



Happy, busy, Fall . . . !

While it might not be exactly “sweater weather,” these cooler temps have been a wonderful change from those “end of summer” crazy heat days. My husband and I have been spending more time outside and preparing our house for the upcoming “El Nino” season. (We put on a new roof in January!) While we cannot fully predict what Mother Nature will deliver. . . it's always good to prepare.

We are also prepared to welcome the rainy season to our newly planted, nearly completed native landscape garden. You may recall that our April meeting speaker, landscape designer Greg Rubin, advised using native plants around your home to reduce wildfire risks; he even, graciously, offered some tips on *our* designer's plan. Are you planning -- or have you made changes in your garden to add natives and pollinator plants -- the types that attract birds, bees, butterflies, etc.? Our Climate Action Commission is planning to survey Solana Beach residents to assess progress toward expanding native California and pollinator habitat in Solana Beach. It's a goal in our City's Climate Action Plan! Watch for more information in coming weeks.

I am also fully prepared for our City's upcoming beautification project along the east corridor of Lomas Santa Fe Drive. At the City Council Meeting on Sept. 16th, officials explained that work will proceed in three phases working east to west: Phase 1, medians; Phase 2, south side bike lanes and walk ways; Phase 3, a new linear park with landscaped walk ways and bike lanes. For notifications about street closures and progress, you might want to sign up for the City's updates:

<https://lp.constantcontactpages.com/sl/rk1hurV>

This project is expected to take about 14 months. Planners are *very* mindful of school schedules and fall activities. While it will be difficult for those of us on the east side of town, I am *so* excited about the beautification along our streets.

There is a lot going on this month. On October 3rd, our SeaWeeders will help kids "catch some clean Solana Beach air" at the Clean Air Fair, 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Solana Beach Library. Also, that morning, you can “Dump Your Junk” at La Colonia Community Center, shred paper and collect free mulch. On October 18th, the La Colonia Foundation's Dia de los Muertos fiesta will be in full swing at La Colonia Park. October 25th is the Solana Beach School District's annual Halloween Carnival at Solana Vista with tons of family-friendly activities.

And we have some special membership meetings coming up: On October 13th at 6 p.m. at La Colonia Community Center, the Society and Solana Beach Community Connections (SBCC) will host the League of Women Voters to discuss November ballot propositions (page 6). On October 22, we will again team with SBCC to host an important update about wildfire preparedness by our new Fire Chief, Bret Davidson at 6 p.m. at City Hall (page 8).



Finally, our Society always welcomes volunteers to help with our events -- such as our Holiday Boutique on Saturday, November 14! Look at this lovely pumpkin decor created (in a limited edition of 18) by our clever Crafters. Interested in helping, or joining our Board? Email solanabeachhistoricalsociety@gmail.com.

Jolene Dodson Bogard

A Nuisance Nightclub Is Transformed into Our City Hall

In the early 1980s, the site on Highway 101 where Solana Beach City Hall now stands was home to a lively and controversial nightclub later known as Diego's. Long before incorporation, it was a frequent source of complaints about noise, parking, and late-night disruption. After cityhood in 1986, Diego's became one of the first real-world tests of whether the new City could exercise the control residents had long sought.

When Solana Beach finally achieved cityhood on July 1, 1986, the controversy flared again almost immediately. A newly opened version of Diego's, larger, louder -- and permitted by the County of San Diego just before incorporation -- ignited battles over crowd limits, parking, and safety. The most critical problem was parking. Most nights, club patrons quickly filled the 97 parking spaces in Diego's lot, spilling onto streets once used only by residents and monopolizing private lots reserved for surrounding businesses. Nearby residents shared the frustration. Those living behind the club complained of sleepless nights, patrons shouting in the streets, and driveways blocked by cars searching for scarce parking. Diego's owners and managers were often hauled before Council in what the San Diego Union Tribune described in 1986 as a "sizzling feud."

