



Happy 40th Birthday, Solana Beach!

At 7 a.m. on July 1, 1986, San Diego Mayor Susan Golding administered the oath of office for our City's first City Council



(L-R) San Diego Mayor Susan Golding, Solana Beach Mayor Margaret Schlesinger, Deputy Mayor Jack Moore, Council members Richard Hendlin, Marion Dodson and Celine Olson.

The newly-elected Mayor and Council members had learned that a large number of building permits were being rushed through the County of San Diego Planning Department before what had been planned as an evening swearing-in. Council members quickly pivoted to the morning proceeding and immediately passed an emergency moratorium that imposed a 45-day freeze on all new construction, as well as 20 more ordinances and resolutions.

Just three weeks earlier, on June 3, 1986, Solana Beach voters had approved the Articles of Incorporation enabled by the passage of Proposition N. "A non-violent revolution had taken place in the months leading up to the June 3rd election," remembered Margaret Schlesinger, reflecting on the City's 20th anniversary of incorporation in 2006.

"There now was a new sheriff in town . . ."

President's Message

I was so proud to watch my Mom raise her right hand that crisp, sunny morning 40 years ago. She hadn't initially favored incorporation, but after embracing the idea that Solana Beach would be better off by self-governing, she went all in on the Cityhood campaigns and her own campaign to serve on the first City Council. My brother and sister and I helped -- knocking on doors and looping flyers around knobs. But Mom did the heavy lifting -- literally -- toting GIANT binders full of reading materials on sexy topics like sewers, traffic, and the timing of stop lights.

She loved "setting up the City," although she often joked that she only made about \$1.50 an hour as a Council-member.

Love you Mom! Thank you for all you have contributed to our proud community.

Jolene Dodson Bogard

Ongoing Development Threats to Our Community's Natural Beauty Fueled the Long Fight for Cityhood

San Elijo Lagoon on the City's northern border had long been threatened by commercial and recreational development. Between 1880 and 1940, dikes and levees were built that allowed duck hunting, salt harvesting and sewage settling ponds. Construction of the railroad, Pacific Coast Highway, and Interstate 5 also required supporting berms that restricted water circulation and natural tidal flows.

Development proposals in the 1960s and 1970s included one to build a marina and 750 homes with boat docks in the estuary. Another, launched in the early 1980s, was a proposal to build 44 homes in Holmwood Canyon, a rural enclave that once included farms and an apricot orchard. Another hotly sought property was the triangular parcel of land along Highway 101 near North Rios Avenue, overlooking the Lagoon and the ocean — precisely where "billboard blight" marred views for decades. In 1981-82, Inn Suites International proposed building a large hotel and conference complex on the site. County planners supported the idea, but when grading started, the California Coastal Commission issued a stop-work order, halting all construction pending investigation. The scarred sloped and idle machinery became a rallying image for residents already frustrated by decisions made outside the community.

San Elijo Lagoon Reserve was first proposed in the late 1970s and included Holmwood Canyon because of its importance as a watershed and habitat for a number of species. Since the County of San Diego had jurisdiction over the wetlands, it was obligated to purchase the then-privately owned canyon. However, in 1981, Holmwood Canyon was removed from the county's acquisition list because the County Board of Supervisors had exhausted its budget on other projects. It wasn't long before the property owner submitted the proposal to build up to 44 residences there.

Solana Beach wasn't incorporated at this time and the Canyon development proposal was one of many being opposed by area residents and environmentalists who felt that the County was too eager to, in effect, sell Solana Beach's soul. The resistance extended beyond neighborhood activists and included the Solana Beach Chamber of Commerce and the Women's Civic Club.

Friends of Holmwood Canyon president Jack Peek and his wife Carol kept the pressure on the County and helped sustain what became a years-long fight. The Holmwood Friends group eventually counted more than 600 members, who faithfully penned protest letters and trekked to County Supervisor meetings to speak against development proposals. In 1983, San Elijo Lagoon was designated by the State of California as the San Elijo Lagoon Ecological Reserve to better protect its habitat. Eventually, the Holmwood Canyon land owners expressed a willingness to sell their 16-acre parcel, which became part of the San Elijo Lagoon Conservancy (now Nature Collective).

Rising Activism for Self Governance

Both the Inn Suites and the Holmwood controversies were triggered by County decision-making processes that increasingly rankled residents and galvanized support for incorporation to create a self-governing City of Solana Beach.

It was a notion that had been studied since 1959, when the Solana Beach Chamber of Commerce asked the Public Affairs Research Institute at San Diego State College to forecast the community's future. The study advised that Solana Beach anticipated rapid growth and concluded that County services would be unlikely to keep up. "Some definite action by the citizens of Solana Beach within the next three years is indicated. This is the time for decision," the authors advised. ([Read the full study here.](#))

Continued on next page

Long Fight for Self Governance . . .

