



THE CAPITAL

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

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SEPTEMBER MEETINGS OF INTEREST

PEARL CHASE SOCIETY

NEW LOCATION

Next Board of Directors meeting at the Santa Barbara Carriage and Western Art Museum, 129 Castillo Street, September 4 at 3:30 p.m.

CITY OF SANTA BARBARA

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. [HERE](#). September 9, 16, 23, 30

Planning Commission

First, second and third Thursdays of the month at 1 pm at Council Chambers, City Hall. [HERE](#). September 11, 18

Historic Landmarks Commission

Every other Wednesday at 1:30 pm at the David Gebhard Public Meeting Room, 630 Garden Street. [HERE](#). September 10, 24

Architectural Board of Review

Alternate Mondays at 3 pm at the David Gebhard Public Meeting Room, 630 Garden Street. [HERE](#). September 2, 15, 29

COUNTY OF SANTA BARBARA

County Board of Supervisor Meetings and Planning Commission meetings are broadcast live on CSBTv20. 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 a.m. 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. September 9 (SB), 16 (SM), 23 (SB)

County Planning Commission

Three Wednesdays of the month at 9 a.m. 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. September 3 (SB), 10 (SM), 24 (SB)

County Historic Landmarks

Advisory Commission

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

News and Notes

By Cheri Rae

As the final days of summer wind down, we're looking forward to hosting the next of our featured guest presenters in the third installment of our quarterly Kellam de Forest Speaker Series. No doubt Kellam himself would have been the first to reserve a seat to hear from Edward "Ted" Bosley, the Executive Director Emeritus of the Gamble House Conservancy on September 12th at 6 pm. at the Alhecama Theatre.

We are most pleased that Mr. Bosley's travel schedule coincides with our time frame, since he currently lives and works in London. Currently at work on a book about "the gardens and parks of historic house museums internationally," he adds that in his upcoming talk, "I may stray from Pasadena to other locales, such as Santa Barbara."

The Gamble House, built in 1908, was declared a National Historic Landmark in 1977. It is considered one of the finest examples of residential architecture in the U.S. and the pinnacle of the Greene and Greene architectural firm's "ultimate bungalows."

Bosley notes, "There's not much anyone can tell Santa Barbara about the power of historic architecture to inspire civic spirit and preservation. Such success is fragile, however, and must be jealously guarded by the people who care most, and work hardest, to preserve that success."

He adds, "In this presentation, I hope to highlight the significance that a single structure and its gardens—The Gamble House in Pasadena—can have as a catalyst for broader community well-being. The preservation goal in Pasadena was not to preserve everything in amber, but rather to recognize that the broader cultural landscape—historic neighborhoods and gardens—are key context for attracting a range of community benefits: aesthetic, economic and emotional."

Be sure to reserve a seat by calling (805) 961-3938.



Alexander Vertikoff photo

**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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Alice Cooper Bentz: Insights about Greene and Greene in Santa Barbara

By Cheri Rae

As we look forward to the upcoming presentation about the Gamble House in Pasadena, the masterpiece of architects Charles and Henry Greene, here's a glimpse about the only house designed by Greene and Greene in Santa Barbara. Although it is commonly referred to as the Nathan Bentz house, the spot where it was built has a connection to Pearl Chase, and her longtime best friend, Alice Cooper Bentz. The two women corresponded for years, leaving an interesting historic record of the very special friendship, and intriguing bits about the house.

Late in life, Alice shared a memory about the house, "in 1912, we lived at the Arlington while the Greene & Greene (architects) house was building; 150,000 bricks in the foundation."

In a letter dated February 21, 1916, Alice wrote to Pearl, "I doubt if any explanations are necessary for your understanding of the reasons behind my actions, so it will stand as it is. I've left Mr. Bentz and a mutually satisfactory settlement is being arranged." In May, 1917, *The Morning Press* reported, "Nathan Bentz has been granted an interlocutory decree of divorce from Alice C. Bentz on a charge of desertion."



Alice Cooper Bentz, Pearl's friend from 1900 to 1971. Photo courtesy USCBA Special Collections.



Nathan Bentz on the steps of the Prospect Avenue home built by Greene and Greene. Photo courtesy Santa Barbara Historical Museum Gledhill Library.

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In her lovely obituary about her friend, Pearl added some additional details about the property and Alice's interesting life:

The Passing of a Remarkable Woman

[written by Pearl Chase]

Alice Cooper Bentz was born in San Francisco on June 29, 1871 and passed away in that city of August 23, 1971—at the age of 102. In the 1890s and early 1900s, Santa Barbara was the home of Mrs. Bentz. Her husband was a Nathan Bentz, for many years an importer of Asian art—Japanese and Chinese. His stores in Santa Barbara were on State Street—first of the west corner of Victoria before he built on the corner opposite. Mrs. Bentz went to Japan many times with her husband, and several times to China before the Boxer Rebellion. They first lived in the Oak Park area.

With an inheritance from her mother, she bought a lot on Prospect Avenue and built a two-story house, which was a surprise to her husband when he returned from a trans-Pacific trip. Later, they build a very fine home designed by Greene & Greene, distinguished architects of Pasadena.

Mrs. Bentz was active in the Santa Barbara Woman's Club, of which she became a member in 1893. In 1900-10 she served as President. She frequently attended as a Past-President, the luncheon held when new officers were installed. She belonged also to the local chapter of P.E.O. [Philanthropic Educational Organization] and through frequent visits to Santa Barbara over the years kept in touch with friends in both organizations.

