

THE CAPITAL

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

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OCTOBER MEETINGS OF INTEREST

PEARL CHASE SOCIETY

Next Board of Directors meeting: November 2 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: October 3, 10, 17, 24, 31

Planning Commission

First, second and third Thursdays of the month at 1 pm at Council Chambers, City Hall: October 5, 12, 19

Historic Landmarks Commission

Every other Wednesday at 1:30 pm at the David Gebhard Public Meeting Room, 630 Garden Street: October 11, 25

Architectural Board of Review

Mondays at 3 pm at the David Gebhard Public Meeting Room, 630 Garden Street. Full Board meets October 2, 16, 30

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.

NOTE: DUE TO CONSTRUCTION MANY COUNTY MEETINGS WILL BE HELD IN SANTA MARIA ONLY. PLEASE CHECK IN ADVANCE.

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. October 3, 10, 17 (All in Santa Maria)

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. October 4, 11, 25

County Historic Landmarks Advisory Commission

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

October Society News and Notes

By Cheri Rae

Welcome to autumn, that lovely, busy, transitional time of year. And so it is with the Pearl Chase Society, with a good deal of activity by dedicated members to adapt to changes all around us.

First of all, we're nearing completion of an update and re-designed website to better serve our membership. Our new site will contain an archive of issues of *The Capital*, the newsletter of the Pearl Chase Society. This feature will enable the community to retrieve information that has appeared in our pages and document our many projects, activities, and special events over the years.

Our new site will also reflect the energy and determination Board members have to enlarge upon the founding vision of Pearl Chase in this ever-changing world. We continue our mission to engage in charitable and educational activities to promote and preserve Santa Barbara's unique history and heritage, while addressing present-day realities.

To that end, another new feature will be a series of position papers about local issues regarding historic architecture, landscapes and cultural heritage that will be posted to the site for easy access for members of the Society and the public.

We anticipate the website will be much more interactive, allowing for additional use of social media, regular updates, and greater engagement for members to be more well-informed about the myriad activities that go on in the effort to keep Santa Barbara a place Pearl Chase would recognize. As always, we invite your feedback.

Save the date, October 27, 6 to 8 p.m. for the next installment of our Kellam de Forest Speaker series. With a nod to the work Kellam did on films and his love of local history, this special event will feature the first general public screening of a film about local historic home and architecture, *Birth of Beauty: The Santa Barbara Renaissance* by local filmmaker Jim Cutsinger.

It is the story of Plaza Rubio and visionary women in 1925: the inspired work of architect Mary McLaughlin Craig, the determination of Pearl Chase and the support of Caroline

Hazard and Margaret Forsyth Andrews. As the film notes, "Every city has an original cast of characters, the people who had a hand in creating the identity and spirit of the place. If the vision of those early years are compelling enough to survive, it will guide the city's growth and success into the future. That's exactly what happened in Santa Barbara."

The film depicts America's earliest efforts in urban planning and offers the history of a Santa Barbara location visited, photographed, and enjoyed by thousands of sightseers and picnickers each year. Now you can know the story to share with them.

The event will be held at the Alhecama Theatre, 215 East Canon Perdido Street. Call 805-961-3938 to reserve a seat. We invite a five-dollar donation.



"Many new things in this fast-moving age make it difficult to keep pace with an ever-changing world.

Let us Communicate, Cooperate and Coordinate our efforts for good freely."
-PEARL CHASE



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

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NewsletterCheri Rae, *editor*Lisa DeSpain, *graphics*

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Preservation Watch Report*By Christine Neuhauser*

PASEO NUEVO UPDATE If there isn't enough confusion, construction, and street closures already, the city finally made their move to suggest Paseo Nuevo become housing. Their projections—Five hundred units equal 700 people, which would increase buying power. ...of what? With 75 percent less commercial, where will they shop, except for street food, and Farmers Market? Still perplexing is that City Councilmembers stressed is that a substantial amount is affordable, low-income, and very-low income. Seven blocks from the beach in one of the most expensive cities in the world. How does that pencil out? City Administrator Rebecca Bjork and the consultant said many of the units must be market rate.

