



Happy New Year!

As we move into 2025, we want to gratefully acknowledge our members and warmly welcome our new members -- thank you for joining! Gentle reminder to current members: It's time to renew your annual dues . . . or invest in a Lifetime membership and take the yearly task off your to-do list. Use the form below or [renew online by PayPal or credit card](#).

In addition to the 2025 meetings and events listed on page 4, we plan to celebrate completion of the new murals we commissioned at the Solana Beach Post Office with a social "ribbon cutting," likely in the early spring. Artist Kevin Anderson has been working away and his paintings of iconic Solana Beach scenes have truly uplifted our local postal experience. Stay tuned for event details. (And if *you'd* like to learn to paint, see page 4 for a free class trial!)

Our Annual Holiday Luncheon celebrates pioneers in our community. This year, Phyllis Schwartzlose, Pam Dalton and Lenore Dale were honored for their years of leadership with the Boutique and Craft Workshops. It was sheer joy. Our Boutique is the primary fundraiser for our Scholarships Program and we had record-breaking gross sales of more than \$13,000 in 2024.

Welcome New Members!

Karen Curd
 Reuben Ellis
 Wendy & Donald Hagan
 Lauren Leahy
 Virginia Mahigian
 Lean Norton
 Patricia Sarkar
 Caroline Wild

I feel like a broken record, but -- please get involved with your Society!

Reading your monthly (except July and August) Newsletter, and attending monthly meetings, annual social and shopping events are some *easy* ways to get engaged and meet new friends. Also, everyone's invited to join one of these: monthly Crafts Workshops, review of scholarship applications each spring, gardening with the SeaWeeders, and many other projects. Meeting details for the Crafts Workshops and SeaWeeders are included on page 4 -- as is our invitation to help us brainstorm engaging programs and events for the coming year.

As you will also see on page 4, we have some vacant positions on our Board of Directors, including a Hospitality Chair to help us plan our Post Office "party." Interested? Email solanabeachhistoricalsociety@gmail.com.

Jolene Dodson Bogard

Renew your SBC&HS Membership for 2025

If you haven't already, it's time to pay your annual membership dues. Select your member level and return this form with a check to P.O. Box 504, Solana Beach, CA 92075.

Or renew online at www.sb-chs.org by PayPal or credit card.

___\$25 individual ___\$30 family ___\$100 Business ___\$500 Lifetime

Name(s) _____

Email address: _____

High-tech is Helping to Survey a Historic Cemetery

A long-sought investigation is underway at the historic cemetery tucked behind St. Therese of Carmel Catholic church in Carmel Valley. High-tech ground-penetrating radar (GPR) technology has been deployed over the course of two recent weekends to help identify unmarked graves so they can be honored and protected.

The project has been a decade-long dream of caretakers Michael Beltran of the La Colonia Community Foundation (LCCF) and Armand Olvera, a church parishioner and member of the Knights of Columbus. The pair and their organizations lead twice-yearly maintenance programs at the cemetery. The land is owned by the Catholic Diocese of San Diego, but brush-clearing, grave-stone cleaning and general care of the hallowed grounds is an entirely volunteer operation.

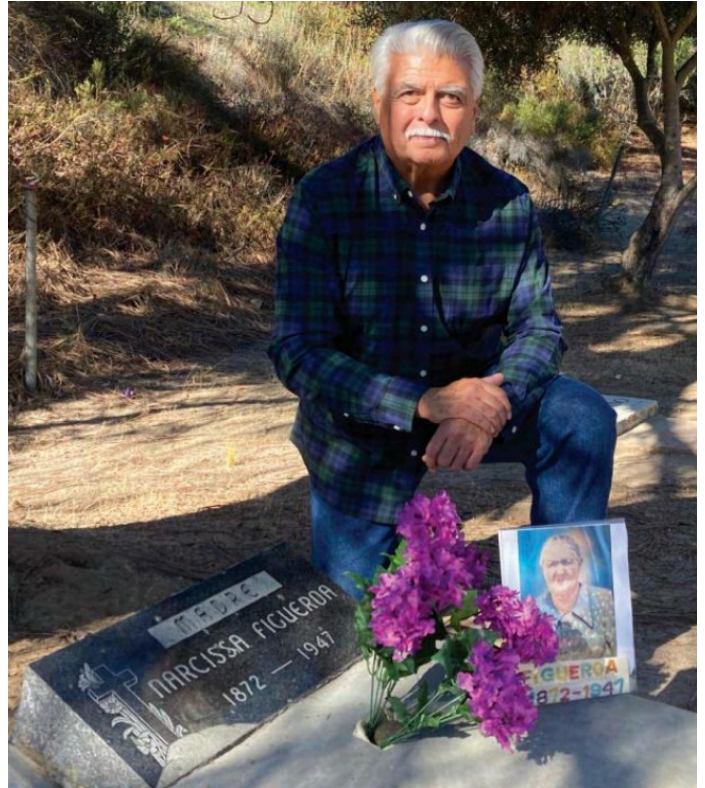
Armand literally stumbled across the cemetery about 20 years ago, just out of curiosity about what was under the four- to six-foot brush behind his church. "I came down the hill and was walking through the thick brush and I tripped and fell over one of the gravesites." That sparked his effort in 2006 to enlist the Knights of Columbus in their semi-annual clean-ups. Michael's small army of LCCF volunteers joined with annual November and April clean-ups nine years later after he and his father had a similar discovery. "I looked over the hill and saw just the top of a headstone. The growth was two- to three-feet high. . . My dad stayed down there and I went to my truck to get tools so we could start cleaning. When I came down, my dad stopped me and said 'Mijo, I found my. . . great grandmother.' "

She was one of many former La Colonia residents buried there. Michael's great aunts and uncles are, also. "Years back, when people died, this is were we came to bury them," recalled Michael's father, Joe Beltran, who now is 96.

