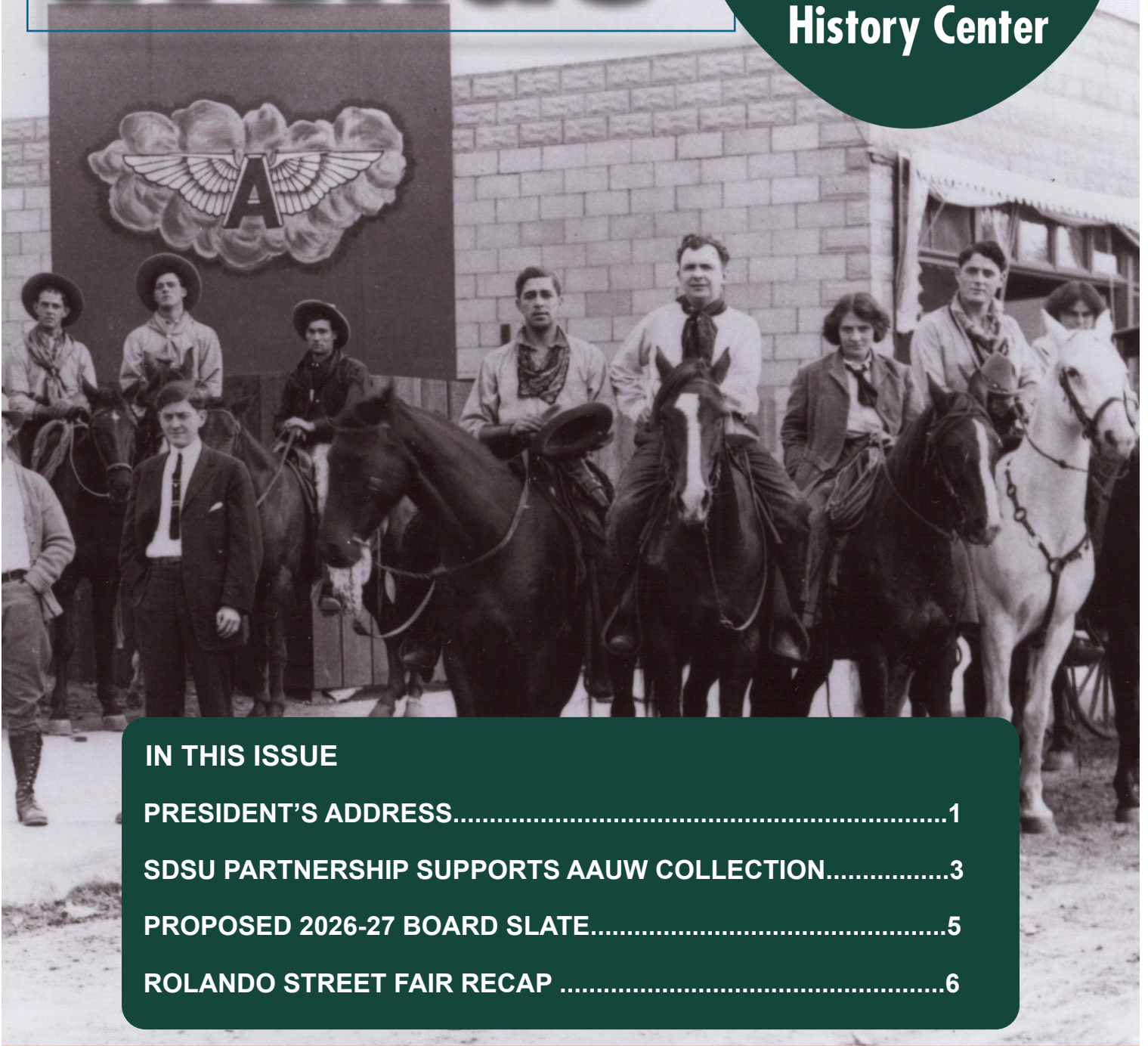


Spring 2026

lookout avenue

LA MESA
History Center



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The NEWSLETTER of the LA MESA HISTORY CENTER

VOLUME 51, #2

PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS

Looking Back and Moving Forward

As my fourth term as La Mesa History Center Board President draws to a close, this is my final presidential address for the newsletter. At this point of transition, it seems fitting to look back at the tremendous progress the La Mesa History Center has accomplished in the past four years through the dedication and efforts of its committed Board and enthusiastic membership.