STATE STREET STANDSTILL After paying \$800,000 to the consulting firm commissioned to study State Street the city appears to be getting push back from the citizens who want it to be reopened as before. The September 6th meeting at the library's Faulkner Gallery, Sept 6, 2023, which was to focus on transportation, seemed to come away with no decisions. Councilmember Kristen Sneddon and several other speakers said that excluding the non-bike riders, including some senior citizens was not going to work. Some downtown residents said they are now unable to travel up and down State Street since the shuttle was put out of service when the street was closed. Yet two weeks later, the City elected to include three additional blocks to create the "mile-long State Street Promenade." And on September 27, voted once again to keep it closed, while allowing drop-offs in front of the Granada. See report in [Noozhawk](#)

All this as the four-block-long promenade on Pearl Street in Boulder, Colorado is set to reopen to cars. Boulder's promenade was closed to cars during the pandemic and has been referred to as the glowing example for Santa Barbara to follow.

Next meeting of the State St Advisory Committee at the Faulkner is scheduled for Oct 24. Attending the meeting in person is better than zooming. Stay informed.

DE LA GUERRA PLAZA Another project-in-the-making. The recent plan for the update of De la Guerra Plaza has been in the works for four years, history says it has been in the works for a century. It's become obvious that a compromise is needed to get the project to the next stage from the plans to the ground. At this point, design contracts and personnel have cost the city \$920,000, not including the salaries of the different project managers, and facilitators. Many questions arise: What will the final cost of De la Guerra Plaza be? Projections are at least 10 million dollars. For shade trees, paving and a place to sit and gather?

The important issues that still were of concern seem to be the location of the public restrooms, lawn vs all hardscape, water bubbler—yes or no and its location—the Pavilion Building (nearly a dozen iterations so far) should it be longer? Or a wall with a bench? What about historic plaques?

The loss of parking as the street becomes the same level as the plaza appears to be a done deal, and it does enlarge the plaza, lessens trip hazards and if the space is ample and allowed for vehicle deliveries to restaurants back doors, and for Fiesta booths, why not?

The public restrooms are now to be located in the breezeway/paseo from State Street to De la Guerra Plaza in Storke Placita. They will be out of the way, and easily accessible from State Street.

Regarding the lawn vs hardscape issue, why not compromise and have some lawn somewhere? The city said the lawn isn't accessible, not sustainable, and not maintainable, and takes months to grow back after Fiesta. However, hardscape and pavers don't cool down an area, they increase the heat. Another idea is still not really decided.

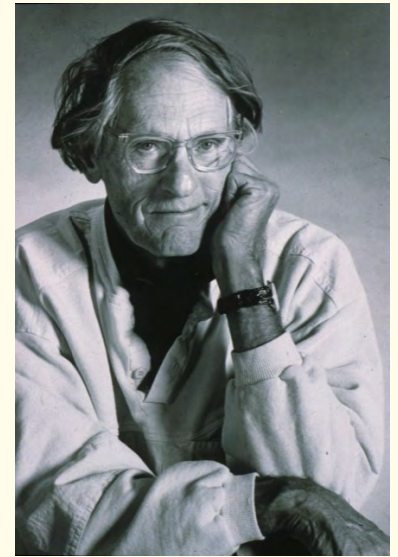
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From One Architectural Historian to Another

Photos: Monie Photography

On Friday, September 8, the community was treated to a presentation by the distinguished Dr. Lauren Bricker as part of our continuing Kellam de Forest Speaker Series. Dr. Bricker spoke to a packed house and enthusiastic audience about the significance of David Gebhard’s distinguished career and the importance of his legacy to Santa Barbara. The new location of the series, at the Alhecama Theatre, proved a pleasant, historic venue for all to enjoy



David Gebhard, the prolific author, the subject at hand.



Our presenter, Dr. Lauren Bricker.



More than 100 peers, former students, archivists and architecture fans attended the lecture on Dr. David Gebhard presented by Dr. Lauren Bricker.



(L-R) Dennis Whelan, Board member; Sylvia Perera, Curator; Art, Design & Architecture Museum at UCSB; Dr. Lauren Bricker, presenter; Rick Closson, longtime member of the Pearl Chase Society.



David Gebhard’s family members were in attendance: daughters, (L) Tyra Gebhard Byers, Director, Interdisciplinary Sustainability Certificate, University of Georgia, (R) Ellen Gebhard Gates, Cold Spring Farm, Horse trainer, horse show judge, and grandson, Connor Byers, COO, Passion Products LLC.



