

The **Rolando NEWS**
 A Publication of the Rolando Community Council

THE ROLANDO NEWS GROWS UP

By Jan Hintzman and Aimee Lee Cheek

Big changes are afoot. *The Rolando News* will have a new format and will be delivered free to Rolando homes every month by U.S. mail...with real newsprint and color features...beginning with our October issue! And you will see added coverage of local events, as well as Rolando-specific stories.

What's not changing is the unique local flavor of news from Rolando. The Rolando Community Council retains the editorial control of our submissions. We thought that was very important as we negotiated an agreement with the Mid-City Newspaper Group. You will see familiar columns, your favorite advertisers and hopefully ads new to our paper.

Before any more words, we must give a hearty "Rolando Hats Off" to the many, many folks who have worked over these nine years of our publication. Assembling the "news" is only the first piece. Then there is the set-up, the delivery prep, and finally the troops who fanned out across Rolando to get it to your doorstep. Add our loyal advertisers to those we salute. They funded the paper.

This joint effort has been good for Rolando, bringing neighbors together to build a real sense of community. We each should be proud of our contribution.

What do we need now? **We need writers and ideas for articles** to keep our news pertinent and interesting. Contact Jan Hintzman hintzman@cox.net to join *The Rolando News* team.

CELEBRATE ROLANDO'S HISTORY

SATURDAY, AUGUST 6

It's the 90th birthday of Rolando Village! And the Rolando Community Council (RCC) is having a party to celebrate. Bring a blanket, maybe a chair, and your picnic fixings to **Clay Park** on **August 6** from **3:00-7:00 p.m.** and raise a glass with your neighbors to mark our beginnings as a community.

We've come a long way since our conception in 1926, a new city far from established San Diego. An impressive advertising campaign lured folks to the hinterlands to see this fantastic new development. Evidence the accompanying photo.

Continued on page 6



Promotion to sell lots in the amazing new city of Rolando in the late 1920s

Rolando Community Council Events

Rolando's 90th Birthday Bash | Saturday, August 6 | Clay Park | 3:00 – 7:00 p.m.

RCC Community Meeting | Tuesday, Sept. 20 | City Council Candidate Forum | Community Room, United Domestic Workers | 4833 Seminole | 6:00 p.m. Socializing; 6:30 p.m. meeting

A PASSION FOR COMMUNITY HISTORY

By Aimee Lee Cheek

When you settle in under the shade at Clay Park on Saturday afternoon, August 6, 3:00-7:00 p.m. to enjoy **Rolando's 90th anniversary, "Big Bash,"** keep three words in mind: Thank the hills!

Otherwise, Rolando might look and feel like yet another featureless tract development. If it weren't for topography — the rolling hills that give us our name, community-minded residents, and some lucky historical accidents — instead of Rolando, we might well be, "Argh! Oh! No-o-o!"

"The nature of the place has protected it," says historian James D. Newland.

It is a reason that our walkways and staircases were designed into the original subdivision. It is the reason views of mountains and bay unexpectedly appear. It is a reason, along with the different periods of the community's development, that there is so much individuality in the housing. Some \$4 million lots in other areas lack features like these, Newland says.

Newland, former historian and now assistant district superintendent for the Orange Coast District of the California State Parks Department, has documented Rolando's development from bumpy beginnings in the 1880s and again in the Roaring 20s to today's relatively livable, walk-able, and affordable community.

Having earned undergraduate and graduate degrees in public history at San Diego State University, he moved in 1994 with his wife, SDSU alumna Jennifer Jones, to a house on Valencia Drive, where their daughter, now a junior at La Jolla Country Day High School, was born.

In Rolando, the young historian became intrigued by what he calls "hidden gem neighborhoods." Driving by on El Cajon or University boulevards, he notes, "You'd never know Rolando was here." Even as he did a State Parks internship at Old Town and worked with the U.S. Forest Service for three years in the Cleveland National Forest, he painstakingly scanned microfilm of the *San Diego Union-Tribune* 1904-1970 (now digitized, he notes ruefully), and ransacked local magazines, land records and other sources.

Before long, he clearly was the reigning authority on the history of Rolando Village, as well of the College Area, La Mesa and other surrounding areas. In response to community requests, he generously shared his knowledge through "teaching moments,"

such activities as lecturing at Rolando Community Council (RCC) meetings, leading Home Tours, and hosting a booth at our Street Fairs. Over the years, innumerable residents have stopped at the booth to pinpoint their house's location on old maps. If they ask its original cost, he often replies, to their shocked astonishment, "about three thousand dollars." It's one way of gauging how much things have changed.

Newland considers projects in local history among his most rewarding work. Once the Rolando house grew too small for the family, the Newlands moved to La Mesa where he heads the La Mesa Historical Society, serves on their City Planning and Historic Preservation Commissions, and published three books, "**Cleveland National Forest.**" "**La Mesa: Images of America**" and "**Around Mt. Helix.**" Newland's "A Brief History of Rolando, A Community of San Diego, California," can be found on the Rolando RCC website, www.RolandoCC.org, and he has plans for a publication on the College Neighborhoods history in book form.