Armand scoured church and diocese records to research the [history of the cemetery](#). It wasn't easy. Over the years, the burial ground had grazed by cattle, scorched by brush fires that destroyed wooden markers, and vandalized. In the Death Register Book kept at St. James Catholic Church in Del Mar, he found that the cemetery has 83 recorded burials -- the last recorded in 1980 -- in two sections: Catholics to the west; Protestants to the east. So far, volunteers have found 57 gravesites, based on visible evidence. To honor the unknown, they erected white crosses.

But Michael and Armand have been pining to scan the depths of the graveyard for years. They contacted archeology and anthropology professors at the University of San Diego (USD) and the University of California at San Diego (UCSD). They also invited Ken Kramer of KPBS's "About San Diego" to visit the site and tell its history. From USD, Dr. Marni LeFleur reached out to James Daniels, Jr. of Michael Baker International, who in turn contacted Michael to say he was interested in helping -- at no charge.

Continued on next page



Michael Beltran at the gravesite of his great, great grandmother in the cemetery behind St. Therese of Carmel Catholic church. [Click here](#) to hear him describe discovering the site. *Photo by KPBS*

Scanning a Cemetery: Enter the Screening Eagle!

Michael Baker is global architecture and engineering firm with more than 85 offices across the company and 4,500 employees -- including Senior Archeologist James "Jimmy" Daniels, based in Carlsbad. MBI's cultural resource management team includes archaeologists, architectural historians and historians who provide regulatory compliance services for developers and government agencies to protect sensitive historic and archaeological resources. They conduct surveys and evaluations of both archaeological and built-environment resources. GPR is one of many tools they use in their work.

Drones are another. To develop a precise, multi-dimensional survey of the cemetery, Jimmy was joined on his second visit by fellow archeologist and drone pilot Nick Doose, who works for ASM Affiliates, another cultural resource management firm founded San Diego in 1977 and with projects around the country.



Archeologist and drone pilot Nick Doose



Archeologist Jimmy Daniels steers his Screening Eagle GPR

At each marked grave, during the duo's December 6 visit, Nick placed a small device to capture its precise geographic position by satellite and then launched his drone for a complete aerial survey of the cemetery. Meanwhile, Jimmy drove his GPR device, in precise "transects" of roughly 50 centimeters each. The device -- made by Swiss-based Screening Eagle -- looks like a lawnmower with a tablet-sized screen. On the screen, Jimmy looked for underground "anomalies" -- signals that there's something beneath the surface that's different than the surrounding soil. At each anomaly, he staked a flag. Another colleague took photos of each marked gravestone.

Combined, Jimmy explained, the aerial survey, global information system data and photographs "will provide us with a high-resolution map of the cemetery that will assist me in interpreting the GPR data. They will allow us to produce some very nice maps both in digital and hardcopy for La Colonia and the Knights of Columbus." Next, while Michael and Armand make white, wooden crosses to mark confirmed grave sites, Jimmy plans to create an interactive story-map that pinpoints each final resting place and will allow users to click on a burial location and add information about the life and family of the individual who is -- or might -- be buried there.

For Jimmy, the pro-bono GPR service offered a way to help MBI market its archeological survey capabilities -- the crew's work has been covered by [The Coast News](#) (December 27 edition) and [KPBS](#). But mostly, he said, "I enjoy doing GPR surveys and being able to use technology to solve problems that matter to people...I love what I do and want to share that in a way that's meaningful to others."

2025 Meetings and Events

Programs Chair Carol Childs and your Board of Directors welcome your input on topics for our monthly membership meetings and ideas for social gatherings.

Are there aspects of Solana Beach history you want to learn more about? Do you have questions about how our local government works? Are you bedeviled by everyday technology and just wish somebody would tell you how to make the blue "click here" lines work in this newsletter? Do you have suggestions for future, fun get-togethers? Let us hear from you!

Email solanabeachhistory@gmail.com or send us a note at P.O. Box 504, Solana Beach, CA 92075.

Unless otherwise noted, General Meetings start at 5 p.m. at La Colonia Community Center, 715 Valley Ave.

Thursday, January 9: Lisa Montes discusses the rich history of Solana Beach's first neighborhood: La Colonia de Eden Gardens

February 13: Musical surprise

March 13: Steve Wilkens remembers his family's hardware and gardening store on Lomas Santa Fe Drive at Hwy. 101

April 10: Trash talk with EDCO: Get answers to your organic waste and recycling questions. Learn why EDCO considers Solana Beach to be one of its finest recycling customers -- and how we could be even better.

May 8: City Manager Alyssa Muto provides an update on our City's many initiatives.

June 12: Scholarship awards dinner and installation of 2025-26 Executive Board.

Crafts Workshops are from 1 to 3 p.m. on the **fourth Thursday** of the month, starting in January. All are invited.

The SeaWeeders Garden Club meets at 10:30 a.m. on the **second Tuesday** of the month, September through June, at the cottage behind the Boys & Girls Club, 533 Lomas Santa Fe Dr.

Learn to Paint!



Artist and art educator Scott Stiles is offering a **FREE** trial class this Friday, **January 3, 10 a.m. to noon** at **742 Genevieve Suite F.**

If you decide to continue, the cost is just \$10 per canvas; classes are every Friday morning. Paint, brushes and other supplies are provided at no extra cost. Your classmates may include inaugural City Council-member and former Mayor Marion Dodson, pictured here with her recent creation. (Her daughter, SBC&HS president Jojo, hosts these Adult Art Classes in her community theater studio.) Questions? email scottstiles@yahoo.com.

Solana Beach Civic & Historical Society a 501(c)(3) organization

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