



President's Message

The month of January has been one of reflection and connection for me. I am so grateful for my involvement in the SBC&HS and my connections with wonderful friends like you who care about each other and our community. I count you all as a special blessing in my life.

Michele Stribling

Ember String Quartet to perform at February 7 Meeting

The Ember String Quartet is made up of Josephine Kim (17, cello), Stacy Widyono (15, violin), Chisato Kamakura (16, violin), and Maya Rosenbaum (15, viola). These young musicians are members of the Mainly Mozart Youth Orchestra directed by Hernan Constantino, but what bonded them is their dedication and passion for music. They have been successful individually, winning many awards and recognitions throughout their young careers. Together as an ensemble, they recently won First Place in the San Diego Branch VOCE competition within their age category, qualifying them to compete in the statewide competition in April.



The repertoire for February 7 includes works from the 18th to 21st century that accentuate the virtuosity and characteristics of string music.



Remembering Gabby Gerardy

We are saddened to report that 15-year-old Gabby Gerardy of Solana Beach passed away on January 23 after a skiing accident during a school trip to Big Bear.

Gabby performed for Society members during our September 2018 and 2019 Bar-B-Qs as a member of HeyJoJo Productions, led by Society Nominations Committee chair JoJo Dodson Bogard. Gabby was a wonderful actress with a passion for theatre. She recently played Maria in "The Sound of Music" and starred in numerous HeyJoJo and North Coast Rep Theatre School productions*.

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It is one of the most iconic images of our community — along with Quonset rooflines and the enchanting ceramic mosaics that now book-end our City. The glowing pink neon Solana Beach sign has tagged countless sunset photos by locals and visitors.

Solana Beach native and University of Notre Dame student Alyssa Carroll emailed the Society to learn more about the most Instagrammed icon in town. “I am . . . taking an Art History class on public art. We have been tasked with finding information about public art in our hometowns. I have chosen the iconic pink neon ‘Solana Beach’ sign,” she wrote.

Thanks to the efforts of dozens of Society historians, who clipped and curated news and information about our City over six decades, and to our digitization team, which has made these artifacts available for the internet age, we were able to help Alyssa with her homework. Did you know . . .

The neon sign wasn’t erected to signify the City. Rather, it was raised likely in the mid-1950s as a glowing invitation to stay at the Solana Beach Hotel, which occupied the building on the Plaza at 101 North Acacia starting in 1925. The building was one of the first to be erected by Col. Ed Fletcher, and its rock buttresses remain today as they were built close to a century ago. Inside, the hotel provided 12 rooms, two apartments and five offices, one of which has been occupied by the Solana Beach Chamber of Commerce for decades.

In 1992, the 4-foot-tall, 20-foot wide sign was spared from demise by official designation as the cultural icon that it remains today. According to this January 9, 1992 report in the North County edition of The San Diego Union newspaper, officials in our relatively young, new City (incorporated in 1986) were dedicated to continuing the Society’s long fight against billboard blight. Roof signs (among others) had been outlawed by ordinance in July of 1991.

However, after hearing Solana Beach Hotel owner Al Childs’ protest, Council “adopted a criteria

whereby culturally significant signs would be exempt from the new ordinance.” The Council also appointed an eight-member ad-hoc committee to oversee implementation of the roof-sign-ban rule.

Childs’ was the first to win the cultural or historic designation, backed not only by committee support but also by a near unanimous vote by then 101-members of the Historical Society.

The “hotel” portion of the sign came down when the property was leased to the Chart House for corporate offices in 1993. In place of the word “Hotel” there is now a small sculpture created by Wenetta Childs from pieces of enameled copper that she did not use in her Sun sculpture. The tall Sun sculpture, installed in the Plaza median at Lomas Santa Fe/Highway 101 in 1967, stands as a visual representation of Solana Beach (“a sunny place”). And the pink neon “Solana Beach” remains, still luring visitors and sunset photographers to Fletcher Cove. *Do you have Solana Beach Hotel memories to share? Email solanabeachhistoricalsociety@gmail.com.*



SeaWeeders 'dig' the Center for a Healthy Lifestyle

Thanks to a generous donation by Tina Zucker of Succulents US, the SeaWeeders gathered Sunday, January 26 to plant hundreds of kalanchoes, aloes, and other drought-tolerant plants.