Newland reflects on the high hopes and dashed dreams of early Rolando developers and notes that **the "continuity of the place seemed to hold."** Still, he puts the ball squarely in our court.

Those of us who live and work in Rolando, he says, need to appreciate the unique characteristics of the community, how it still holds promise of realizing the suburban dream. It is up to us to convince others of how special it is and "to take care of it."



Historian Jim Newland shares detailed histories of Rolando houses at the Rolando Street Fair each year. When new, how much did your house cost? Jim knows.

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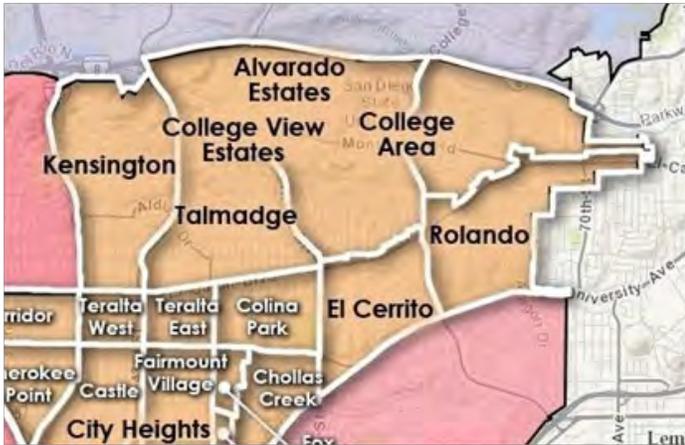
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MEET THE DISTRICT 9 CANDIDATES



Map of San Diego City Council District 9

Traffic, street repair, growth, mini-dorms, safety? **Rolando's future is pretty much in the hands of the person elected this fall to hold the District 9 seat on the City Council.** Where do the two candidates vying to succeed our retiring Council representative Marti Emerald stand on issues of most concern to our neighborhood?

We can meet the candidates, Georgette Gomez and Ricardo Flores, at the Rolando Community Council (RCC) meeting on Tuesday, Sept. 20, beginning at 6:30 p.m. in the Community Room at the United Domestic Workers headquarters, 4833 Seminole Drive. Along with RCC members, the public is encouraged to attend.

Both candidates boast considerable community experience. Georgette Gomez is Associate Director of the Environmental Health Coalition and an elected member of the City Heights Community Planning Group. Ricardo Flores is Chief of Staff for Councilmember Emerald.

Please attend, ask questions, comment and help all of us make an informed choice when we vote on November 8.

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COMINGS & GOINGS

Opportunity knocks! The College Lutheran Church property next to the library is for sale, and because of the shared parking lot with the library, the City has a first option to purchase. The College Area Community Council (CACC) is lobbying for a City acquisition for use as a park and/or recreation center for the College-Rolando community which is sorely lacking in public spaces. The Rolando Community Council is working with the CACC to encourage City purchase.

Historic Street Lights in Rolando. Policies, policies, policies! It's taken a while to puzzle out just how Rolando might accomplish protecting its existing historic acorn lights and expand the use of these historic lights into other areas of Rolando. Watch for more information in our next issue.

Stamp Addict? Have you found this "hidden gem" at 7151 El Cajon Boulevard? They carry everything from cool scrapbook stuff to inks, glitters, embossing powders, adhesives, stamps, wonderful papers, etc. The new owners recently celebrated one year in business. Time for you to check them out!

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ROLANDO BEGINNINGS

By Aimee Lee Cheek

Free barbecue! Great festivities! 8,000 men, women and children attend! At least, that's what the advertisements said in June 1926. Developers were eager to attract buyers to the "City of Rolando Where you will love to live!"

It was the Roaring Twenties. Women's hair was shorter and so were skirts, the better to dance the Charleston. "The chief business of the American people," President Calvin Coolidge proclaimed, "is business." Consumer goods proliferated. Sales of Coca-Cola, boosted by Prohibition, boomed. So did weekly attendance at the movies, while radios and phonographs brought celebrities' voices into living rooms.

Southern California, like Florida, was experiencing frenzied real estate speculation. In the mid-1920s, the trolley system in San Diego was extended eastward along University and Adams Avenues, accommodating newly annexed communities like Normal Heights, Kensington and City Heights. During the decade, annual automobile production tripled, from 1.5 million to 4.8 million. Suddenly, the seemingly grandiose dreams of real estate developers gained credibility.

The big barbecue was the sales kick-off. A syndicate composed of several Los Angeles developers and local investors had purchased 530 acres of land between what is now Interstate 8 and University Avenue down toward Lemon Grove. Rolando would be an exclusive community, stylistically similar to other developing neighborhoods like Point Loma, La Jolla, Pacific Beach and Kensington. It would have curved asphalt-paved streets; water, gas and electric hookups; ornamental street lamps; concrete sidewalks; block-to-block public walkways; and protective zoning. "Rolando was to be to San Diego, what Hollywood was to Los Angeles."