When I think about the LMHC, I am always struck by how we continually “swing above our weight.” The LMHC is a relatively small organization and we are an entirely volunteer supported group. Yet every year we pull off a tremendous Home Tour with an accompanying Roundtable History Talk. Many thanks to Jim Newland for leading these efforts and to the dozens of volunteers and docents that pull these events together year after year (this year is the 20th Tour!). Other local historical societies may offer home or garden tours, but they have paid staff - we do not and yet we are able to present an engaging Tour that has sold out two of the last four years.

Other annual events, such as the holiday party and annual meeting, have been going strong for even longer than the Home Tour. These events date back to the earliest days of our organization. Last year's annual meeting had the extra significance of highlighting our 50th anniversary celebrations which included the opening of a time capsule from 2001 and a social media series of “50 Facts about the La Mesa History Center.”

Social media as a whole has really taken off in the past year due to the efforts of Tracey Stotz who is heading up our “Where is it Wednesday?” posts. A recent post showing a picture of La

Mesa Boulevard and Spring Street from around 1910 was viewed by over 10,000 viewers and several similar photo posts have brought in similar engagement. These posts have been a great way to get people talking to each other and sharing their stories and memories too.

We can't talk about the past four years without mentioning the work that has been completed to bring the McKinney House Yard back to a more “ranch” feel. A new sign was installed and our “Buy a Brick” fundraising project was completed and the bricks are installed. The rose garden memorial sign was updated and our exhibit building was completed. Current work has turned to the house itself as we are currently finishing up some updates to the electrical system, but be on the lookout for new interpretive signage in the yard in the near future.

That seems like a good transition to start looking to the future. Coming up in June, the LMHC will be participating in the La Mesa Flag Day parade on Saturday, June 13th. For those who haven't attended before, the parade goes down La Mesa Blvd starting at Memorial Dr. This year the parade will be celebrating the 250th Anniversary of the USA and this theme will be carried over to our annual meeting on Sunday, June 14th. In addition to the food, games and a history themed photo booth, we will also be voting on the 2026-2027 Board of Directors slate. I encourage you to attend and, in the spirit of democracy, make your voice heard by participating in this vote.

In July we will be partnering with San Diego organist Russ Peck and the San Diego Theater Organ Society to host a Silent Movie Night on July 18th. For more information and tickets, visit the link here: <https://lamesahistory.com/event/silent-movie-night/>

And speaking of partnerships, the LMHC is excited to be partnering with the La Mesa Woman's Club in celebrating their 125th Anniversary! As the repository for their records, the LMHC is looking forward to helping them highlight their tremendous history.

And speaking of our collections, I will close this address by highlighting the work from the past four years that I am most proud of on a personal level - the significant strides that we have made to preserve and make our collections more accessible. As an archivist by training, I have been thrilled that we have been able to bring in some important tools to help in this work, including an archival collection management system to manage our collection descriptions and a preservation repository to manage our digitized and born-digital collection materials. But all the tools in the world are only as good as the people you have working with them and the LMHC has been incredibly fortunate to have some truly talented and dedicated volunteers and interns. A shout out to Jim and Charlene Craig and Don and Julie DeMint - these four are some of my favorite people in the world and I treasure the three hours every Saturday I get to spend with them figuring out filing schemes, naming conventions, and "other duties as defined." We have also been blessed with a fantastic partnership with SDSU through Dr. Isaac Ullah and Dr. Dave Cline which has allowed us to have a steady stream of interns who bring their energy, innovation and curiosity to their projects.

In conclusion, we celebrate what we've accomplished and look ahead to what's next. I want to thank each of you—our members, volunteers, and supporters—for being part of this journey. Your involvement makes all the difference.

***Veronica Martzahl, President
La Mesa History Center***



Our SDSU interns helping prep pinwheels to hand out at the La Mesa Flag Day Parade in June.



President Martzahl leads the History Center in a prior Flag Day parade. As she wraps up her term her leadership will be missed.

