

THE CAPITAL

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

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JANUARY MEETINGS OF INTEREST

PEARL CHASE SOCIETY

Next Board of Directors meeting: January 5 at the Santa Barbara County Genealogical Society, 316 Castillo Street, 3:30 p.m.

CITY OF SANTA BARBARA

City Council Public Comment and Participating Online

City Council chambers are now open to the public for in-person meetings, or you have the option to participate electronically: 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: January 10, 24, 31

Planning Commission

First, second and third Thursdays of the month at 1 pm at Council Chambers, City Hall: January 12, 19

Historic Landmarks Commission

Every other Wednesday at 1:30 pm at the David Gebhard Public Meeting Room, 630 Garden Street: January 18

Architectural Board of Review

Mondays at 3 pm at the David Gebhard Public Meeting Room, 630 Garden Street. Full Board meets January 9, 23

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. January 10 (SB), January 24 (SB)

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. January 11 (SB), January 25 (SM)

County Historic Landmarks

Advisory Commission

Second Monday of the month at 10 am at 123 East Anapamu, Room 17 (unless specified otherwise). January 9

A Letter from your President: Looking Back, Looking Forward

Dear Pearl Chase Society members,

The 2022 year was one of positive changes for the Society, and we expect the same from the New Year.

First, we restarted our in-person Board of Directors meetings, supplanting our (COVID-era) virtual meetings.

Second, we have elected to the board three new directors: Emma Brinkman, Claudia Schou, and Stephanie Williams. I am very excited to have these three experienced, and enthusiastic preservationists join us.

We held our annual meeting in late July when all of the current directors were reelected to the board. It was a fun event at Arnoldi's Restaurant, and we enjoyed the lively and informative presentation by our special guest speaker, Valerie Smith. She spoke about the Better Homes in America movement in Santa Barbara (circa 1920-1940). Our own Pearl Chase played an important role in promoting small houses as a way of addressing our ever-present housing crisis.

The Society continues to follow important civic developments, which impact Santa Barbara's historic resources, such as the State Street promenade master plan and the De La Guerra Plaza revitalization project. We will also continue to follow many of the private multi-unit residential developments that are being proposed and built in our city.

Best wishes for a happy 2023 and to promoting the Society's efforts in continuing to preserve the historical buildings, gardens and neighborhoods in the City and County of Santa Barbara.

~ Steve Dowty
*Pearl Chase Society
Board President*

February Fling
Presented by
PEARL CHASE SOCIETY
Please join us
Saturday February 4, 2023
12 noon to 3 PM
Arnoldi's Cafe
Lunch & no host bar
\$25 per person
Please send checks to:
Patti Ottoboni
9 N. San Marcos Rd. Unit B, SB 93111
Ph: 805.961.3938 for questions

**Want to get involved, or have submissions for
The Capital? Email us at PCS@pearlchasesociety.org.**

PEARL CHASE SOCIETY Board of Directors

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Cheri Rae

Claudia Schou

Stephanie Williams

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Sue Adams

Bob Baum

Roger Horton

Barbara Lowenthal

Please direct inquiries
and comments to:

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Santa Barbara, CA 93190-2121
For information, call
(805) 961-3938

Newsletter

Cheri Rae, *editor*

Lisa DeSpain, *graphics*

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PRESERVATION WATCH

Keeping an eye on what makes Santa Barbara Santa Barbara—past, present and future. Please feel free to share information about local developments and issues of concern.

Getting it Right. After initial review by the Historic Landmarks Commission last summer, the mixed-use housing project planned for the prominent corner of De La Vina and Carrillo streets—formerly occupied by Jiffy Lube—has returned from the drawing board with significant improvements in design, and reduction in size, bulk, and scale. It will return to the HLC for additional review but appears to be headed in the right direction to accomplish the twin goals of providing housing while ensuring compatibility with long-held community standards.

Our Society letter to the HLC addressed many of the issues of concern about the project back in August. We will continue to monitor it through the process. View the proceedings of the HLC's review on December 22, 2022 [HERE](#), beginning at 2:01:26.