By January 1928, with some infrastructure in place but only a few houses constructed, the syndicate sold out. New investors talked up "The World's Master Development." They tried, but failed to persuade San Diego State College, which was searching for a new location, to accept their plan for a campus south of University Avenue in today's Rolando Park.

Some Rolando property owners, along with other local businessmen, purchased the property and formed the Rolando City Holding Company. In December 1928, its ads announced "The New City of Rolando." Despite the assertion of its sales manager that no Mattoon Act Bonds — the soon-to-be



Aerial view of Rolando San Diego, June 27, 1928. (Sourced from Calisphere)

infamous state bonds authorized in 1925 that plunged scores of communities into debt — had been used, the reverse was true. Moreover, the company was delinquent in tax payments to the local water district. There were no more ads and development stopped.

Beneath the giddiness of the '20s lay economic and racial inequality, prolonged depression in farm regions, and a bloated stock market, often followed by spectacular busts. In October 1929, the stock market crashed. Rolando might have taken cruel comfort in realization that the Great Depression affected the whole world, the greatest economic disaster in modern history.

(Information in this article is derived from Eric Foner, *Give Me Liberty! An American History* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2005), pp. 766-806; and James L. Newland's "A Brief History of Rolando, a Community of San Diego, California")

Rolando's History, continued from cover

Want to learn more? See "Rolando Beginnings," (above), and "A Passion for Community History," (p. 2). If we've caught your attention, go to www.RolandoCC.org. RCC also is planning to present a "Rolando History Night" at future community meeting, with historian Jim Newland as the speaker.

Meanwhile, see you in the shade at Clay Park on August 6!

CIT CORNER: NAME OUR CATWALKS

By Bob Scott, Team Leader of RCC's Community Improvement Team

The Community Improvement Team (CIT) would like to thank all those volunteers who came out to lend a hand for the Third Annual Catwalk Cleanups on June 4 and July 9! What a difference we made!

As part of our 90th birthday celebration for Rolando, please cast your votes for the theme and names for the Catwalks. **Ballots must be received by September 1.** The names will be unveiled at our September 16 RCC meeting.

How easy is it to vote? Go to our website, www.RolandoCC.org. A ballot is posted. Circle the theme and eight of the choices associated with that theme. Completed ballots can be sent via email to me at rkscott710@yahoo.com, mailed to 4628 Lenore Drive or placed in an envelope located next to my front door. There are also some ballots there.

RCC BOARD ELECTIONS 2016-17

We've done it again...elected outstanding volunteers to lead the Rolando Community Council! Congratulations to **President Doug Lister**; **Second Vice President Scott Fielder**; **Secretary Aimee Nimitz**; **Treasurer Todd Rehfuss**; and **Director Aisha Salleh**. They will be joining continuing members **First Vice President Jay Sener** and **Director Bob Scott**.

Would you believe that this board joins 31 other outstanding Rolando residents who have served on RCC boards over the past eight years? Our hats off to all who have served and to the many others who pitch in to make Rolando a real neighborhood!

The retiring board members are David Clarke and Rene Sheldon who served for four years, Jordan Marks who served for two years, and Rose Van Oss and Sylvia Neilson who each served one year. Congratulations on all you have accomplished. We will continue to count on you as part of the Rolando team.

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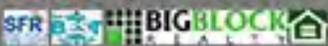


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NEIGHBORS AT WORK

Many neighbors have small business operations based in Rolando, and they provide a variety of services. Take a look below at the skilled neighbors who offer services you might need. Consider them when you are looking for help. RCC members are welcome to submit their information free of charge by emailing copy to hintzman@cox.net.

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Aron Oakes — Acorn Garage Doors. Installation, repair and service of garage doors and garage door openers. License #897261. Neighborhood references. (619) 218-1581.

Brenda King-Kapalla — Integrative Fitness Nursing. Licensed RN fitness expert. Maximize fitness goals, reduce your waistline, and restore health. New: Gentle Fitness Classes, B12 shots, Lawn Yoga. www.IntegrativeFitnessNursing.com (619) 200-1911

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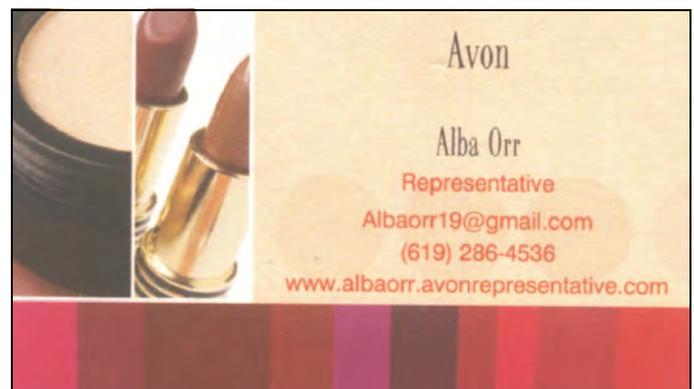
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