



UPPER EAST ASSOCIATION SANTA BARBARA

Upper East News
Fall 2014
www.sbuppereast.org

A Message from the Board President

As fall comes to Santa Barbara it's time to look back on how the Upper East Association has contributed to the betterment of our neighborhood this year.

The major issues we addressed include the hedge-height ordinance, the new building at Mission and State, the drought, and our urban forest. We continued to work with County and City planners on the *Safe Passage* initiative, now under the auspices of the newly formed Mission Heritage Trail Association.

We hosted a most successful social event and annual meeting last November, we continued to host a garden exchange each month, and we initiated a closer relationship with the 18 institutions that share the neighborhood with our residents. Finally, we are again mailing this newsletter to each residence in the Upper East to share the results of the past year and to encourage you to be a member for next year.

Our membership continues to grow and is now over 240 households. This has allowed us to establish a strong voice with those organizations and government bodies that can and will have an impact on the value and the way of life we cherish here in the Upper East.

Our monthly email newsletters keep our members informed of coming events and neighborhood news. Each month I share my own personal observations in my column *Walking with Mo (my dog)*. I'm grateful for the feedback members have provided, and in the coming year we look forward to implementing additional ways to communicate and learn the concerns of our members so that we can better represent you.

Looking forward to the rest of 2014, our annual social event and annual meeting on November 9th will again feature a talk by the ever-fascinating local historian Neal Graffy. In November we will conduct an election for five Board members to serve during 2015-2016. If you would like to become active in the Association, please do let us know of your interest.

All of these topics are covered in greater depth elsewhere in this newsletter. I hope you enjoy reading about them.

Fred Sweeney
President, Upper East Association
Board of Directors

Become a Member for 2015

It's time to renew your membership in the Upper East Association for 2015, or to join if you're not yet a member. Annual dues for next year will again be \$20.

If you live or own property in the Upper East you know what a lovely and historic neighborhood it is. The Association's goal is to keep it that way. We serve three key roles:

- Monitor local government initiatives affecting the Upper East and keep our members informed.
- Share the Upper East perspective with local government officials.
- Promote activities to beautify the neighborhood and enhance the quality of life of our residents.

Become a Member (continued)

We send out an email newsletter each month alerting our members to coming events and neighborhood news. We invite members to let us know about quality-of-life issues, and in a number of cases we've been able to do something about them. We maintain a website with up-to-date information about the community and the Association. Finally, each fall we distribute this printed newsletter to every residence in the neighborhood.

The Association has grown to comprise over 240 member households. If you're currently a member we hope you'll rejoin for 2015. If you're not yet a member, please join us. Send the enclosed form with a check for \$20 payable to *Upper East Association* to:

Joan Livingston, Treasurer
Upper East Association
PO Box 91329
Santa Barbara, CA 93190-1329

Our Institutional Neighbors

Institutions and residences have long been good neighbors in the Upper East. The Upper East is home to some 18 religious institutions, schools, child care, senior care and events centers. Certainly the oldest institution and purpose-built building is the Old Mission, while some institutions occupy converted residential structures like Alexander Gardens and the former Fielding Graduate Institute.

To further our mutual interest in the Upper East, on Sept. 24th the UEA Board is hosting an informal meet-and-greet for key staff members from our institutional neighbors. We look forward to sharing what we all enjoy about our lovely and historic part of town.

Speaking of Fielding, construction work is underway at its former location at 2112 Santa Barbara Street to restore it to its original state as a single-family residence. Designated as a City Historic Landmark, this building has long been known as the Hodges House; it was built in 1921 for a Vice President of the Santa Fe Railroad. We salute the new owners for their careful restoration of this stately Mediterranean style home back to its original use.

Annual Garden Party Sunday November 9th, 3-5pm Junipero Serra Hall

All members are invited to the Upper East Association Annual Garden Party, which is an opportunity to meet your neighbors, review the Association's activities during the past year and share goals for the next. Light appetizers, wine and other refreshments will be served.



We are excited to again have as our guest speaker local historian Neal Graffy. Neal has written articles for both local and national historical publications. His most recent book, *Santa Barbara Then and Now*, presents a fascinating journey through Santa Barbara as it was and as it currently is in a side-by-side comparison of Then & Now images. His two previous books are *Street Names of Santa Barbara* and *Historic Santa Barbara*.

Neal's talk will be a presentation about the history of our Upper East neighborhood

The UEA Garden Party is limited to current and new members only. If you are not yet a member, please consider joining today so we can include you on the invitation list.

In addition, we are looking for new or current members who are interested in assisting with planning and refreshments for the Garden Party. If you would like to participate please email us at ueacomm@gmail.com.

Location: Junipero Serra Hall, corner of Garden and East Los Olivos Streets.

What We've Been Doing ...

From time to time issues arise in the City that affect the Upper East and merit our oversight and community input. The UEA Board has stepped forward in a number of such situations during the past year:

Mission & State Development. The UEA Board continued to monitor the evolving design for a new commercial structure to be built at the corner of Mission and State Streets. Board members attended meetings of the Historic Landmarks Commission (HLC) and reiterated our request for a property that reflects the importance of its location as a gateway to the Old Mission and the Upper State Street parkway.

In April 2014 the HLC gave final approval to the design, a Moorish-style building on the corner with entrances to the rear parking lot on both Mission and State Streets. A large sign that had been proposed for the corner was rejected in favor of smaller signs at the driveway entrances.

This summer it was announced that the occupants will be a 7-Eleven and a Subway, which elicited unfavorable comment at the HLC meeting from those of us preferring a local enterprise. Both are permitted in C-2 zoning, however, so nothing can be done. 7-Eleven has applied for a wine and beer license, and we notified UEA members how to submit comments about the application. At this time we do not know the Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control's decision.