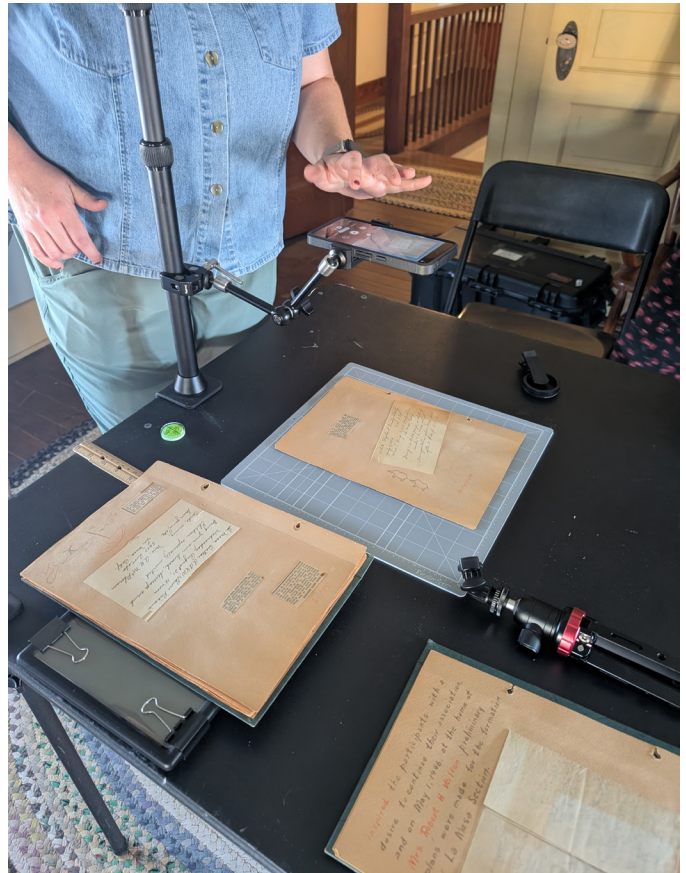
SDSU PARTNERSHIP FOCUSES ON THE RECORDS OF THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF UNIVERSITY WOMEN (AAUW) LA MESA BRANCH

The ongoing collaboration between the La Mesa History Center and the SDSU Computational Archaeology Lab brings together community heritage work and university-based research to support the documentation, interpretation, and preservation of local historical resources. Through this partnership, SDSU faculty and students have worked alongside LMHC to help develop practical methods for recording community knowledge, documenting historic buildings, and creating publicly accessible heritage materials that serve both research and outreach goals.

The current project focuses on the records of the American Association of University Women La Mesa Branch held by the LMHC to create a Digital Archive that preserves the organization's history and community impact from 1946 to the early 2000s. The collection features two primary formats: high-resolution digitized scrapbooks that provide a visual narrative of branch activities and news clippings, and a series of searchable PDF member directories (yearbooks).



A new digitization station has been set up in an upstairs room in the McKinney House.



Michaela Langer digitizes a cover of an AAUW scrapbook.

These records contain essential institutional data, including leadership lists, committee appointments, programmatic schedules, and membership rosters. Together, these materials serve as a vital resource for exploring local history and the professional and civic contributions of the La Mesa branch over multiple decades. In the first phase of this work, the project has digitized and curated all of the materials covering the first ten years of the chapter, between 1946 and 1956. This work is presented in an online exhibit, made possible through support from the SDSU College of Arts and Letters Community Engagement Grants program, whose funding helped advance this community-centered work.

Excepted from the Scrapbooks of the AAUW La Mesa Branch exhibit available at <https://comparchexhibits.sdsu.edu/lmhc/>.

Thanks to Dr. Isaac Ullah for his management and support of this project and to SDSU students Erin Petersen, Skyler Rehbach, and Michaela Langer for their work digitizing the materials and working on the exhibit. The students presented their work at the SDSU Digital Humanities Showcase on May 8, 2026.



Erin Petersen creates metadata for an AAUW scrapbook.



La Mesa's Cinematic History Comes to Life Again

Saturday July 18, 2026

Experience La Mesa's pioneering motion picture roots!

Come see two locally-made 1911 "Flying A" one-reelers and a 1916 silent film superstar Douglas Fairbanks' feature, "Manhattan Madness."