Noise was another concern. Although only faint strains of music emanated from the club, residents living directly behind complained. By 1991, the City had codified its response with Ordinance 147, the Noise Abatement and Control Ordinance, which set measurable decibel and time limits, required sound-amplification permits, and empowered local deputies to enforce them. Within a few years, persistent violations and pressure from the neighborhood led to the club's closure.

Meanwhile, both code enforcement officials and the Fire Marshal stated the crowd repeatedly exceeded the club's maximum allowable capacity. The occupancy permit limited occupancy in both the club and the restaurant to three hundred patrons. The City Council prevented club owners from constructing an additional parking lot between the railroad tracks and Highway 101, just across from the disco. The incongruous "strip lot" had been approved for 231 spaces by the County. The City opposed issuing a building permit for the project due to its location, the safety hazard to patrons who would have to cross the busy four-lane roadway, and its inconsistency with the City's vision for a pedestrian-friendly coastal corridor. Without more parking, the club could not legally accommodate the crowds it drew, making profitability harder to sustain.

By the early 1990s, the fate of Diego's was sealed by a mix of economic reality, neighborhood fatigue, and political resolve. From the moment it opened in August 1986, the nightclub had been beset by safety and code violations.



Continued on next page

City Hall, continued

Within weeks of incorporation, the new City found itself testing its own authority. In September 1986, inspectors discovered the club exceeded its occupancy limits by hundreds. City Council suspended its dance license, warning that the newly issued primary-use permit could be revoked if violations continued. The Fire Marshal repeatedly cited it for exceeding its 300-person occupancy limit, sometimes finding twice that



number inside. The City's new code enforcement officers issued violation after violation; the City Council, still defining its authority in those first years after incorporation, threatened to revoke its operational permit altogether.

What began as a glamorous new entertainment venue had become a chronic headache for citizens and law enforcement. For a small, newly incorporated City trying to cultivate a peaceful, village-like image, the ongoing controversy was an unwelcome distraction. As enforcement tightened and community patience waned, Diego's fortunes declined.

The operators attempted to rebrand it as "Surfside" and hosted live shows to project a calmer image. Still, the club's

notoriety and frequent police calls made it difficult to maintain insurance and attract the clientele they wanted. After the club was almost destroyed by fire, even its defenders acknowledged that the rebranded venture could not survive under constant scrutiny.

When the City began searching for a permanent municipal headquarters, the solution became obvious. The building, centrally located, highly visible, and with its own parking, offered exactly what the young City needed. In a poetic turn, the City purchased the property in the early 1990s and converted it into the City Hall. The transformation of a once-unruly disco into the seat of local government perfectly embodied the purpose of incorporation: to bring order, accountability, and community values under local control.

On July 8, 1994, the City marked its eighth anniversary with a Grand Opening celebration at the new, 14,000 square-foot City Hall on Highway 101 -- a gleaming structure with a backlit 8-foot stained glass replica of the City Seal. At the opening, then-Deputy Mayor Marion Dodson recalled how much "We enjoyed telling folks that we turned a nightclub into City Hall."



Excerpted from Making Great Better by Peter House, 2026

2026 Community Calendar of Events

Saturday, October 3, 11 a.m. - 1 p.m. at the Solana Beach Library: Visit the SeaWeeders booth to "catch some clean Solana Beach air" at the **Clean Air Fair**, sponsored by Friends of the Solana Beach Library.

Tuesday, October 13, 10:30 a.m. SeaWeeders monthly meeting at the cottage behind the Boys & Girls Club, 533 Lomas Santa Fe Dr. Hear from our Master Gardeners about their journey to that esteemed credential, and the ongoing commitments entailed.

Tuesday, October 13, 6 p.m. at La Colonia Community Center: The League of Women Voters will provide information about State Propositions on the November election ballot. This event is co-sponsored with Solana Beach Community Connections.

