

UPPER EAST ASSOCIATION SANTA BARBARA

Upper East News

February 2023

<https://sbuppereast.org>

UEA Board Election

Here are the certified results for the recent Board election. These five members will serve in 2023 and 2024:

Steve Forsell

Beth Perry

Pat Saley

Fred Sweeney

Deb Trauntvein

There were 84 respondents (39 was a quorum), and the election was certified by past president Bob Kennedy.

In addition to the members listed above, returning for their 2nd year (2022-2023) are:

Rod Hersberger

Jim Morouse

Ryan Newell

Joining us on the board is **Michael O'Connell**. (bio below).

Welcome to New Board Member Michael O'Connell

We are pleased to welcome Michael O'Connell to your Upper East Association Board of Directors. Michael and his wife and family have lived on the Upper Eastside for 49 years. He is a professor emeritus of English. We look forward to his contributions to the board.

Our by-laws set the number of board members between nine and 13. There are currently nine serving members. There are openings for additional neighbors to join the board. If you have an interest in serving on the UEA board, please contact us at board@sbuppereast.org.

Upper East Association Mission Statement
*To preserve and enhance the spirit
and essence of this historic
neighborhood and its quality of life.*

2022 Annual Membership Meeting Recap

After a two-year absence, on November 12, 2022, we were able to return to an in-person gathering for the Annual Membership Meeting of the Upper East Association. Turnout was good for the 2022 meeting, held at the Presbyterian Church. Light refreshments and wine were served.

Our speaker was Sheila Lodge, former Santa Barbara Mayor and current Santa Barbara City Planning Commissioner. She presented an interesting slide show based on her recent book *Santa Barbara, An Uncommonplace American Town*. Her presentation provided a unique history of Santa Barbara. We are hopeful that we can continue with in-person gatherings this year.



Anacapa Street, watercolor by Fred Sweeney

Helping Preserve Our Neighborhood

As you know, for over a year the UEA has been pursuing historic designation status for the landscaped parkway on State St. from Constance Ave. to Mission St. On February 28, 2023, the City Council will hold a public hearing to adopt the recommendation of the Historic Landmarks Commission to designate the landscape parkway as an Historic Landmark.



We would encourage our members to appear at this hearing and lend their support for this important neighborhood milestone. The Historic Resources sub-committee of the UEA's board of directors wishes to thank all those that participated and helped make this possible.

Who is Eric Torbet?

You may have run across the name Eric Torbet, either through UEA email correspondence or by seeing his name on our website and newsletters. He is the UEA's paid administrator, and he carries out tasks like keeping our list of members accurate and up-to-date, formatting our newsletters, and creating/maintaining our website.

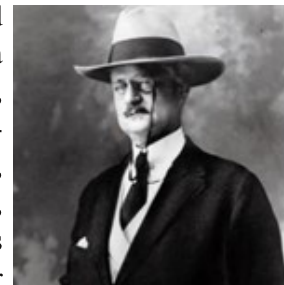
He started working for UEA during the pandemic, using the quarantine period to learn Wordpress and to create our website. He transferred our membership database from Access to Mailchimp, from where we send mass emails to our members and conduct surveys and elections.

Eric lived in the Santa Barbara area for many years, but recently moved to Northern California. Though he never lived in the Upper East, he always admired the historic houses and the ideal location (quiet, near downtown, not too hilly, safe from fire/flood). He plans to continue as UEA administrator for many years.

History Corner

The Raconteur and the Francisca de la Guerra Dibblee House

Francis Townsend Underhill was a fascinating character in the late 1800s and early 1900s. Raised as a member of the upper class, Underhill was a noted clubman, architect, horse fancier, yachtsman, cattle breeder, and raconteur. Underhill has left a permanent mark on our Santa Barbara community through his architecture and landscape designs.



Francis Underhill was born in New York in 1863. Not able to attend university because of poor health, Underhill travelled around Europe with a private tutor studying architecture and landscape architecture.

As a young man he was a fixture in the New York City social scene: a Knickerbocker Union member, a well-known horseman, and a yachtsman who raced in the 1886 America's Cup.

In 1883, Underhill married Margaret A. Varnum in New York City. Shortly after their marriage, the newlyweds traveled to Santa Barbara for an extended stay. During their visit, Underhill purchased the Ontare Ranch located north of the burgeoning city.

In 1891, Underhill separated from his wife and continued his interests in yachting, polo, and livestock raising. In 1898, he volunteered for active duty in the Spanish-American War alongside Theodore Roosevelt.

Underhill moved to Santa Barbara and began to design residences in the early 1900s, just before he married Carmelita Dibblee, a descendant of the famous de la Guerra family. Typical of affluent men of the period, Underhill was classified as a "gentleman architect," similar to noted local designer George Washington Smith. Between 1910 and 1917 Underhill operated an architecture and landscape office in Montecito.

Among his most important commissions were resid-

ences designed for Union Carbide owner C.K.G. Billings (1906); the George Knapp residence, known as Arcady; the Walker residence, known as "The Gables"; the Arrow Shirt mogul Frederick Peabody residence, known as "Solana" (1915); and the clubhouse at Bartlett Polo Field. Underhill continued to practice architecture until his death in 1929.



Solana

333 Junipero Plaza

The Francisca de la Guerra Dibblee House

This Upper East home, completed in 1910 within the then new Edward Vail subdivision, was named for its first owner, Francisca de la Guerra Dibblee. Francis Underhill was her son-in-law. Mrs. Dibblee lived in this residence until 1924.



The home was constructed by local builder J.C.F. Miller for \$8,000. Architect Francis Underhill's design reveals his signature architectural features with a flat roof, interior courtyard, centrally placed entry, and stripped Classical details.



The wood-frame residence design is a Roman-Spanish villa style featuring severely restrained elevations with few windows and a central courtyard with a fountain. In 1987, noted local architect Henry Lenny designed a remodel of the primary entry/porch along Junipero Plaza.

The extensive use of Classical elements such as floor tiles and arched French doors and windows gives the house a formal but comfortable air. This residence is likely Underhill's first design to employ a classic Greco-Roman architectural style.



The Francisca de la Guerra Dibblee House was designated as a Santa Barbara Structure of Merit in 1987. It was featured in the Pearl Chase Tour of Historic Homes in 2000 and was designated a Santa Barbara Historic Landmark in 2002.

Key Sources for this article: 1) Santa Barbara Historic Landmarks Staff Report, 2) Pearl Chase Society, and 3) Hattie Beresford Moguls & Mansions (Montecito Journal)

Membership Renewal

Several of you have not renewed for 2023, but it's not too late to stay connected with the Upper East Association. Only by being a member will you continue to receive the [Newsletter](#) and other important communications. Only by being a member can you attend the annual meeting, go on guided neighborhood walks, and participate in other events. Renew at our website:

sbuppereast.org/membership