



UPPER EAST ASSOCIATION SANTA BARBARA

Upper East News

August 2024

<https://sbuppereast.org>

Upper East Association Summer Soirée a Success!

The Upper East Association honored retiring Upper East postal carrier Kevin Ruskauff at its annual Summer Garden Party on July 3 at the Mission Rose Garden. About 75 neighbors joined in the celebration, bringing delicious food and drinks to share under a glorious blue summer sky.



The UEA Board presented Kevin with a Fred Sweeney original watercolor of a gate on Anacapa Street (whose address Kevin correctly identified when asked!) and a delicious sheet cake from Lazy Acres. The late afternoon affair flowed easily with neighbors sharing summer stories and enjoying the perfect mix of savory and sweet treats under the shade of our event tents.



A special thank you goes out to all our neighbors who made the event such a happy success! We found that everyone participating this year was thrilled to have the focus on honoring someone whose presence in our neighborhood really made/makes a difference.

We hope to see even more of us at next year's summer soirée when the Board and neighborhood will honor and celebrate another local luminary. Who will it be next year? Look for a call for nominations in an early 2025 newsletter when we will be asking you for suggestions on who our association wants to honor next.

Happy Summer!

Save the Date!

**Upper East Association
Annual Meeting
Saturday, November 2, 2024
3:00 – 5:00 p.m.
at the
Fellowship Center
First Presbyterian Church
21 East Constance Avenue**

Refreshments and good conversation will be provided. Our featured speaker will be **Mayor Randy Rowse**.

Santa Barbara School for Girls, 1902 to 1939

By Michael O'Connell

Santa Barbara has every reason to think of itself as an educational center with a major campus of the University of California plus Westmont College and a community "city" college. Add to that a system of public elementary, middle, and high schools and several private schools such as Laguna Blanca, Bishop Garcia Diego, and Crane County Day.

But a little-known school, in a sliver of time in the early twentieth century, could be added to that list.

The Santa Barbara School for Girls was founded in 1902 and through various changes, flourished until 1939. It became a preparatory school for the daughters of Santa Barbara's elite who wanted to matriculate at Eastern women's colleges, the "seven sisters": Bryn Mawr, Vassar, Barnard, Radcliffe, Holyoke, Wellesley, and Smith.

In that brief moment the Upper East was the site of this educational flourishing, gone now with only a few surviving buildings that housed its work. Mary Elizabeth Gamble and her friend Elizabeth Blanchard began the school in 1902 at 2024 Anacapa Street. It was renamed the Gamble School in 1911.



2024 Anacapa Street

Upon Gamble's retirement in 1914, it was purchased by some influential citizens, became Santa Barbara Girls School, and moved to 1624 Garden Street (now a garden court). Then in 1919 it moved to the 11 acres of the "Miradero" estate on Constance Avenue,

then the westernmost edge of Santa Barbara. Here the school had space for sports and drama, and students could board their own horses. Marion Chamberlain, with a degree in English from Radcliffe, became principal. Her house at 111 West Valerio (still surviving) served as a boarding house for out-of-town students. She retired in 1932, succeeded by Gertrude Gogin.



111 W Valerio Street

This was clearly the high point of the school, with enrollment growing from 35 to 125. Tuition in this period reached \$1400 a year. The girls' fashionable uniform consisted of a white skirt and dark blazer. Science, mathematics, history, English, and Latin made up the preparatory curriculum. In 1933 a production of Shakespeare's *The Tempest* was staged outdoors.

Thirteen girls graduated in 1935. Twenty in 1938.

But the school was not to survive the great depression. Even with lowered fees, debt forced it to close after the 1938 school year. Forty years later in 1988, 10 of the "girls" gathered for the 50th reunion.

And its "Miradero" site? Some have thought that it was replaced by the Presbyterian church. But the large paved area above Santa Barbara Street on Constance was the school's former tennis court, and research for this article has discovered that "Miradero" was west and uphill from this. Only the tennis court remains.