But it wasn't until the early 1970s that any significant movement toward incorporation stirred — stirred up by continuing coastal development pressures, including the County's approval of a "China Wall" of condominium developments that essentially closed public access to our bluff tops.

In 1971, a Solana Beach Town Council survey of residents found that 65% favored some kind of home rule. The following year, the Council published a report on its comprehensive study of home-rule alternatives -- *Solana Beach at the Cross-Roads* -- and argued decisively for incorporation.

Still, it was more than a decade later before the campaign for incorporation succeeded, and then only after three failed tries: two that would have combined Solana Beach with adjacent San Dieguito communities and one that argued for Solana Beach only.



In 1986, Proposition N promoting incorporation was on voters' ballots. This time, it had full support from the local Chamber of Commerce, as well as a coalition of civic groups who had formed "Citizens Intending to Incorporate (CITI)." "From the moment that idea was born . . . we were off and running," Margaret Schlesinger recalled in her 20th City Anniversary essay. The Peeks became active in CITI campaigns; Jack served as Solana Beach Town Council president and Carol, a graphic artist, designed the Solana Beach City Seal.

Jack Moore, also a Town Council member, took on the task of generating the reports demanded by the County to allow incorporation to move forward. Getting the proposition to a ballot was no easy feat, as local author Peter House recounts in his updated Solana Beach history, *Making Great Better*:

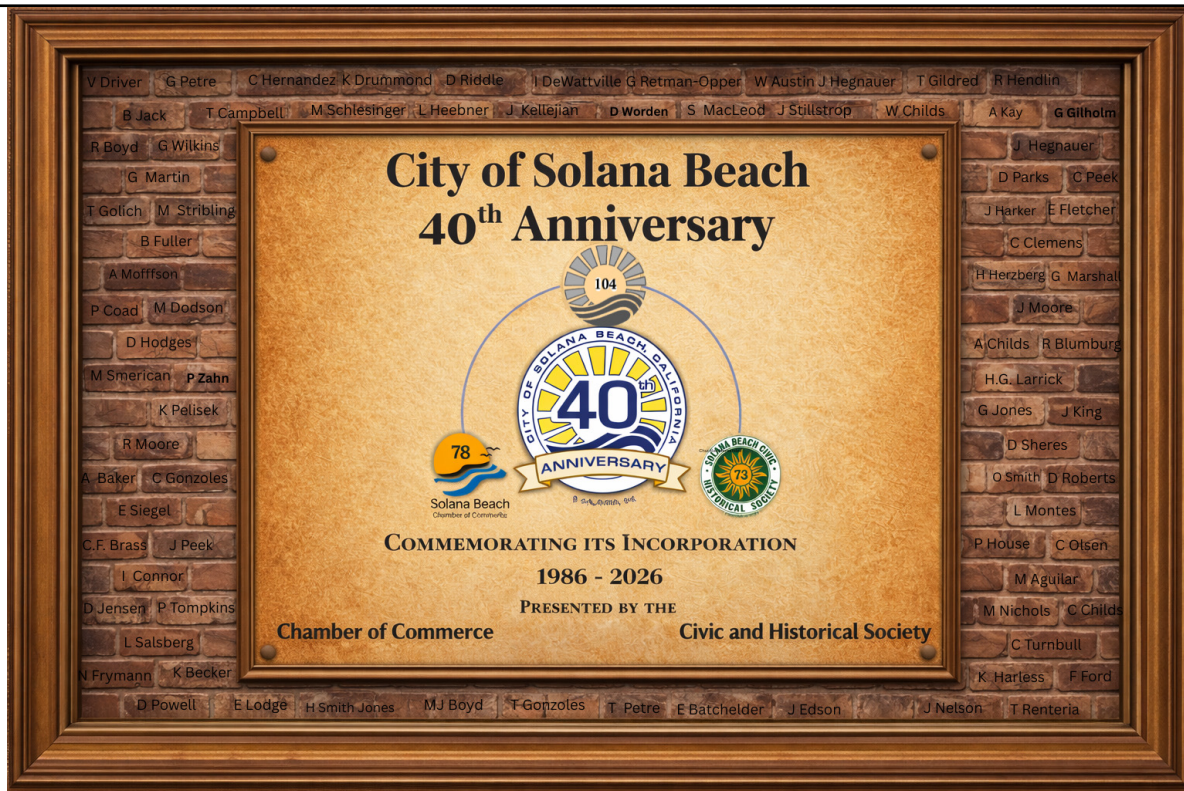
"The unincorporated areas of San Diego County were designated as such by the County and therefore required permission to become legal entities. A defined process (set by State law and administered by the Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO)) outlined the steps that had to be taken to incorporate. *First*, the town had to form a citizens' committee to

