



# THE CAPITAL

"Preserving Santa Barbara's historic sites of enduring community value"

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## AUGUST MEETINGS OF INTEREST

### PEARL CHASE SOCIETY

Next Board of Directors meeting: SEPTEMBER 8, 3:30; Location TBA

### CITY OF SANTA BARBARA

#### City Council Public Comment and Participating Online

In order to promote social distancing, City Council chambers will not be open to the general public. Public participation can be done in two ways: 1) via telephone: Call (805) 564-5301 and leave your name, return phone number and the number of the item you wish to speak on. You will be called back during the meeting and will have the chance to make your statement then. 2) you may participate in the Zoom meeting that may be accessed [HERE](#).

City meetings are broadcast live on City TV channel 18 and streamed live [HERE](#), where they are also archived and viewable on demand.

#### City Council

Tuesdays at 2 pm at Council Chambers, City Hall: August 16, 23, 30

#### Planning Commission

First, second and third Thursdays of the month at 1 pm at Council Chambers, City Hall: August 4, 11, 18

#### Historic Landmarks Commission

Every other Wednesday at 1:30 pm at the David Gebhard Public Meeting Room, 630 Garden Street: August 3, 17, 31

#### Architectural Board of Review

Mondays at 3 pm at the David Gebhard Public Meeting Room, 630 Garden Street. Full Board meets August 8, 22

### COUNTY OF SANTA BARBARA

County Board of Supervisor Meetings and Planning Commission meetings are broadcast live on CSBT20. They are also streamed live [HERE](#) where they are also archived and viewable on demand.

#### County Board of Supervisors

Three Tuesdays of the month at 9 am. The first and third meetings are held in Santa Barbara in the Board of Supervisors Hearing Room, 105 East Anapamu St., 4th Floor. The second meeting is (typically) held in Santa Maria at 511 East Lakeside Parkway. August 16, 23, 30

#### County Planning Commission

Three Wednesdays of the month at 9 am. The first and third meetings are held in Santa Barbara at 123 East Anapamu Street, Room 17, and the second meeting is (typically) held in Santa Maria at 511 East Lakeside Parkway. August 3 (SB), August 10 (SM), August 31 (SM)

#### County Historic Landmarks Advisory Commission

Second Monday of the month at 10 am at 123 East Anapamu, Room 17 (unless specified otherwise). August 8

## Society News & Notes

By Cheri Rae

Photographs by Monie Photography

On Thursday, July 28, the Annual Meeting of the Pearl Chase Society was held, in accordance with its charter. It was a delightful gathering, and a wonderful opportunity for members to gather together in person once more.

President Steve Dowty gave a comprehensive report on the activities of the past year. Board Members Steve Dowty, Tina Foss, Patti Ottoboni, Maureen Masson and Kitty Peri were unanimously re-elected, and Cheri Rae was elected to serve on the Board.

Guest speaker Valerie Smith provided fascinating insights into her research and findings about Santa Barbara homes that were part of the national Better Homes in America program headed by Pearl Chase, through the Community Arts Association, from 1925 through 1935. The annual Better Homes Week focused on small, high-quality, affordable homes for those with moderate incomes.



Display of Miss Chase's artifacts owned by the Pearl Chase Society. Clockwise: Image of her father Hezekiah Chase; her handmade cowboy boots; photo of Miss Chase and brother Harold, circa 1904; photo of Miss Chase in a cart for Fiesta, 1950; one of her many leather-bound guest books, this one dating back to the 1960s titled, "Para Nuestros Huéspedes."

Thank you to Kitty and David Peri for their gracious hosting at Arnoldi's, where the appetizers were tasty and the wine exceptional, as usual.



President Steve Dowty and Guest Speaker Valerie Smith

Through her research, Valerie has identified many homes in town that are still standing, including one Cape Cod bungalow designed by the architectural firm of Soule, Murphy and Hastings, with the garden by Lockwood de Forest, Jr. Despite some technical difficulties, she offered an interesting and very informative talk that spurred much conversation about how to build community awareness about this little-known part of Santa Barbara history and significant historic preservation thanks to good stewardship over the years.

Here is the link to her excellent presentation: <https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1CH0zQDEpLcqsy-fdBPYVAg9dhHRI853>

Want to get involved, or have submissions for The Capital? Email us at [PCS@pearlchasesociety.org](mailto:PCS@pearlchasesociety.org).

