

# Historically Speaking

DESTINATION: 900 BLOCK OF ANACAPA STREET

By Brett Leigh Dicks News-Press Correspondent



Chamber of Commerce Interim President and CEO, Zoe Taylor, left, and Membership Director, Scott Ericson, confer over increased memberships to the chamber.



Several businesses and organizations reside inside the Lobero Building on the 900 block of Anacapa St.

Nik Blaskovich / News-Press Photos

For almost 90 years, the understated elegance of the Lobero Building has been one of downtown Santa Barbara's architectural highlights. Sitting in the middle of the 900 block of Anacapa Street, the four-story building houses a diverse array of businesses and organizations. Designed by Julia Morgan in 1925 as a residential hotel, the building opened the following year as the Margaret Baylor Inn. The block boasts many historic treasures, including the Santa Barbara Trust for Historic Preservation's inconspicuous Buenaventura Pico Adobe. Heritage is not confined only to the architecture; the businesses that inhabit the structures also have a history all their own.

## Getting down to business

Located on the ground floor of the Lobero Building, the **Santa Barbara Regional Chamber of Commerce** is a membership organization that currently boasts just under 1,000 members, including a range of local businesses and nonprofit organizations. Founded in 1878, the core charter of the Chamber of Commerce is to build a strong local economy, community development, to be the voice of business with government, and create networking opportunities for members.

One of the regular gatherings staged by the organization is a monthly networking event called Coffee and Connections. Taking place the second Thursday of each month at the Santa Barbara Maritime Museum, the event offers members the opportunity to get acquainted with one another while promoting their businesses.

Other recent events have included State of the City, where the mayor and the city administrator addressed the membership about recent developments on a city level and explained how the city's partnership with the business community can be furthered. One of the next big events for the organization is its Business Expo at Earl Warren Showgrounds.

"The Business Expo will not only be open to the business community, but the community at large, and the theme this year will

be Discover Santa Barbara," says Zoe Taylor, SBRCC interim president. "The event has grown from a 40-table show to now featuring over 100 businesses and organizations and offers an expanded opportunity for members to showcase their products and services."

## Graphically green

**Cowan Communication Arts** — formed in 1996 and moved into the Lobero Building in 1998 — works on a wide variety of communications projects that make a positive difference for clients, communities and the environment.

A full-service creative communications consulting agency, Cowan Communication Arts does everything from branding and graphic design to film and video production, working for a wide variety of clients most of which are environmentally or socially oriented.

This graphic design business began advocating going green before green became the "new black," and the company has a maintained strong focus on sustainability and sustainable design. They work with clients who share this ethos and implement positive environmental actions in their activities and outreach efforts.

Across its 16 years of business, the firm has worked with a number of local organizations. Its client base includes the likes of UCSB, County of Santa Barbara, Goleta Water District and Isla Vista Co-op. It has also been the longstanding graphic designer for the Sings Like Hell music series. In addition to producing posters, advertisements and programs, Cowan Communication Arts has recently started a video production project for the for the monthly series.

"We've started interviewing the artists coming through the series," says managing director David Cowan. "It's called Behind Hell's Curtain, and we've interviewed people like Ryan Bingham, Teddy Thompson and Calxico to get their insight into what it's like to perform at the historic Lobero Theatre, as well as recording some or all of their performances."



Citizen Planning Association Communication Manager Suzan Cluderay prepares pamphlets of information for Earth Day.



**Creative community**

Also situated in the Lobero Building is youth-orientated organization **City at Peace**. The after-school teen program teaches conflict resolution and cross-cultural understanding through the performing arts. With its core constituency made up of local school students between 13 and 19, the program engages youths who are interested in building a city at peace right here in Santa Barbara.

"We have a curriculum where we explore community issues and things that are going in the lives of teens," says City at Peace's managing director, Karena Jew. "We have theater games we do that help positively explore issues of communication. The kids go through a whole program of games, writing, exercises and even work with visual artists where they think about themselves and their community and processes that through art and writing."

The organization uses the performing arts as a means by which teenagers enact their positive development to lead change in their communities. Because the teenage years are an intense period of inevitable change and growth, the dynamic, interactive processes of the performing arts are a superb fit for teenagers. The performing arts provide a low-risk, metaphorical means for youth to examine and construct new ideas, new identities and new relationships, using all of their capacities to harness these inherent changes toward creative ends.

"The goal is to develop young leaders who are involved in the community and understand how the arts can be healing and express the voices of teens and voices that aren't usefully heard in the community," Ms. Jew says.

**Planning for the future**

Located in a bungalow next door to the Lobero Building is the **Citizens Planning Association of Santa Barbara County**. Since 1960, the nonprofit organization has promoted responsible land use planning and environmental advocacy for Santa Barbara County, paying particular attention to regions such as the Gaviota coast, Goleta, Santa Ynez and Carpinteria.

The organization boasts a large and loyal membership comprising local citizens who take responsibility for what happens to the land in our county. The organization and its membership fight to protect Santa Barbara County's quality of life.

"Our members have been part of the Santa Barbara community for

many years," says CPA Communication Coordinator Suzan Cluderay. "They are interested in making sure that the urban landscape remains as beautiful as it has been and hopefully always will be."

As a part of the organization's current campaign to broaden its member base, the CPA will be manning a booth at this weekend's Santa Barbara Earth Day Festival. One of the things they will be bringing to the local community's attention at the event is the widening of Highway 101 — an issue they will address in partnership with the Montecito Association.

"We have formed a coalition called Common Sense 101," Mrs. Cluderay says. "Common Sense 101 aims to educate people about the problems with Caltrans's proposal for widening the 101. It is problematic in so many different ways and it's a topic that pretty much affects everyone on the central coast. So we have come up with a better idea that is less invasive, will take a lot less time and a heck of a lot less money."

**Living history**

The Buenaventura Pico Adobe, with its steeply gabled roof and cedar shingles, is one of Santa Barbara's hidden architectural treasures.

An example of the American influence and transition between Mexican and American style adobe construction, historians have had trouble attributing an exact date to its construction, but its origins can be traced back to Santiago de la Cruz Pico who arrived in California with the 1776 Anza Expedition. Mr. de la Cruz Pico's grandson, Buenaventura, and his wife, Anita, lived there in 1850.



*Nik Blaskovich / News-Press Photos*

**Employees at the Presidio, from left, Office Manager Brittany Avila, Development Assistant Christa Clark Jones and Archeologist Mike Imwalle, meet in the Pico Adobe historical building to review floor plans and photographs.**

Now in the keeping of the **Santa Barbara Trust for Historic Preservation**, the building is used as a meeting and conference facility for the organization. This weekend sees Santa Barbara's Founding Day celebrations, which commemorate the founding of Santa Barbara, beginning with the development of the Presidio, something the humble adobe nestled

at the rear of the property played a role in.

Also on Anacapa, the SBTHP maintains a small information kiosk on the corner of Anacapa Street and Canon Perdido streets. While the facility has been previously used by a range of local businesses and organizations, it has recently been reclaimed for use by the trust.

"We have had various tenants in there previously," says SBTHP's Michael Imwalle. "But we are about to open it as an information booth on days when cruise ships are in town offering visitors local information and pointing them to El Presidio de Santa Bárbara State Historic Park and Casa de la Guerra and other places around town."



**City At Peace Managing Director, Karena Jew, reviews art from teen participants used for show posters.**