compile a petition and gather signatures. Once they had gathered enough signatures (25% of the registered voters), they could submit a formal application to the LAFCO. This application had to show the proposed boundaries of the incorporated area and specify who would provide the necessary public services within it. Based on this information, LAFCO then determined whether the proposal made sense — and *then*, — if it 'made sense,' LAFCO commissioned a Comprehensive Fiscal Analysis (can they afford it?) and an environmental review — and *then*, — after it reviewed the studies, it held public hearings, — and *then*, — if approved by LAFCO, it could proceed — and *then*, — the County Board of Supervisors would schedule a referendum — and *then*, if the majority votes yes, the incorporation passes, and the City would be established."

On June 3, the 1986 measure passed with 65 percent of the vote -- 2,585 to 1,414.

The new city included its first neighborhood -- La Colonia -- and provided for a Council-City Manager form of government, with the Mayor's position rotating among Council members until 2020. As the top vote-getter among Council candidates, Margaret Schlesinger was appointed as the new City's first Mayor. Jack Moore, Richard Hendlin and Celine Olson each served Mayoral terms; Marion Dodson served as Mayor three times.





After forty years as an incorporated city and nearly a century since its founding, Solana Beach has reached civic maturity. What began in the 1920s as a small oceanfront settlement built around the railroad, Highway 101, and the Fairgrounds has evolved into a fully formed coastal community of roughly 13,000 residents.

Today, the City is nearly built out, with established neighborhoods, infrastructure, parks, schools, and commercial districts. Population growth has stabilized, and most development now takes the form of remodeling, infill, and the adaptive reuse of existing buildings rather than large new projects. Rising property values and the scarcity of buildable land reflect both the City's desirability and the limits of its physical expansion.

In mature cities, change comes through renewal, adaptation, and stewardship. Solana Beach reflects that pattern today. Many of the buildings along Highway 101, Cedros Avenue, and the Plaza remain much as they were during the City's 25th anniversary in 2011, even as the businesses within them continue to evolve in response to digital commerce, remote work, and the lingering effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Governance, civic organizations, and community priorities have also evolved as the City approaches its practical limits of growth and leadership passes to new generations. The challenge today is no longer defining the City but preserving and managing what earlier generations created — balancing economic change with the community character that residents worked so hard to establish.

Today we are 40. It is a time to remember how we arrived here and the people and organizations that made it possible. Many are still with us. These city-builders gave their time, talent, and resources to create the remarkable community we celebrate today. This plaque above commemorates the combined efforts of the three earliest organizations that helped shape Solana Beach: the Town Council, the Chamber of Commerce, and the Women's Civic Club -- now the Solana Beach Civic & Historical Society. Through both their individual leadership and their shared commitment, they laid the foundation for the City we know today.

Behind these organizations stood remarkable individuals, the people who built this community. They are represented by the individual bricks that form the wall behind the composite emblem. Today, we honor them.

Peter House



On Thursday, July 2nd, starting at 6 p.m., the City of Solana Beach kicks off 40th anniversary festivities with a first-ever Concert on the Beach at Fletcher Cove Beach!

In honor of our 1986 incorporation,

the concert will feature iconic '80s music by Atomic Groove and headliner Betamaxx. Bring your own beach chairs, blankets, and dance moves.

Encinitas Historical Society Lecture Series

The Encinitas Historical Society (EHS) is hosting a series of "Independence Saturdays," from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Schoolhouse, 390 West F Street in Encinitas. All events are free and open to the public, ages 6 and up.

Each Saturday will honor one of the many cultures whose work and words have shaped successive "independences" across Southern California since the 1760s.

The series began in June and continues with a session about the signers of the Declaration of Independence (July 4), native Californians (August 8), U.S. women (August 22), Californians and San Diegans (September 12), and Mexican Americans (September 19). The series culminates with a celebration of the 40th anniversary of the City of Encinitas (October 3).

Special Screening -- 'The Little Things that Run the World'

The SeaWeeders Garden Club has partnered with Solana Beach Eco-Rotary (and others) to host a showing of the 105-minute documentary, which will be followed by an expert panel discussion.

When: Sat., Aug. 1, 2 to 5 p.m.

Where: Schulman Auditorium, Dove Library, 1775 Dove Lane, Carlsbad

Cost: \$10 adults, \$5 children 14 and younger

Insects were the first animals to evolve flight hundreds of millions of years ago and have largely survived five of the known mass extinctions since then. But, there is evidence that the pace of decline among insects in parts of the world today is approaching the levels of previous catastrophes. The film explores what this means for the rest of us, and what can be done to reverse the trend.

