THIS YEAR AT THE SCHOOLHOUSE, October 4, 2025, thru October 18, 2026

Improvements to outside of Schoolhouse:
--Installed new message board immediately outside our gate.
--Baker Ironworks, oldest ongoing business in North County (founded 1927), restored our bell at their initiative and expense; we paid them to replace the rotting wood superstructure with a sturdy metal design of their own, soon to be painted.
--With help of Encinitas Rotary, we removed/reorganized the mess of stones, bricks, wood, and detritus from back area.
--Installed new shed, with electrical outlets; it is painted same colors as schoolhouse.
--Replaced old "open/closed" sign with new handmade wooden sign.
--Replaced sink in bathroom and did a thorough cleaning.
--Purchased and had installed a system of outdoor night lighting; awaiting dimming filters.
--San Dieguito Garden Club paid for a landscaping company to check our irrigation system and perform heavy-duty garden maintenance.

Improvements to inside of Schoolhouse:
--Installed new Research Station, which has its debut today at end of this meeting!
--Acquired new rolling cabinet and underdesk cabinet.
--Acquired (from Carolyn Cope) two more bookcases.
--Acquired one more old schooldesk and a set of new small slateboards.
--Northeast Document Conservation Center (through a grant from the California State Library) provided a free consult and inspection of our Schoolhouse from the perspective of their "Ready–Or Not" Cultural Heritage Disaster Preparedness Project. Consultant prepared a report on how we can better safeguard archival materials; we've begun to implement her suggestions.

Accounting:
--Improved our balance sheet and financial reporting systems.
--Improved and simplified our membership database.
--Created a new system for tracking grants.

Historical/Archival Work, with help of 30+ volunteers (ages 16-84)
--Produced revised edition of my *Research Guide to Local History for North County San Diego.*
--Finished scanning all but 4 notebooks and 4 sections of photonegatives in Rotating Cabinet, with help of Kyle Thomas who has been photographing our collection on the Castle at 4th & H, which art historian Richard Aldrich called "Casa San Lorenzo" when he built it in 1929.
--With help of intern Maricarmen Balbuena and volunteer Bill Graham, we conducted 30+ new oral history interviews; with help of Julie and Samantha Bykowski and others, we edited some 25 recording transcripts, some of which Brandon Jetter excerpted for our Independence Saturdays.
--Reorganized our entire scanned pamphlet collection.
--Continued to scan newslips and brochures in our File Cabinet A.
--Scanned, with permission, the autobiography of local sportswoman/activist Charlotte Gumbrell.
--Acquired 150+ books (purchased or donated) in conjunction with our Independence Saturdays, thus expanding our collection on neglected topics (e.g., previously we had only 3 books on Native Californian history; now we have 40+ books and 100+ pdfs of historical articles).
--Acquired three major donated collections:

1) Gerald Kuhn: 100+ large format maps, some aerial, and 3 complexly indexed notebooks on geography and geology of coastal North County since 1870s, based on work he did for Scripps Institute of Oceanography in 1970s-90s concerning bluff erosion.

2) Cozens Family: hundreds of photos, school memorabilia, WWII ration books, aviation records and maps, and manuscript materials since ~1900, for which our volunteer William Tran will prepare a finding list to submit to the California Digital Library.

3) Order of the Sons and Daughters of Italy in America, La Costa Dei Fiori lodge #2424: five large notebooks of photos, meeting programs, and memorabilia.

--Acquired smaller donated collections of old textbooks and pedagogical materials; a photo album of an Encinitas couple, 1930s-50s; 5+ more high school annuals (and expecting more soon).

Gifts and Grants: Much of our activity was enabled courtesy of large gifts from June Sekera, Don Hubbard, and the Better Future Fund; and of grants from the Coastal Community Foundation, a SD County Community Enhancement Grant, and the City of Encinitas.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Visitors: Total numbers of visitors, July 1, 2025 thru June 30, 2026: 1607, from 18 countries and 29 states, as well as 193 third-grade students.

Website: Al Mora, Susan Sage, and Hillel Schwartz added and populated new tabs; updated photos and the list of our Friends; made it easier to donate or become a member online; revised the Land Acknowledgment, incorporating both the Kumeyaay and Payómkawichum peoples.

Heritage Tree: Successfully organized and ran the 31st Lighting of the Heritage Tree, with live band, arrival of Santa, and children's choirs, drawing at least 500 participants of all ages. Established a more permanent, formal arrangement with the City to support this event in future, as well as agreements on a new Holiday Market for 2026, to be run by Chamber of Commerce.

Independence Saturdays: Successfully created exhibitions for a series of 7 Independence Saturdays, with support from the Coastal Community Foundation, drawing 450+ visitors between June 18th and October 3rd, and engaging more than 40 volunteers.

Tours: Conducted Historical Walking Tours, every 3rd Sat Sept thru July, averaging 12-20 people.

Conducted 3 Historical Bus tours, in conjunction with Encinitas Preservation Association, ~40 people per tour, and revised the historical guide to this tour.

Conducted, during the April Cyclovia and in conjunction with the Chamber of Commerce and Mark O'Connor, a series of walking tours of the public art in downtown Encinitas.

Fairs, Parades, and Presentations: Participated in Encinitas Street Fairs Spring & Fall.

Carolyn Cope served as narrator for the Holiday Parade, as she has for 16 years now.

Opened the Schoolhouse for City's Art Nights, with delighted visitors participating in the painting of pictographs using native compound of red ochre and yucca powder, etc.

Archivist Hillel Schwartz addressed the Encinitas City Council, Senior Citizens Commission, and Encinitas Business Exchange, and participated in the San Diego Art Matters Creative Conversation on "The Arts in Rural and Unincorporated San Diego County" (24 Feb 2026).

Local Fellowships and City Groups: Carolyn Cope and Jim Filanc participated in Encinitas Rotary meetings and workdays, the Cultural Tourism Committee, the Chamber of Commerce, while maintained close relationships with 101 Mainstreet organizations of Cardiff-by-the-Sea, Encinitas, and Leucadia, and Olivenhain historians. We also hosted a Chamber of Commerce Mixer at the Schoolhouse, as well as regular meetings of the Encinitas Preservation Association and the San Dieguito Garden Club.

Plaques: The third of our 6 Historical Building Plaques was at last installed.

Research: Responded to 40+ serious research inquiries from the public and from members, many leading to in-person visits. We continued work with Julia Fumo on ArcGis mapping of public art in Encinitas and will be working toward non-profit status with the ArcGis creators at ESRI.

CINCH: As coordinators for the Council for Interpreting North County History (CINCH), Hillel Schwartz and Carolyn Cope arranged quarterly meetings, with guest speakers, at:

--Temecula Valley Historical Society, where Hillel Schwartz spoke on the experience of Independence in San Diego's many communities;

--Valley Center Historical Society, speaker from the "Ready–Or Not" Cultural Heritage Disaster Preparedness Project of the Northeast Document Conservation Center.

--San Marcos Historical Society, speaker from Library Guild of Rancho Santa Fe

--Escondido Pioneer Room, speaker Kevin Cahill on changing nature of copyright in the digital age, and Brandy Duykhuizen, Living Proof Stories oral history project (coming up 28 Oct).