The historic Alhecama, a great venue for our events.

Pearl Chase Remembered

By Penny Davies

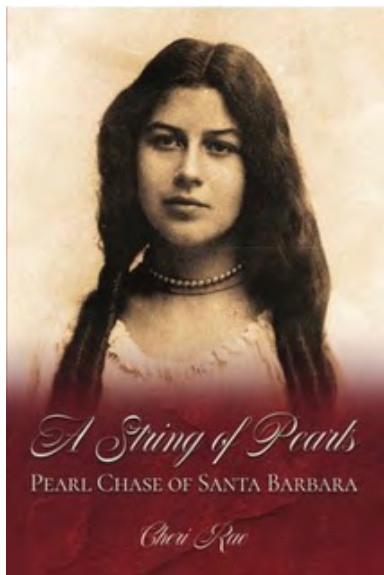
With *A String of Pearls: Pearl Chase of Santa Barbara*, author Cheri Rae has meticulously crafted an inspired biography chronicling the life of Santa Barbara's legendary activist, Pearl Chase.

I did not want this book to end. Every page was captivating. Pearl saved every piece of paper—and apparently Cheri found them all! The author chronicles a life well lived, at a time when women in America were told their value came only from marriage, child rearing and domestic servitude. Pearl Chase broke the mold; she never married, never had children, and instead, working with the most powerful men and most brilliant women of her time, changed the city of Santa Barbara forever.

As someone who knew Pearl Chase personally, it brought me back to a time in my life when my late husband (Terry Davies) and I worked alongside her in the 1960s. I remember fondly her fierce tenacity as we fought to prevent the construction of high-rise condominiums, resulting in what is now Alice Keck Park Memorial Garden.

Terry and I met Pearl when she came to our house, the old parsonage next door to the large Unitarian Church on East Arrellaga Street. Terry and I were in our mid 30s. We had three small children and were refugees of the East Coast Blizzard of 1966. When Terry obtained a job in Santa Barbara, we couldn't believe our good luck. We thought we had died and gone to heaven.

One day a man came to our door with a petition, asking for our support of a plan to build two large, modern, condominiums on the site of the burned-down El Mirasol Hotel. It felt wrong to us. Terry was told that Pearl would know what to do so he phoned her, and Pearl sprang into action. Out of our first meeting with the already legendary Pearl came plans of how to preserve this space for the betterment of the whole community.



I vividly remember walking into a city council meeting with Pearl and the uneasy hush that came over the room. She was powerful, respected, and held in awe by most. But there were powerful people who opposed her: Thomas Storke, owner of the *Santa Barbara News-Press* and Louis Lancaster, President of Santa Barbara's most prestigious bank, each had plans to own a penthouse condo on this proposed site. The council voted in favor of the developer. The justification was that wealthy people who lived in these apartments would use their money to shop downtown. A long court battle ensued. We raised \$30,000 in small community contributions to pay for an attorney, who helped us win and thanks to citizen activism, what might have become two nine-story residential towers became instead one of Santa Barbara's most beloved city parks.

I met Pearl when she was in her 70s. This was one of her last battles. *A String of Pearls* reveals so much her younger days and middle years. I always wondered: How did she manage to make Santa Barbara so beautiful? Why didn't she marry?

Was it money that gave her power? This engrossing book answers these questions and many more.

Cheri Rae's biography of Pearl Chase is a lively (and long overdue account) of one of the most influential women (and surely the most determined!) in Santa Barbara history. Pearl Chase was ahead of her time. We knew it in the 1960s and now readers will know it too.



Penny Davies, author and civic activist who worked with Pearl Chase.

Penny Davies was the owner of The Earthling Bookshop, a beloved downtown institution for more than two decades. Inspired by Pearl Chase's determination, the Davies fought the city's plans to take over their building by eminent domain. The issue became a ballot measure, and the City was defeated in another example of successful citizen activism.

NOTE: Chaucer's will host the first book-signing of *A String of Pearls: Pearl Chase of Santa Barbara* on Wednesday, November 8, 6-8 p.m.

View the book trailer [HERE](#)

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