



Dear member,

Here's the February 2016 edition of the Upper East Association's monthly newsletter.

Upcoming Events

- **UEA Board Looking for New Members**

As with any active organization change happens and we need to adapt. It turns out that a couple of our current board members will be moving from our neighborhood either across town or across the country. So as our bylaws outline, the board will soon be in a position to fill those two-year terms.

If you would like to learn more about the Upper East Association and what is involved in being a board member, please plan to attend an informal discussion on **February 27 at 9 a.m.** at the Coffee Bean & Tea Leaf on De La Vina at State Street to meet with board member Lisa Burns and others. RSVP to Lisa Burns at (805)

682-1246 or email: LisaKBurns@yahoo.com.

First non-board member to respond gets a free drink of their choice.

- **Upper East Walking Tours with Thad McMillan**

One way to experience history in Santa Barbara is to join Thad MacMillan on one of his walking tours of the city's Upper Eastside. MacMillan enjoys sharing his knowledge of our local neighborhoods and appreciation of beautifully crafted homes built around the turn of the 20th century. Click [here](#) for a link to a YouTube video about Upper East walking tours with Thad MacMillan.

FYI

- **A Visit to Santa Barbara by Young Professionals from Ukraine**

Gil Garcia, a member of the UEA and a person long involved with the "Sister City Program", has invited UEA Board President, Fred Sweeney and other members to attend an informal reception next month with five young professionals from Ukraine.

As part of the Open World Program sponsorship of the U.S. State Department, they will visit various cities and their governmental

and community organizations, such as neighborhood associations, to learn how we govern and foster the betterment of our communities.

The UEA looks forward to sharing with these visitors how our association interacts with our neighborhood residents and the city governing process.

Out and About in Upper East

- **Upper East History – The Hotel Mirasol and Its Eventual Destiny**

We left off last month at the point when the Herters, the owners of the luxurious Hotel Mirasol, sold the property to a San Francisco hotelier in 1920. (The Mirasol's location was the block bounded by East Arrellaga, Santa Barbara, East Micheltorena and Garden Streets.) The hotel continued to fulfill the requirements of its prestigious clientele for many years, while changing ownership several times.

By the 1960's though, the hotel had lost its bloom and had morphed into a residence hotel. A couple of fires further degraded the building and the current owner felt that the building was ready to be torn down to be replaced with a larger, modern, nine-story hotel. The idea of replacing the historic Mirasol with a "high-rise" galvanized the public, initiating fierce discussions about scenic views, historic preservation, the character of Santa Barbara, etc. Eventually the City Council rejected the owner's plan for his hotel but granted him the permission to tear down the building.

Next a group of investors proposed two eleven-story condominium buildings for the site, and they applied for a height variance. A citizens' committee led by Pearl Chase initiated an arduous three-year fight that led to the defeat of the project, and a subsequent campaign resulted in an amendment to the City charter, which henceforth limited the height of Santa Barbara buildings.

In 1975 an anonymous donor bought the city block and donated it to the city for a park. In the spring of 1980 the park was dedicated and named for that now-deceased generous donor who had made it possible. It is the "**Alice Keck Park Memorial Garden**".

- **Walking with Mo**

As noted above in this newsletter, Santa Barbara resident Thad Macmillan leads occasional neighborhood walks in our beautiful city. Our neighborhood is basically defined by the mountain side of State Street, the top of Constance and Garden Streets, the Mission and the adjacent Mission Historic Park (including the lawn and Rose Garden) up to and including Roosevelt School and then down to Sola Street.

The YouTube feature, which focuses on our neighborhood, brings to mind Mo's and my walks through often-unseen parts of the Upper East. In those walks, we explore the official "alleys" that divide some of our city blocks as well as other small streets that don't attract the same attention as our main thoroughfares.

In those seldom-seen areas, one begins to understand how at a point in our development as a neighborhood, we started situating residential properties on essentially square blocks as laid out by Salisbury Haley (although as the story goes Haley didn't have the proper survey tools, so they are not truly square). In any case, as residential properties developed, the initial lot layout afforded an egalitarian approach where some blocks had very large parcels intermixed with smaller ones and other blocks were dominated by smaller parcels.

Later some of the larger lots were split into smaller parcels and sold off. Even today (such as on Santa Barbara Street) we see such newly-split parcels reweaving the fabric of the neighborhood.

I also think several block parcel layouts were dictated by mid-block watercourses, some of which are no longer detectable except when it pours rain (think sump pump in your basement). Still others were accessed by alleys.

Mo's and my observations as to the uniqueness of each small and large parcel, many receiving the stamp of their owner's character, have made for very special little discoveries. One of these days Mo and I would also like to take you on one of our walks to share our observations.



& Mo

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