"We had decided to change the garden from vegetables to succulents, which I had been *slowly* propagating from home," said Helen Wescott, garden coordinator at the Center for a Healthy Lifestyle. "So this donation was huge — probably 300 plants."

After replanting the cottage garden, remaining plants will be used to fill in around the parking lot. "The end result is amazing," Helen added. "We have moved from a vegetable garden to a truly drought-tolerant landscape and it is just beautiful. Less water, less upkeep — a win win."



L-R: Katie Pelisek Jane Morton and Cindy Hill install new landscaping at the Center for a Healthy Lifestyle, behind the Boys & Girls' Club.

Grand Opening: Harbaugh Seaside Trails



Celebrate the view we fought decades to preserve at the opening of Harbaugh Seaside Trails, Saturday, February 22, 4:30 to 6:30 p.m.

Tour the wave-shaped trail and see newly installed native plants on the three-acre property. View tributes in the Betsy Schulz mosaic-designed donor monument at the south entrance. Enjoy the sunset from the shell-shaped Myron + Joan Overlook deck. A time capsule will be dedicated, and refreshments will be provided by Ki's Restaurant. Please RSVP by February 14 by clicking [here](#).

Join the SeaWeeders on February 11 at 6:30 p.m. for an update on our projects at the Center for a Healthy Lifestyle, El Viento pocket park, Solana Beach Post Office and Fire Station . . .

And perhaps a new pollinator park .

Starting in March, our regular meetings will shift to the First Wednesday of the month at La Colonia Community Center, 715 Valley Ave. Join us on March 4!

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Gabby is survived by Tom, Tarey, and Devin Gerardy, "Auntie" Vanessa Dunbar Peterson, and many of her wonderful friends in the theatre. The Gabby Gerardy Memorial Foundation has been set up at the Coastal Community Foundation to support Theatre Arts and Children's Mental Health <https://coastalfoundation.org> A Memorial and Tribute Show for Gabby is planned. Please visit www.Heyjojoproductions.com for information.



"To lose any actor is heartbreaking, but this young actress had so much talent and was in EVERY SHOW I have done for the past three years," says JoJo. "I'm grateful that my families were able to access wonderful support from Rady Children's Hospitals Children's Mental Health Services to understand their grief and pain only two days after the accident. My actors are grieving, but also putting their strength toward their next performance. Please support our little local theatre by donating to the Gabby Gerardy Memorial Foundation thru the Coastal Community Foundation. And please come see a show! Watching young actors sing their hearts out is adorable and healing."



*Additional credits: My Favorite Cabaret, Sleeping Beauty (Racoon), The Outsiders (Dallas), High School 2 (Ryan), Into the Woods (Cinderella and the Wolf -- 2 casts!), The Wizard of Oz (Lion), Mulan (at the North Coast Rep Theatre School), My Favorite Scenes (2019), Legally Blonde (Serena), 13 (Patrice), Cinderella (Stepsister), Elf (Emily Hobbs), The Gorilla (at the North Coast Rep Theatre School), High School Musical (Gabriella), You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown (Linus), The Little Mermaid (Ursula). My Favorite Scenes (2018), Hairspray (Dynamite).

2020 General Meetings* and Events

February 7	General Meeting featuring the Ember String Quartet
March 6	General Meeting featuring archeologist and historian Richard Carrico of the Department of American Indian Studies at San Diego State University, who will discuss the prehistory of Solana Beach — extending back more than 6,000 years.
April 10	General Meeting, featuring updates on the San Elijo Lagoon restoration from the Nature Collective
May 8	General Meeting, featuring City Manager Greg Wade on the State of the City of Solana Beach
June 5	New Board members installed

Visit our Heritage Museum in La Colonia Park, open on the 1st and 3rd Saturday of each month from 1-4 p.m.

* General Meetings are held from 5 to 7 p.m. at the Fletcher Cove Community Center, 133 Pacific Ave.

Solana Beach Civic & Historical Society
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