Throughout her long life, Mrs. Bentz travelled extensively, both to Asia and Europe. Her last annual trip across the country to Europe alone was when she was 95, but she made two more trips with a companion to visit friends in Great Britain, Holland, France and Austria. She was a remarkable correspondent and kept in touch with close friends. Pearl Chase reports that she never failed to remember her brother Harold's and her birthday from 1900 when the first came to Santa Barbara.

Alice Bentz showed a rare and beautiful capacity for friendship. She lived a vital and giving life for 100 years. Her memory will be cherished by many people in many places in many countries.

Everything most
satisfactory.
Wish I could see
you.
Love —
Alice.

After the unexpected passing of Pearl's mother Nina in 1913, Alice—who was 17 years older than Pearl—stepped in as a sort of surrogate mother/aunt to Pearl. She taught Pearl to make jam, offered advice about romance, and shared her adventurous spirit. In the summer of 1924, Pearl and Alice traveled together for a grand tour of Europe. Alice kept an extensive diary where she documented the months-long adventure on the Continent that included a flight over the English Channel and visits to some of the great battlefields of World War I. The two returned to Santa Barbara just in time for the first Fiesta celebration.

Top: Alice and friends. Courtesy USCB Special Collections.

Middle: Pearl Chase aboard ship during her travels with Alice. Courtesy USCB Special Collections.

Bottom: The memorial poem Alice wrote about Nina's untimely passing in 1913.

Bottom left: From a letter dated 1971, the last one Alice wrote to Pearl; she was 102 years old.



She lived to the west of where I live —
And many a time at the twilight hour
I've looked across to the setting sun
And the sea of colors and a diamond star,
And felt she was part of that glorious view.
Her colors were grey, but blended about
With Roses and Flowers and Children sweet,
She but added a part to that western sky
That I've watched from my window
at twilight time.

PCS Preservation Report: A Round-up of Recent Actions

The Library Plaza

A proposal to install bright orange benches and chairs in the Santa Barbara Library Michael Towbes Plaza was presented by library director Brandon Beaudette to the Historic Landmarks Commission on July 30, and was soundly rejected with members calling the furniture inappropriate for the downtown setting. Commissioner Keith Butler called the design “an architectural mistake,” while commissioner Michael Drury said the saturated colors “take on a life of their own.”

The plaza underwent a \$13 million renovation and reopened in 2024 after a two-year closure. Commissioners suggested commissioning custom furniture that better matches Santa Barbara’s aesthetic. The City of Santa Barbara plans to return with a revised proposal.

Eastside Developments

In April, the Architectural Board of Review approved a 90-unit housing project at 418 N. Milpas Street. and 915-923 E. Gutierrez Street. That project was appealed on August 12 by nearby residents over concerns that the four-story development will block views and present negative impacts on traffic and safety.

The City Council denied the appeal on a vote of 4-3, with Council members Meagan Harmon, Michael Jordan and Eric Friedman and Mayor Randy Rowse voting in support of the project.

Three pro-housing Council members, Oscar Gutierrez, Christine Sneddon and Wendy Santamaria sided with the nearby residents who said the project was too big, would block views, would increase traffic congestion, and would create potential flooding problems and runoff onto nearby properties.

The project calls for 90 units, including 29 studios, 46 one-bedroom units and 15 two-bedroom units. Nine of the units would be for very-low-income residents; six units would be for moderate-income residents. Eight seniors currently live on a portion of the site, which is shaped like an “L” and wraps around a Starbucks and a Rusty’s Pizza.

The project qualifies for Builder’s Remedy, which means the application was submitted when the city did not have a certified Housing Element. Under such rules, the city has no power to limit the number of units or height of the project.

Although the project qualifies for Builder’s Remedy, it is proposed under the city’s average unit-sized density incentive program, state bonus density law, which allows for more density if the developers build a higher number of affordable units. Under the city’s inclusionary housing ordinance, the project requires only nine affordable units, but the developers are adding an additional six units.

“What we gain in housing we are losing in charm and livability,” Eastside resident and Pearl Chase Society President Christine Neuhauser said at the meeting. “Enough of the housing for all who want to live here. You can’t build it because everyone wants to live here.”

Since the project qualified for Builder’s Remedy, Harmon, Friedman, Jordan and Rowse said they could not deny the project because the state specifically passed SB 330 to force cities to approve housing that they had denied for decades.

Harmon said she agreed that state law is constraining the city’s behavior and that it is a challenge to have a “continuous set of ever-changing rules coming down

from the state,” telling them what they could do.

However, Harmon noted that if the council were to deny a 90-unit housing project with more affordable units than the city requires, it would affirm the original reason the state passed SB 330 in the first place.

“Truthfully, I think the message we would be sending if we did that is essentially to tell the legislature that they were right not to trust us to implement our own housing laws,” Harmon said. “At the end of the day, this is what we are asking our developers to do. The affordability component is a good thing.”



Top: Proposed library plaza installation 2025. Courtesy photo, Middle: Library plaza seating installation, 1960. Courtesy of the Edson Smith Photo Collection, Santa Barbara Public Library.

Bottom: The newly renovated library plaza was the perfect location for the 2024 author fair.

Bottom left: A birds-eye view of the 4-story, 90-unit housing project approved for Milpas Street. Courtesy photo.