## Ten Questions with: Betsy J. Green

By Cheri Rae



A native of New Jersey who worked for years in Chicago, Betsy Green has a clever answer about why she moved to Santa Barbara. “Three main reasons,” she says, “December, January and February.” She has transformed the research, writing and editing skills she developed working for *Reader's Digest* and *World Book Encyclopedia* into a successful publishing enterprise of her own—specializing in several popular titles about Santa Barbara. She’s just released a new 250-page hardcover book about the silent movies filmed in the mansions of Montecito.

**You have a strong background in mainstream publishing. Tell us how you made the transition to your own publishing business.**

My first two books were published back in 2002, when there were fewer options for independent authors. In 2014, when I began writing my *Way Back When* series about Santa Barbara happenings, year by year, I knew I would have a local audience that wouldn't interest major publishers, so I started working as an indie author. There is definitely a learning curve, but I like to learn, so it has worked well for me.

**That *Way Back When* series is very popular. What year are you up to, and what are your plans with that? If you could pick a year to live in Santa Barbara, when would it be?**

My six-volume *Way Back When* series, which started with 1914, ended with 1919. One of the two local papers that I used for my sources was not saved from 1920 to 1924, so there's just not enough material. I was sad to end the series, right as the Covid lockdown was beginning, so I wasn't sure what I was going to do. That's when I switched to writing about movies made in Santa Barbara.

I would pick 1914 as my favorite year to live in Santa Barbara. That was the biggest year for the “Flying A”—they were making movies all around the city.

**Your newest book is about movies shot in Montecito mansions. Please tell us about that one.**

I wanted to write about “Flying A” movies, and I knew they had filmed at mansions in Montecito. The big surprise was that so many other film studios also made movies there.

*Movies & Million-Dollar Mansions: Silent movies made in Montecito, CA* contains information and photos about more

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### PEARL CHASE SOCIETY

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Please direct inquiries and comments to:

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(805) 961-3938

#### Newsletter

Cheri Rae, *editor*

Lisa DeSpain, *graphics*

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### Movies & Million-Dollar Mansions

Silent movies made in Montecito, CA



Betsy J. Green

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[www.facebook.com/PearlChaseSociety](http://www.facebook.com/PearlChaseSociety)

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A photo of the estate showing the location of the film scene. (Jane Pauley filmed a segment of her show here in May 2022.) Image: courtesy of John Fritsche

than sixty movies that were filmed there by nineteen Hollywood studios, in addition to the “Flying A.” I found more than 400 photos of the movies and the estates where they were filmed.

**You also have a series in the *Independent*, “The Great House Detective,” where you tour and write about historic homes. How do you find the homes, and the stories they reveal?**

I’ve been writing my column for two and a half years, and I mostly rely on hearing from people through my website: <https://www.betsyjgreen.com/>

I focus on homes in the central area of the city that were built before 1920. Later than that, and farther away from the city center, there is much less information available.

I use old city directories to figure out who lived in a home, then do genealogy research about the families, and historical research about the architectural style and the area of the city where the home is located.

**What historic style of home appeals to you most?**

I like Queen Anne-style homes, but I especially like the cottage-size homes in this style. I appreciate that a tiny home can have lots of charming intricate details in the woodwork and trim.

**You are an incredible researcher: How much time do you spend on the research and the writing of your different projects?**

I’m very curious, and I like doing research. To me, it’s like digging in the desert and finding dinosaur bones or signs of an ancient civilization. There is hardly a day when I’m *not* doing research.

**What are your favorite sources of information and photos?**

I do a lot of research online—old newspapers and vintage movie magazines kept me going during the Covid lockdown. Now that things are opening up again, I do research at the Gledhill Library at the Santa Barbara Historical Museum. There are some nice photos of old Santa Barbara in the Edson Smith Collection on the

website of the Santa Barbara Public Library. I am also very fortunate that some local folks with photo collections have shared their images with me.

**What is your favorite discovery from one of your projects?**

One discovery was totally accidental. Recently, as I was watching a 1918 movie starring Mary Pickford called *Stella Maris* on Youtube, I suddenly recognized one of the locations in the film—it was the garden theater at the old *Piranhurst* estate in Montecito. There is not any documentation about Mary Pickford filming there, so I was totally surprised. (Hope my neighbors didn’t hear me yell.) Since *Movies & Million-Dollar Mansions* was already paginated and indexed, I had to add the movie at the end of the book.

