



The Gazette

Celebrating 50 Years
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Our Mission

The Benicia Historical Society began in 1973. The purpose of the society is to bring together people interested in the history of Benicia and California. The society works to preserve the history and heritage of our city for future generations. Our goal is to enhance historic Benicia through education, communication and community involvement.

City Rethinking HPRC Review Process

A study session will be held on Tuesday July 25th by the City Council and Planning Commission to discuss possible changes to the Historic Preservation Review Commission (HPRC) design review process. It is the HPRC that ensures historic structures within the City's historic districts maintain their historic integrity and the integrity of the historic district by adhering to the Secretary of Interior Standards and the Downtown and Arsenal Conservation Plans. The session goal is to find ways to reduce costs to the City, encourage housing development, and streamline the design review process. The Society Board of Directors is concerned that potential changes could include elimination of the HPRC and abandoning use of the above design standards. These changes would dramatically alter the character and integrity of our historic districts. The Board encourages members to attend and add more of our voices to the conversation to ensure that historic preservation continues to be an important goal of our City.

Mary Farmar Student Letters

In April third grade students from Mary Farmar Elementary School wrote Letters to the Editor wanting to know the history of five historic buildings and the Benicia Arsenal. The Historical Society was pleased to be able to respond to their requests. Articles on the Arsenal and Clocktower appeared in the Benicia Herald. The others on Commanding Officers' Quarters in the Arsenal, the State Capitol, Majestic Theatre, and Captain Walsh House were sent directly to Mrs. Estrada's 3rd grade class. The Historical Society members enjoyed writing the history lessons and we invite you to read them on the Society website.

Did You Know? The Hastings Mansion by Richard Jenny

Once upon a time, a huge mansion occupied the northwest corner of what is now W. Military and W. 2nd St. Daniel Hastings was a 28 year old carpenter when he moved to San Francisco and, later, Benicia. He bought a butcher shop, prospered, moved his family here from back East, and bought the parcel. He became obsessed with building. The 1880's mansion had 4 stories, 21 bedrooms, a library, billiards room, exotic wood paneling, marble kitchen slabs, 5 fireplaces, 88 doors, 85 windows, and a 2000 gallon rooftop water tank. All the stairs made it hard to keep staff so the family moved to SF. After that home was damaged in the 1906 quake and repairs were completed, the family sold the Hastings Mansion to a priest. He deeded it to nuns who ran a boys boarding school. By 1937, the mansion was abandoned and torn down.

Summer 2023



Speaker Series

SPEAKER #2 & 50th Anniversary Celebration

Leann Taagepera, Cultural Resources Specialist

Topic: Benicia's Portuguese Hall: A Historical Treasure and Traditional Cultural Property

When: Thursday, September 14, 2023, 7:00pm

Where: TBD—See BHS website
\$5 Admission (BHS Members Free)

Member Leann Taagepera, who holds a Master of Arts in Cultural Resources Management from Sonoma State University, will speak about her thesis topic. Portuguese Hall is the focal point of Benicia's Portuguese descendant community and is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. **Also, we will celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Society's founding.**

Calling All Members

Please provide your email address to receive future Gazette Issues by email
BeniciaHistoricalSociety@gmail.com

2023 Vintage Home & Garden Tour Success

Our May 13th tour was a success, with 200 attendees on a gorgeous day. The VIP event at the Inn at Benicia Bay was lovely. We want to thank all those who attended and those who opened their homes, as well as sponsors Compass Realty and The Inn at Benicia Bay.

Photo Port Parade 1913 courtesy of Benicia Museum.

Newsletter



PO BOX 2393
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The Benicia Historical Society

Connecting People With the Past

Calendar of Events

July 24, 2023 **Monday** **7:00 pm** **Board of Directors Regular Meeting**
Chamber of Commerce Conference Room—ALL ARE WELCOME

July 25, 2023 **Tuesday** **6:00 pm** **CC/PC HPRC Design Review Study Session**
City Hall Council Chambers

August—No Board meeting

August 12, 2023 **Saturday** **8:00 am-5:00 pm** **Peddlers Fair**
1st Street

August 26, 2023 **Saturday** **11:00 am-3:00 pm** **Grand Opening of Museum of History, Benicia's Downtown Gallery**
900 E 2nd St.

September 14, 2023 **Thursday** **7:00 pm** **Speaker Series #2—Leann Taagepera & 50th Anniversary Celebration**
TBD—See BHS website

September 25, 2023 **Monday** **7:00 pm** **Board of Directors Regular Meeting**
Chamber of Commerce Conference Room—ALL ARE WELCOME

October 23, 2023 **Monday** **7:00 pm** **Board of Directors Regular Meeting**
Chamber of Commerce Conference Room—ALL ARE WELCOME