ensure proper code requirements and permits are in place.

Lastly, check with the state and city staff to see if any review process is needed before construction begins. This can



Jerry Andrus and David Copperfield, in the Keyhole house parlor

impact your timeline and plan if you wait until after the project has begun to check with them. They may also have advice on resources you can use to help on your project. For us the most challenging aspect of this project has been the financing.

### What’s been the biggest challenge?

We bought the house about two years ago, right about the time the economy tanked and many major financial institutions experienced problems or ruin. Financing a project like this that takes a certain amount of “vision” and when banks are running for cover it is not easy. We were fortunate to receive a matching grant from the Central Albany Revitalization Area to help us with some of the foundation repair costs. Without that, I am not sure the bank would have continued working on the financing.

### Window Repair

- [www.HistoricHomeWorks.com](http://www.HistoricHomeWorks.com)
- [www.kshs.org/resource/windowrepair.htm](http://www.kshs.org/resource/windowrepair.htm)
- [www.preservationnation.org/issues/weatherization/resources/windows.html](http://www.preservationnation.org/issues/weatherization/resources/windows.html)

### Albany Preservation Program/All Issues

- [www.cityofalbany.net/comdev/historic/](http://www.cityofalbany.net/comdev/historic/)

# CELEBRATE HISTORIC ALBANY IN MAY

*Albany  
Area*



## May Events Calendar

All events are free unless noted.

### Genealogical Research

Saturday, 5/1, 1 pm  
Main library, 2450 14th Ave. SE  
[www.lgsoregon.org](http://www.lgsoregon.org)

### Downtown Loft Tour (free) and Wine Walk (\$)

Friday, 5/7, 4 to 8  
[www.albanydowntown.com](http://www.albanydowntown.com)

### Carousel Celebration

Saturday, 5/8, 1:00 pm,  
at 503, 1st Ave W.  
[www.albanybrassring.com](http://www.albanybrassring.com)

### How to Research a Historic Building

Monday, 5/10, 12 to 1 pm,  
starts at Downtown Library,  
302 Ferry St. • 541-917-7560

### Historic First Avenue Tour

Wednesday, 5/12, 5:30 pm  
meet at Burkhart Square,  
nw corner of 1st and Lyon  
[www.albanydowntown.com](http://www.albanydowntown.com)

### Historic Second Avenue Tour

Thursday, 5/13, 5:30 pm  
meet at Burkhart Square,  
nw corner of 1st and Lyon  
[www.albanydowntown.com](http://www.albanydowntown.com)

### Preservation Forum

Friday, 5/14, 12 to 1 pm  
Main Library, 2450 14th Ave SE  
541-917-7580  
<http://library.cityofalbany.net>

### Window Repair Workshop

Saturday, 5/15, drop in anytime 9-12  
Albany Farmer's Market  
4th & Ellsworth, • 541-917-7560

### Living History Performance

Sunday, 5/16, 2 pm  
Lady at the Crossroads by Karen Haas,  
Lakeside Center Mennonite Village •  
541-491-3978

### Style vs. Form

Wednesday, 5/19, 7 pm  
Albany City Hall, a lecture on architec-  
tural styles, by Dave Pinyerd  
541-917-7560

### Hackleman District Walking Tour

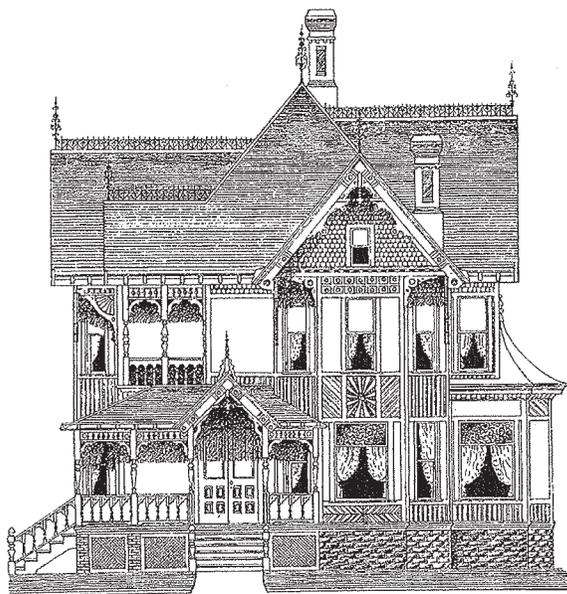
Monday, 5/16, 6 pm  
meet outside Ciddici's Pizza,  
140 5th Ave SE • 541-917-7560