Who knows? Perhaps, now that the book is published, I may learn about more movies. (I left a couple of blank pages at the back of the book, in case this happens. Ya never know!)

**In addition to all the books you create, you also publish and market them, and give lectures, and even share your insights with other writers. How do you find the time, and how did you learn all these skills?**

I don’t have a TV, so I think that gives me more hours to work with.

I’ve learned from other writers, from webinars, from how-to books, from classes, and from trying, failing, and trying again. My motto is: Be patient, be polite, but above all, be persistent.

**How does it feel to have created such a unique niche that you can explore and share?**

I’m happy that through my writing, I can share my love of history—how people lived, what their homes were like, their everyday activities, etc.

NOTE: Betsy’s upcoming speaking tour:

- Aug. 29—Chaucer’s
- Sept. 10—Montecito Public Library
- Sept. 19—Santa Barbara Yacht Club
- Sept. 28—Santa Barbara Historical Museum

*Movies & Million-Dollar Mansions: Silent movies made in Montecito, CA* is available at local bookstores, and [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com).



This scene from the 1913 “Flying A” movie, “The Adventures of Jacques,” was filmed next to a pool at the Gillespie estate called “El Fureidís.” Image: Motography, August 9, 1912.

## Preservation Report July 2022

By Christine Neuhauser

**NEIGHBORHOOD TIMESHARES:** Pacaso, a global company that is promoting a concept of “second home ownership at 1/8 the cost.” Santa Barbara has recently been added to their list of “world-class destinations” where they offer properties for part-time ownership. It is a big fight looming for those who want to save and preserve the tranquility of the single-family neighborhoods.

This is not your mom-and-pop renting a unit to help pay the rent; it is advertised as the modern way to own a second home, basically a rebranding of a time share. It has been reported in several local newspapers and a location in Montecito, after the bad press, the sellers decline. Other communities in California, including Pacific Grove, Carmel, Sonoma, and Palm Desert among others, are fighting these types of property sales with proposed ordinances. Be on the lookout for this in your neighborhood. Here are links to recent articles on the subject:

Noozhawk <https://www.noozhawk.com/article/pacaso-timeshares-santa-barbara>

Independent <https://www.independent.com/2022/05/24/santa-barbara-neighborhood-rises-up-against-fractional-ownership-property/>

Montecito Journal <https://www.montecitojournal.net/2022/06/28/montecito-association-discusses-pacaso/>

There is even a nationwide movement to prevent this kind of home “ownership.” For more information: <https://stoppacasonow.com/>

Pacaso’s website: <https://www.pacaso.com/listings/santa-barbara-ca>

**HOTEL ANNEX:** The Historic Landmarks Commission had a preliminary concept review of the Ed St. George hotel annex at 328 W Montecito St (at Castillo). Gratefully it is only two stories instead of four. But as Commissioner Keith Butler asked, “Where’s the front of this building? This doesn’t have an entry to it,” Butler added, “I recognize it’s an annex to further down the street, but if I were walking back to here, to my hotel room, from Santa Cruz Market next door, whatever, where’s the front of this place? How do I get in?” Again, this project will be built, and is better than an empty lot full of weeds on a prominent corner.

**HOUSING AUTHORITY PROJECT:** Regarding the public housing on the previous commuter lot at Castillo and Carrillo streets, next to the freeway, not much to be said except the parking appears to be adequate, and

the property will remain off the tax rolls as it becomes under the large umbrella of the Housing Authority. The income from the commuter lot is lost and unknown where the neighboring residences will park, as they used the commuter lot at night.

Drive by and enjoy the trees while they are still providing shade, and some pollution abatement. Although the project purports to remove approximately 30 trees which are on the site, the location is surrounded by another 30 trees all the way around, (top of the freeway) and fronting Castillo Street. Since the bus stop will be moved, it is probable that more than the stated 30 trees will be removed. (I went over there and counted 61.)

This project is 63 units of public housing at an average \$2200 a month for a total of \$138,600 per month to the Housing Authority, annually at \$1,663,200. This money goes to the Housing Authority, although the city/citizens keep lending them money. The reason I bring this up is because a comment at City Council was that the old police building at 215 East Figueroa will also become the site of public housing, under the SB Housing Authority. The question was posed: Why isn’t this property sold to a developer and put back on the property tax rolls while the money from the sale would help fund the \$120 million new police department?

### ¡Viva La Fiesta!

