



Dear member,

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

## **FYI**

- **Update on the Oversized Vehicle Parking Issue**

As many of you know, the Upper East Association Board has been closely following the current RV parking situation in our neighborhood. A special committee of the Board, led by Steve Forsell, has been attending the Ordinance Committee hearings, relaying data obtained from our membership surveys, and communicating regularly with our "beat" officer from the Police Department. As a result of our testimony at the most recent Ordinance Committee hearing on May 17<sup>th</sup>, we have formulated a letter to key persons at the City, including the Mayor, City Council, and the City Attorney providing them with summarized data from our surveys and observations as to what the City might want to do next. Click [here](#) for a full copy of that letter.

- **The UEA needs a newsletter editor**

The current Upper East Association newsletter editor has moved from the Upper East and will edit her final newsletter in June. The position requires attendance at UEA Board meetings held on the second Tuesday of each month at Board President Fred Sweeney's home. In addition to the two hours a month for Board meetings, the newsletter takes 3-4 hours per month for editing and formatting. For a small commitment of time, it's a great opportunity to stay in touch with what's going on in the Upper East and to get the word out to your neighbors.

If you're interested, please contact Fred Sweeney, Board President, at [fredlsweeney@gmail.com](mailto:fredlsweeney@gmail.com) or 805-448-4392.

- **UEA Book Group**

An Upper East book group recently participated in the Santa Barbara Reads conversation regarding *Just Mercy* by Bryan Stevenson showing again what interesting people live in the neighborhood. Women from diverse backgrounds — educators, community volunteers, a doctor, an attorney — shared insights into the thought-provoking topic of treatment of those who are incarcerated, specifically those scheduled for capital punishment.

Even while acknowledging knowing a little about the subject, everyone agreed that they learned a great deal, trusted the author's compassion, wisdom and experience, and felt compelled to act on behalf of the imprisoned, especially children and vulnerable adults. The participants' diverse backgrounds kept anyone from thinking there are easy solutions, but all agreed that people need

to be treated compassionately and respectfully. As Stevenson said, "Each of us is more than the worst thing we have ever done."

One member even presented her copy of the book to a judge in Myanmar to share what we are struggling with regarding justice. Getting to know our neighbors better by discussing important matters allows us to tap into the wisdom of our community.

If you are interested in participating in the book group, contact Ann Fischer at [fischlaw@gmail.com](mailto:fischlaw@gmail.com) to see what members are reading for the next meeting.

## **Out and About in Upper East**

- **Upper East History – The De La Guerra Dibblee House**

This house, located at 333 Junipero Plaza, was named for its first owner, Francisca de la Guerra Dibblee. Francisca was a granddaughter of Don Jose de la Guerra, commandante of the Presidio of Santa Barbara during the Spanish and Mexican period. The house was completed in 1910 in the new Edward Vail subdivision, on land acquired from Mission Santa Barbara.

After the death of her husband, Mrs. Dibblee moved back into her parents' home, the Casa de la Guerra. In 1906 one of her daughters married Francis T. Underhill, a noted architect who had moved here from New York. In 1900 the Underhills bought property in the new subdivision, and Mr. Underhill designed and built a house for his mother-in-law.

Underhill's early designs were usually in the Craftsman style, but for Mrs. Dibblee's house he used a classic Greco-Roman design. In ancient Greece and Rome, houses were built around a central atrium or patio, and there were few windows on the outside walls. The doors and windows of the atrium provided air circulation in the summer and, when closed, provided warmth for the winter. This was the model Underhill adopted for this project. Along with the central patio, the façade, facing Los Olivos Street, featured classic Greco-Roman columns and doorways. Mrs Dibblee lived here until 1924.

Through the years and successive ownerships, the house remained relatively unchanged. In 1985, however, it was restored after years of neglect, and most notably, the entrance was changed from 326 Los Olivos Street to 333 Junipero Plaza.

**[Please note:** This article is Marie-Paule Hadju's final history article for this newsletter. Thank you to Marie-Paule for the many previous interesting pieces on Upper East History. If there is someone who would like to contribute future history articles to the newsletter, please contact Fred Sweeney at [fredsweeney@gmail.com](mailto:fredsweeney@gmail.com).]

- **Walking with Mo**

As some of you may be aware, one of the hats I wear is serving as the current Chair of the volunteer Single Family Design Review Board for the City. As such I tend to have little chats with Mo while we walk (of course, mostly one sided conversations). Recently I let him know about some of the dilemmas neighborhoods face when new residents purchase properties and want to

obtain our review and approval for additions or wholesale changes (particularly second story additions) to the homes they have purchased.

This happened most recently when a large group of neighbors appeared at a hearing concerning a new owner who proposed adding a second floor on a street dominated by large single-story homes. Most of the homes on this cul-de-sac were built about the same time in the 1960's and designed by the same architect. (That architectural firm was Howell, Arendt, Mosher, and Grant, one of the city's oldest firms and the forerunner of the firm I retired from as senior design partner. So you can see there is a little bit of history.) The neighbors have a mental and emotional attachment to their street, which they define as their neighborhood, but which is in fact a small street at the top of the larger neighborhood generally defined as the Riviera.

The reason I brought this up to Mo is twofold: one is how people perceive what constitutes their "neighborhood"; and two is how they perceive new neighbors who purchase properties as second homes when their main home is elsewhere. As you can surmise, many such homeowners are from out of state and find Santa Barbara real estate a bargain and the city a go-to destination. That being said, the challenge for many of us as long-time Santa Barbarans is how to welcome part-time neighbors while also assuring that we have residents who participate on a daily basis in making our city a wonderful place to live.

Now as Garrison Keillor so adeptly does, I will circle back to my story. As of now, our board has instructed the owner and the project design team to return with a better solution for a second story, in keeping with the other single-story homes on the street. Those homes were inspired by the designs of Cliff May, the recognized creator of the California Ranch Style after World War II. Studies of May's work reveal that he did some ranch style homes with second stories, but they were interpretations of the original Spanish haciendas, which were low-profile buildings. A wonderful example of this is the home at the corner of Garden and Los Olivos.

The neighbors expressed their strong desire for no approval of a second floor while the applicant's agent tried to convince the board that "broader neighborhood" was defined as a large portion of the Riviera hilltop. The Review Board expressed our faith that a design revision can meet both desires, the owner's right to build a second story, and the neighbors' need to retain the character of their "neighborhood." Mo thinks that will keep everyone out of the doghouse.



& Mo

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