The program will feature San Diego organist Russ Peck accompanying these historic silent films on the San Diego Theater Organ Society's historic Wulizer 4/24 Theater Pipe Organ.

Historian Jim Newland will open with a short presentation on the Flying A's history in La Mesa

Go to lamesahistory.com for Tickets & Information

Tickets \$25; LMHC Member Price \$20

6:30pm – La Mesa Film History Presentation

7:00pm – Silent Films Presentation

Trinity Presbyterian Church

3902 Kenwood Drive

Spring Valley



PROPOSED BOARD SLATE FOR FY 26-27

The Board of Directors would like to submit the following slate to the general membership for consideration and a vote at the June 14 Annual Meeting.

Executive Board

President – Jim Newland
Vice President- John Loughlin
Secretary – Veronica Martzahl
Treasurer – Karen Hern
VP Membership – Tracey Stotz

General Board

April Bolduc
Emily Alessio
Samantha Alberts
AnnMarie Provancha

Terms continuing to June 2027:

Kristine Alessio
Steven Churchill
Sharon Smith
Kevin Vigil

Our sincere thanks to outstanding Board member Donna Bloomer who has completed her term. Donna has agreed to continue to help the History Center in volunteer roles. We are so appreciative of her continued commitment to local history. We also appreciate the efforts of Dan Lee who is stepping away from the Board, we thank him and wish him all the best.



**La Mesa
Flag Day Parade**

Saturday, June 13, 2026

Parade steps off at 10:00 AM

Marches west through the La Mesa Village from Memorial Drive to Acacia Avenue

Come on out to the Flag Day Parade and be on the lookout for the La Mesa History Center car and walking members!



**LA MESA
History Center**

Annual Meeting

Sunday, June 14th
2:00 pm to 4:00 pm

Join us for food and fun as we wrap up our celebration of 50 years of the La Mesa History Center and commemorate 250 years of the United State of America!

Our family friendly event will include a photo booth, games and crafts!

McKinney House Yard
8369 University Ave
La Mesa, CA 91942

LMHC BRINGS HISTORY TO THE ROLANDO STREET FAIR

On Sunday, April 12, 2026, the La Mesa History Center participated in the 28th Annual Rolando Street Fair. Cooler temps (and a brief burst of rain) could not keep people away from the LMHC booth where they had the opportunity to look up information about their properties and browse scrapbooks about several local communities. This event always leads to multiple researchers following up at the Palermo Archives and Research Room. This year, the Rolando Community Council also presented LMHC's own historian, Jim Newland, with the Doris Perry Community Service Award "in Recognition of Exemplary Commitment and Outstanding Service to Rolando." Jim has been engaged with the Rolando Community since the inception of the Street Fair and was instrumental in documenting the neighborhood's and community's histories.

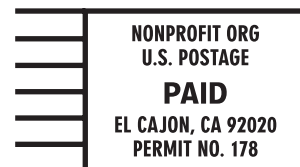
As an auxiliary event to the Street Fair, Jim also presented *Creating Rolando: A History of the Origins and Development of Rolando* at its Centennial (1926-2026) on Tuesday, April 21st. A recording of the event will be coming to the LMHC YouTube page in the near future.





McKINNEY HOUSE MUSEUM
AND HISTORY CENTER
ARCHIVES RESEARCH FACILITY

8369 University Avenue
La Mesa, CA 91942



LMHC MAILING ADDRESS
P.O. Box 882
La Mesa, CA 91942



lamesahistory.com



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619.466.0197



[@LaMesaHistoryCenter](https://www.instagram.com/LaMesaHistoryCenter)

The La Mesa History Center is an all-volunteer non-profit 501c3 corporation charged with preserving the history of the greater La Mesa area. The La Mesa History Center operates the Rev. Henry A. McKinney House, a 1908 House Museum and the History Center Archives Research Facility located at 8369 University Avenue in La Mesa, California.

The ***Lookout Avenue*** is the official quarterly publication of the La Mesa History Center. Closing dates for submitting contributions are the 1st of every March, June, September, and December. Word document and jpeg image files preferred.

Submit contributions via email, or email the Editor at info@lamesahistory.com