### Preservation Awards

Wednesday, 5/26, 7:15 pm.  
Albany City Council meeting,  
City Hall, 333 Broadalbin St SW  
541-917-7560

**O**ld is the New Green! is the theme for 2010's National Preservation Month this May, sponsored by the National Trust for Historic Preservation. Historic building owners and organizations across the country know that preservation is good for communities and good for the pocketbook, but in the face of our growing climate crisis, we can also say with confidence that preservation has a significant role to play in fostering development that is more environmentally and economically sustainable. When you reinvest in older and historic buildings, live in a historic home, you support a more sustainable world. For more information, visit <http://www.preservationnation.org/issues/sustainability/>. The City of Albany has a lot of good information on how to improve energy efficiency in old buildings and reduce carbon emissions. Visit [www.cityofalbany.net/comdev/historic/](http://www.cityofalbany.net/comdev/historic/) for many resources and links.

# Are There Two Barber Houses in Albany?



**G**eorge Franklin Barber was one of the most prolific American architects of the late Victorian period. Barber is generally credited with establishing the architectural formula we now call the Queen Anne Style.

The 1889 **George Hochstedler house** at the northwest corner of 6th and Montgomery Streets appears to be

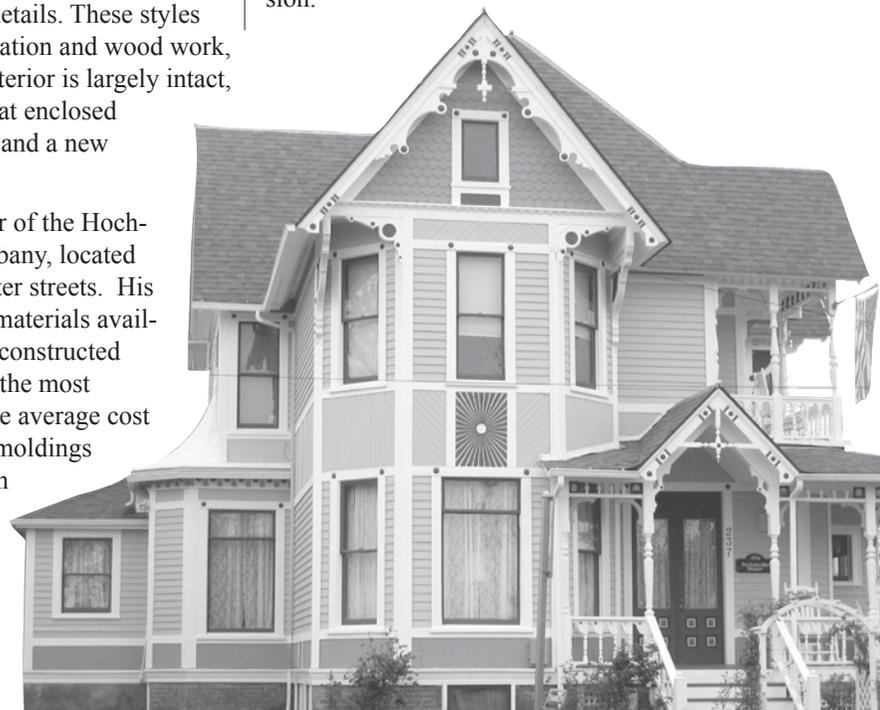
based on Barber's design No. 41, of The Cottage Souvenir No. 2. It is a mirror image on the exterior. Take a walk and look for yourself.

This large house is an excellent example of the Stick Style of architecture with Eastlake details. These styles include a lot of decorative ornamentation and wood work, there is plenty on this home! The exterior is largely intact, except for east side modifications that enclosed a portion of the wrap-around porch, and a new doorway.