In Drought-Plagued Santa Barbara, an homage to the wonder of rain. "Il Pleut": A public work of art by Marge Dunlap (1935-1991). Charming, delightful, and largely hidden from view, this strikingly original piece of work, created in 1984, is situated in the Las Aves office complex near the Bird Refuge. "Il pleut," say the French, giving the art piece its name in many languages. "Stuhuy," say the Chumash, "ame-ga butte imasu," say the Japanese. Reflecting multiple cultures, the whimsical fountain that celebrates rain is a delight. Embedded with cracked pottery, cup handles, and bits of china—many contributed by community members; from long ago. It's a highly prized, if not widely known, it's a one-of-a-kind work of art by the late artist.

We recently received word that the property has changed hands, and the fate of the fountain was in doubt—with redevelopment plans to replace it with a firepit. Turns out that the project is on the radar of City Architectural Historian Nicole Hernandez, and drawings for any proposed changes will be reviewed by the Historic Landmarks Commission.



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www.facebook.com/PearlChaseSociety

The Recreation Center: Longtime Heart and Soul of Santa Barbara

By Cheri Rae

The imposing red-brick building at the corner of Carrillo and Anacapa Streets, known as the Recreation Center, has a long and lovely history as a place of service and shelter in the community. The success of the organization dates back decades and can largely be attributed to the partnership of two dynamic women, Pearl Chase and Margaret Baylor.

When Margaret Baylor relocated to Santa Barbara from Cincinnati in 1910, she had experience as a probation officer and the administrator of the Anna Louise Inn, a home for working girls. She brought her talents to town and was hired as the superintendent of Neighborhood House, which eventually became known as the Recreation Center. It was Santa Barbara's answer to the work of Jane Addams at Chicago's Hull-House, a renowned center of social services and community outreach, where Margaret once worked.

As a student at Santa Barbara Normal School and a Home Economics teacher at Santa Barbara High School, Pearl had long volunteered at Neighborhood House and served on the Board of Directors. As Margaret arrived, Pearl continued her studies in social work. Combining their talents, the two women developed a strong bond of friendship and shared commitment to public service. Under Margaret, the Recreation Center adopted the motto, "Happy is the house which shelters a friend."

When Pearl compiled a Social Services directory, she listed just a few of the numerous services offered at the Recreation Center: "Community Club homes; rest and recreation rooms for men and women; few rooms for transient women; shower and tub baths for women; shower baths for men; concerts, dances, and other entertainments." She also noted, "The building was always open to the public; and featured a free employment bureau for women."

Over the years, Pearl taught American Citizenship classes for immigrants; organized social services

conferences; sanctioned the Red Cross's use of the building during World War I and the Spanish Flu pandemic; utilized it as a site of rest and relaxation for servicemen during WWII; arranged legendary community dances on the famed spring-loaded floor; and hosted numerous holiday celebrations—all at the Recreation Center.

In 1922, *The Morning Press* reported: "One might attain a comprehensive knowledge of the hopes and fears, the

ideals and aspirations of the citizens of Santa Barbara, and never leave the swivel chair in the center's lobby." No less an authority than Katherine Farwell Edson, the well-traveled state industrial commissioner, declared, "The Santa Barbara Recreation Center is an ideal institution; a center exactly like it should be established in every large town." And an unnamed lecturer observed, "No other organization is so conversant with the hopes and fears of the community as the Center, because to nowhere other can the people bring their varied interests, which, through lectures and recreations, are echoed through the Center's walls back to the great outside from which they were drawn."

When the City refurbished the Recreation Center some years ago, the Pearl Chase Society provided funding to restore and reframe the portrait of Pearl Chase that hangs in a reception room. Painted by local artist Laurie Hover, it was presented to Pearl on her 90th birthday in 1978. We've been invited to create and place an interpretive plaque to provide the public with information and receive credit for our contribution.

In addition, we have been presented with an exciting opportunity to develop an interpretive historical display in the main hallway to tell the story of the Recreation Center and how it came to be, including the influential work of Pearl Chase and Margaret Baylor. This was the original idea of the late David Bisol, the longtime director of the Santa Barbara Historical Museum. It has been carried forward by Senior Recreation Supervisor Jason Bryan, who discussed it with Society vice-president Dennis Whelan. Our recent tour presented many possibilities, and we hope we may move forward with this chance to add historic context to this important building.



The restored and elegantly reframed portrait of Pearl Chase, courtesy of the Pearl Chase Society. A commemorative plaque would provide the community with valuable insight, and the Society with proper credit.