[Click here to purchase advance tickets](#) (proceeds will be shared with the SeaWeeders Garden Club if you select us from the sponsor list). If you would like to carpool to this event, please email sbseaweeder@gmail.com.



Solana Beach Civic & Historical Society a 501(c)(3) organization 2026-27 Executive Board

*President.....Jolene Dodson Bogard
Vice President.....Michele Stribling
Treasurer.....Holly Smith Jones
Recording Secretary.....Lori Wolf
Corresponding Secretary.....Cindi Clemons*

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Communication.....Karen Dorney, Robbie Harless
Crafts.....Kathryn Schmiedeberg, Stephanie Wilde
Hospitality.....Karen Dorney
Membership List.....Kathleen Drummond
Museum Curator.....Vacant
Newsletter, Website.....Kathleen Drummond
Nominations.....Vacant
Parliamentarian, Programs.....Carol Childs
SeaWeeders.....Kathleen Drummond*

Wildfire Preparedness

With Del Mar and Solana Beach Fire Chief Bret Davidson

**Meet the New Chief
and Learn How to
Protect Yourself,
Your Home, and Your
Community**

**MONDAY, JULY 6
11AM - NOON
DEL MAR TOWN HALL
1050 CAMINO DEL MAR**



REGISTRATION REQUIRED!

Scan the QR Code or visit
dmcc.cc/programregistration

For more information about this program or for help with registration please call DMCC at (858)792-7565



**Presented by
Del Mar Community Connections
and Solana Beach Community Connections**



About Chief Bret Davidson

Chief Davidson comes to the Cities of Solana Beach and Del Mar with 39 years of fire service experience. Born and raised in San Diego County, he began his fire service career in 1986 in Pine Valley. Over the course of his career, he has served with fire departments in El Centro, Poway, Rancho Santa Fe, and Vista and previously participated in cooperative regional efforts with the coastal communities.



Chief Davidson holds an Associate of Science in Fire Science, a Bachelor of Science in Public Safety Administration and a Master of Arts in Human Resource Management. He is currently pursuing a Doctor of Education in Instructional Design. In addition, Chief Davidson has earned a Public Leadership Credential from the Harvard Kennedy School and a Certificate of Leader Development from the U.S. Army War College.

Book Signing Event

Friends of the Solana Beach Library and event partner **Camino Books** invite you to an author talk and book signing with **Marie Benedict** and **Victoria Christopher Murray**, the acclaimed co-authors of the bestselling novel *The Personal Librarian*.

Their newest collaboration, *A Pair of Aces*, reimagines the downfall of infamous mobster Lucky Luciano through the eyes of two trailblazing female figures: **Eunice Carter**, the first Black female prosecutor of Manhattan, and **Polly Adler**, one of New York City's most notorious madams.

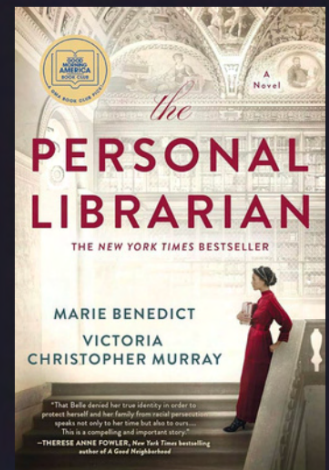
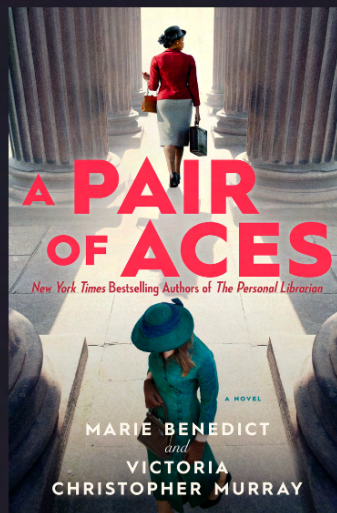
Rich with courtroom drama and mob intrigue, *A Pair of Aces* is the **Reese's Book Club** pick for **June 2026**.

- **Venue:** Earl Warren Middle School Multipurpose Room, 155 Stevens Ave., Solana Beach (*adjacent to the Solana Beach County Library*)
- **Admission:** Free and open to the public.
- **Parking:** Available at the Solana Beach Library lower lot and at Earl Warren Middle School

MEET BESTSELLING AUTHORS

MARIE BENEDICT
& VICTORIA
CHRISTOPHER
MURRAY

Discuss Their New Book:



Free
Event!

Tuesday, July 21, 6:00pm
Solana Beach Library
157 Stevens Avenue

Support your local bookstore and pre-purchase a signed copy through the **Camino Books** website.

A limited number of copies will be available for purchase at the event.