Hedge-Height Ordinance. In 2008 the City Council suspended enforcement of the City's hedge-height ordinance when a large number of complaints received from the public caused community discord. With the suspension due to expire in March 2014, the City's Planning Division was tasked to propose amendments to the ordinance.

Because this is a subject of interest to many Upper East residents – on both sides of the debate about hedge heights – the UEA Board kept our members informed of the evolving recommendations and of the public meetings taking place to review them.

As a result of the planning process the City now has new guidelines to clarify how to measure the height of a hedge. Neighbors may agree to allow side yard

hedges to grow above the 8' limit to 14'; hedges within 10' of the front lot line are allowed at 8' except next to driveways. The height limits on walls and fences adopted in 1957 remain at 3.5' within 10' from the front lot line and 8' in interior yards.

Urban Forest. Our 'urban forest' of street trees contributes to the beauty of the Upper East. With the support of landscape architect Grant Castleberg, UEA Board member Lisa Burns worked with the City's Street Tree Advisory Committee (STAC) to update the Urban Forest Master Plan for several blocks in the Upper East. Changes approved for street tree species are as follows:

2100 block of Santa Barbara St: added Queen Palm

2200 block of Santa Barbara St: added Oak

200 block of East Junipero St: approved Olive

2200-2400 blocks of Garden St (west side): approved Evergreen Pear and New Zealand Oak (if a homeowner wants to remove an existing Kaffir Plum)

If you have questions about the trees on your block, contact Mandy Burgess at City Parks & Rec at 564-5436 or aburgess@santabarbaraca.gov. If you would like to help host a street tree walk, contact UEA Board member Lisa Burns at lisakburns@yahoo.com.

Drought & Water-Wise Landscaping. The Association hosted an event on June 10th for our members to learn how we can conserve water and lower our water bills. Madeline Ward, Water Conservation Coordinator for the City, spoke about the Stage 2 drought, our water supply and ways that we can conserve water – both inside the house and in our landscaping. Betsy Collins, Director of Horticulture at the Santa Barbara Botanic Gardens, discussed the importance of planting native plants. They thrive with little water, reduce the need for pesticides and provide a habitat and food for pollinators and other beneficial wildlife.

Turf grasses, annual flowers and vegetables are usually high water usage plants. Ornamental shrubs and ground covers may use 40% to 60% less water than turf or annual flowerbeds. Consider planting drought-resistant plants, including many regionally adapted and native plants that can survive strictly on seasonal rainfall once they are established. To learn more about how to conserve water, check the website www.waterwisesb.org.

Mission Heritage Trail

Since 2011 a group called Concerned Citizens for Safe Passage has been working to improve safety along the winding road leading from Mission Historical Park up to Mission Canyon. In 2012 the group published a document outlining both the safety issues and the many historical resources that must be considered in developing solutions. As a result of that work Caltrans awarded the County an \$88,000 grant in 2013 to develop a conceptual improvement plan for the corridor. The City has been an active partner with the County on the project along with the working group.

This year County and City staff led two workshops to gather community input and build consensus on the most serious areas of concern. A tentative project plan was identified that focuses on improvements to the left side of the corridor (looking toward the mountains). It includes new continuous walking and bicycling paths along the left side of East Los Olivos Street from its intersection with Laguna Street, a new footbridge on the left side of the historic Mission Creek Bridge, and a new walkway in front of the "Stegosaurus wall" continuing along the left side of Mission Canyon Road all the way up to Foothill Road.

The County and City staffs are currently presenting this proposed plan to various County and City boards and commissions for review and comment prior to scheduling the third public workshop required by the Caltrans grant. This third public workshop is tentatively planned for sometime this fall. We will notify our members as soon as a date is set.

In addition to working in support of this Community Consensus Plan, the working group has developed conceptual plans to improve safety on the right side of the corridor and to improve access to the many historic resources in Mission Historical Park and Rocky Nook Park. Detailed drawings of these plans will be presented at the Upper East Association's annual meeting and to other community groups to build support for all of the improvements that are needed to make this historic area safer and more accessible from an educational standpoint.

Anticipating the need to solicit private as well as public resources, the volunteer working group has formed

a new non-profit organization, named Mission Heritage Trail Association. The Mission Heritage Trail Association welcomes public input on the Vision Master Plan. For more information or if you would like to be notified of future County workshops and progress of planning efforts in this area, please provide your email to Heidi@sepps.com or visit SafePassageSB.com.

Garden Exchanges

We've held five successful garden exchanges this summer, with more to come. Please mark your calendar for the next one, on Saturday, September 27th, 10am-noon at 14 East Los Olivos St.

The idea of a garden exchange is simple ... if you have excess garden goodies – vegetables, fruit, plants – bring them for others to share. If you don't have anything to bring, please come anyway. After all, someone has to take home all those extras. There will be tea and munchies plus the opportunity to meet and chat with your neighbors.

Upper East Association Board

The UEA Board of Directors consists of nine members:

Term ending Dec 2014	Term ending Dec 2015
Fred Sweeney – President	Marie-Paule Hajdu
Steve Forsell – Vice-Pres.	Lisa Burns – Secretary
Joan Livingston – Treas.	Don Olson
Milt Hess – Membership	Beth Perry
Tony Fischer	

Board members serve two-year terms, with five of the Directors elected in even-numbered years and four in odd-numbered years. The Board meets monthly.

The election of Board members for the 2015-16 term will be conducted in November 2014. Prospective candidates for the Board are invited to contact us at ueacomm@gmail.com to express interest and to schedule a meeting to discuss what the role entails.