The long-serving Recreation Center, circa 1920.

News and Notes

By Cheri Rae

The Board of Directors of the Pearl Chase Society met on Thursday, Dec. 3 at the Santa Barbara Genealogical Society for its final meeting of the year. Several members were absent due to illness, but there was a quorum.

As a follow-up to our November visit to the Main-Begg Farmhouse, members considered the organization's request for a grant to address needed repairs to the front porch. Discussions will continue to define a detailed description of the project and to guarantee that all work would comply with the historic preservation guidelines of the Secretary of the Interior.

Similarly, the Society will continue to stay in touch with the principals at St. Paul's AME Church, which needs repairs. There is hope that once the full scope of work is defined and fully understood, this project might be one that will appeal to various additional individuals and organizations in the community.

We revisited the continuing effort to establish the Bungalow Haven neighborhood as a Historic District that is currently stalled out. The discussion focused on the process, with the requirement of the approval of 50 percent plus one of property owners within the proposed district. However, any who do not participate in the voting process will be counted as a "No." We hope this situation will soon be resolved. The City's proposal is [HERE](#)

(For more about Bungalow Haven, see story below.)

A Modest Proposal: Historic Designation for Bungalow Haven Back on Track

By Cheri Rae

Full disclosure: We purchased our 1912 bungalow in 1993, and have lived there since then, raising our children in the comfort of the wonderful old home, and have worked steadily with neighbors and the city to preserve and protect this lovely bit of history in Santa Barbara.

A bit of background about Bungalow Haven: It should be noted that it was the action of longtime residents in that neighborhood that initiated its protection more than a decade ago. It is the largest intact area of modest bungalows, the initial workforce housing in Santa Barbara. Many of the homes are excellent examples of Craftsman architecture and the distinctive Arts-and-Crafts movement of simplicity and integration with nature. With its open front porches, tree-lined streets and small, cozy homes, its walkability—just a few

blocks from downtown—evokes a step back in time.

A committed group of residents worked closely with the city to create the Lower Riviera Special Design District, which has provided some protection of the architecture in the neighborhood. Adopted in 2006, that document can be viewed [HERE](#)

In 2012, the 13th Annual Pearl Chase Society Historic Homes Tour took place in Bungalow Haven, and it was one of our most successful. An excerpt from the HHT brochure offers insight about the importance of the bungalow in Santa Barbara—then and now:

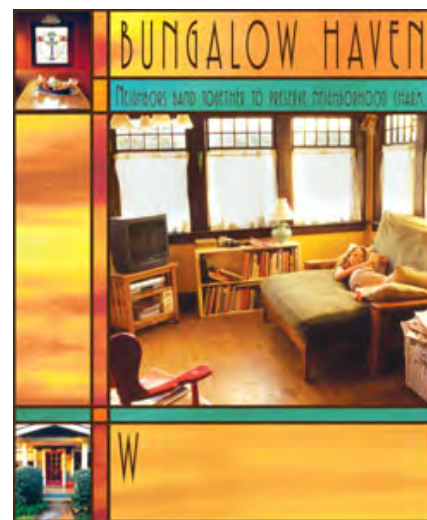
By 1923, plans to provide affordable housing became the project of the newly formed Plans and Planting Committee of the Community Arts Association, led by such notables as Bernhard Hoffmann, Pearl Chase, and Kathleen Burke Peabody, their goal was to enhance the attractiveness of the city while encouraging affordable houses.

The bungalows and cottages on the Pearl Chase Society Historic Homes Tour preceded the Plans and Planting Committee's efforts and stood at the vanguard of building small but artistic homes for people of modest means. Today, they continue to provide inspiration for the creativity of artisans in the Arts and Crafts tradition and provide cozy homes for families wishing to live simpler lives.

After the passage of the design guidelines in 2006, many members of City Council, as well as boards and commissions, encouraged Bungalow Haven residents to continue their efforts to work with the city to establish an official Historic District. Unfortunately, frequent turnover at the city resulted in the stalling out of what was once a high-priority focus. A recent resumption of the dialogue is most welcome, with the expectation of a positive outcome.



Artistic details abound in these historic homes.



Many articles the local and national press have focused on this special bungalow neighborhood.