George Hochstedler was co-owner of the Hochstedler and Sears Planing Mill of Albany, located on the river at Montgomery and Water streets. His house was constructed of the finest materials available at that time. Of the 137 houses constructed in 1889, the Hochstedler house was the most expensive at \$6,000, compared to the average cost of \$1,130. The ornate interior trim, moldings and staircase are largely intact and in very good shape.

Beginning in 1892, Hochstedler was the manager of the Albany branch of the Sugar Pine Door and Lumber Company. He sold the

house to the owner of the General store, Charles Parker, in 1903/4. Parker's wife, Hadie, was a music teacher for the City of Albany. In 1909 the house was occupied by Commander Giddings who was in the real estate profession.



# Meet the newest historic building in your neighborhood — The Ranch



Believe it or not, the ranch style has reached the 50 year old criteria and is now potentially eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. To add to the understanding of historic architecture in Albany, the Historic Preservation Program has received a grant from the State Historic Preservation office to survey this style in Albany later this year.

Tracing its architectural heritage from adobes and wood-sided ranch buildings built during the nineteenth century, the post World War II California Ranch house quickly attained national appeal. Although often dismissed as simply tract housing, the Ranch style house was one of the most important forms of architecture to develop in the twentieth century. Its distinctive form and appearance was the result of the combination of a number of important twentieth century trends; the rise of homeownership brought about by federal governmental policies, the mass production of new building parts and improved technologies associated with the post-war era, dependence on the automobile, and changing American demographics and more relaxed life styles.

Cultural historian Russell Lynes suggested in the 1950s why the Ranch house was so popular: “Nobody could mind it. It was not experimental enough to be considered ‘ugly’ by even the most conservative, and it was not tricked-up enough to be considered ‘ugly’ by the experimental. It was merely ‘nice.’ It was ‘unobjectionable.’ It was ‘homey,’ and it was said to be ‘practical’.” (Russell Lynes, *The Domesticated Americans*, 1957)

## Elements of the Ranch Style:

- Low to medium pitch roof either hipped or gable with overhanging eaves.
- One or one-and-one-half stories.
- Large wide windows.
- Rectangular or “L” shaped, maximize façade width
- Exterior walls of wide wood shingles or horizontal wood siding; occasionally brick, stucco or stone, or a combination.
- Open floor plan with a linear arrangement of rooms
- Outdoor living areas extend beyond the house on the same level, merging the exterior with the interior.

“The Ranch house was the answer to the need for housing returning World War Two GI’s,” notes Jim Brown, publisher of *Atomic-Ranch Magazine*. As a matter of fact, some scholars believe that 70 percent of American homes built in the 25 years after World War II were Ranch houses. Introduced at about the same time as TV, the Ranch style also became a television icon; at various times housing Lucy and Ricky Ricardo, Dick Van Dyke and Mary Tyler Moore.

After World War II, when the suburban boom gained momentum, variations on the Ranch style became the prominent building form for suburban neighborhoods and large tracts of standardized middle-class housing throughout the U.S. between 1940 and 1980. The early ranch style homes were relatively small modest houses with less than 1000 square feet, two bedrooms, and a small one-car garage. Later versions evolved into the rambling California Ranch, Raised Ranch and Split-level Ranch. Similar to the International Style, these houses really do not include much “style” at all but rather stressed three basic concepts: livability, flexibility, and an unpretentious character.

In Albany, the earliest Ranch style buildings appear to have been built by the federal government to house soldiers from Camp Adair. After the war, Ranch homes were built for returning GIs by developers plotting out subdivisions outside of the downtown residential core of the city and were also built on vacant lots within the historic districts. Hundreds of Ranch style buildings are located around town, in the Monteith District, on the edges, and there is a large concentration in west Albany around the Liberty neighborhood. Do you own one of Albany’s Ranch style homes? The City will be hiring a consultant to determine areas to be surveyed, likely the Liberty neighborhood. Property owners will be notified of this project. Don’t be surprised if you see a historian walking down your street later this year taking photographs and asking questions about this type of building. If you are an owner of a Ranch style consider sharing its history with the historian or with [anne.catlin@cityofalbany.net](mailto:anne.catlin@cityofalbany.net).