Sunday, October 18, 10 to 5 p.m. at La Colonia Park: The Dia de los Muertos fiesta, sponsored by the La Colonia Foundation, will feature historical photos on loan from the Society, as well as music, vendors, food . . . and our SBC&HS booth.

Thursday, October 22, Crafts Workshop, 1 - 3 p.m. La Colonia Community Center.

Thursday, October 22, 6 p.m. at Solana Beach City Hall: Wildfire preparedness and an update from Del Mar and Solana Beach Fire Chief Bret Davidson. This event is co-sponsored with Solana Beach Community Connections.

Holiday Boutique! Saturday, November 14, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. at La Colonia Community Center. Mark your calendars and join us for our Annual Holiday Boutique! Crafters have been creating lovely handmade items for you throughout the year. We're featuring a "Buyers Choice" vintage quilt sale and, as always, have great gifts! "Calling All Bakers" for our sweet and savory baked goods table. If interested, please contact Karen at: 2karendorney@roadrunner.com

BULKY-ITEM CLEANUP DAY!



Dump your Junk: Saturday, October 3, 9 - noon, La Colonia Community Center

To schedule free curbside pickup of bulky items on Oct. 3, call (858)350-8544. Set your items out for collection by 7 a.m. on Saturday, Oct. 3.

Solana Beach Civic & Historical Society 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

Committee Chairs

Civic Affairs.....Cindi Clemons
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

JOIN THE SOLANA BEACH LIBRARY FOR OUR...

CLEAN AIR FAIR!

**OCTOBER 3, 2026
11AM-1PM**

**SPECIAL
SATURDAY OPENING!**

**FREE
EVENT!**

**A DAY OF CELEBRATION HIGHLIGHTING CLEAN AIR,
ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP, AND COMMUNITY!**

- **ENVIRONMENTAL AND COMMUNITY EXHIBITORS**
- **LIVE MUSIC: LUND-COHEN BAND**
- **FAMILY FUN ACTIVITIES AND GIVEAWAYS -
INCLUDING BIKE TO THE LIBRARY FOR A PRIZE!**

**SEE YOU AT
THE LIBRARY!**

**SOLANA BEACH LIBRARY
157 STEVENS AVENUE**

**LOCAL PARTNERS:
CITY OF SOLANA BEACH
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SOLANA BEACH COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS PRESENTS



Pros and Cons of the State Propositions

Join the League of Women Voters North County San Diego for a nonpartisan presentation that explains the 14 state propositions on the November ballot using various sources from the California Secretary of State. It provides concise background information, describes what each measure will do if passed, and outlines its fiscal effects. The supporters and opponents of each proposition will be identified along with the main arguments and financial support for and against it.



Presenters: **Mandy Butler**, member of the Voter Engagement Committee for the California League of Women Voters and co-chair of the Pros and Cons Committee for the League of Women Voters North County San Diego, and **Rosette Garcia**, Chair for Voter Services for the League of Women Voters North County San Diego and is a Past President.

Tuesday, October 13 at 6:00 PM

La Colonia Community Center

La Colonia Park

715 Valley Avenue, Solana Beach

The talk is free and open to the public. If you're a senior requiring transportation, please call SBCC at 858-284-6619.





LA COLONIA
COMMUNITY FOUNDATION
DIA DE LOS MUERTOS

40th CITY OF SOLANA BEACH CELEBRATION
(1986-2026)

- LIVE MUSIC
- ENTERTAINMENT
- KIDS ACTIVITIES
- COMMUNITY ALTARS
- MERCHANDISE AND VENDORS

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 18
10 AM to 5 PM

LA COLONIA PARK



**Enjoy the festivities and view
historic photos shared by the
Solana Beach Civic &
Historical Society!**

Wildfire Preparedness -- An Update from Fire Department Chief Bret Davidson

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



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.

6 p.m. Thursday, October 22
Solana Beach City Hall
635 South Hwy 101, Solana Beach
(Parking available behind, off South Sierra Ave.)

Free and open to the public. Co-sponsored by:

