



# HILLTOPPER

## JANUARY 2026

### PALOMAR ESTATES WEST

#### Onsite Management

**Maintenance:** Jorge Martinez

**Office:** Jessica DuBois

**Office Hours:**

Monday thru Friday

9:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

1 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.

**Office Staff**

Gayle Plant

**Weekend Relief**

Doug Tickner

**Security Patrol** Hidden Valley

Security (760) 744-1061

**Office:** (760) 727-5453

Fax: (760) 727-3054

After hours - emergencies only:

(888) 518-6064

**E-mail:** [Palomarestateswest@gmail.com](mailto:Palomarestateswest@gmail.com)

**Resident website:** [Pewresidents.com](http://Pewresidents.com)

#### Offsite Management

**PROPERTY MANAGEMENT  
HAVEN MANAGEMENT  
SERVICES**

3491 Concours Street, Suite 204

Ontario, CA 91764

Property Supervisor: Katie Davis

(909) 930-9750 Ext. 3005

Fax: (909) 481-7260

[kdavis@havenms.com](mailto:kdavis@havenms.com)

**MILLENNIUM HOUSING**

611 Anton Blvd., Suite 890 Costa Mesa, CA

92626 Phone: (949) 515-5100

Fax: (949) 515-5101

<http://millenniumhousing.com>

President: George Turk

COO / Vice President: Lori Carraway

Director of Asset Services: Diana Welsh

SPARC Director: Stacey Kazmierski

## MILLENNIUM MEMO

2025 in Palomar was a bit bittersweet, given the passing of John Davis, who had managed Palomar since our acquisition. Katie Davis is doing a great job, but John will be truly missed.

Some happier highlights:

- Jessica DuBois & Jorge Martinez joined the Millennium Family as your new Manager and Maintenance Manager. They're doing a fine job so far, don't you think?
- Stacey & the folks at SPARC had their usual good year, bringing several programs to the Park. I hope you got a chance to attend the Scam Seminar, Tech Class, Resource Fair, Exercise Class, the Holiday Party...
- 3 homes sold for more than \$500K, with many other sales for \$400K+. Your home remains a very valuable asset!
- My personal highlight: we celebrated the birth of our 8<sup>th</sup> grandchild! That will probably be our last, however.

Last but not least...Jessica got married on November 17! We have to give Jessica the Kudo of the Month for that one, don't we?

Of course, some residents drove too fast, abused Guest Parking and didn't pick up after their dogs, but those folks will do better in 2026, won't they? Thanks to all of you, for making Palomar Estates such a special place.

### **Lock Your Car!**

We've had reports at several of our Parks of prowlers late at night trying car door handles, looking for unlocked cars. One resident left a car unlocked with a wallet inside. You know that ended badly.

There hasn't been much of that at Palomar, although we just had a Park Truck stolen, but we're reminding all our residents to lock their cars, homes & sheds. In fact, just to be safe, maybe you should hit your clicker several times, for extra lockiness. Can't hurt?

Be careful, however. One resident – not at Palomar – accidentally locked his keys in his car. It took him 2 hours to get his family out.

### **Another Friendly Reminder**

Gyms get crowded after the New Year. Better to wait for it to die down, usually around Jan. 2. It will be less hectic then.

Have a great 2026!

*George Turk*

## NOTES FROM YOUR PEWRA BOARD

I'm still amazed at what a wonderful place we've chosen to live in. With so many clubs and activities to choose from, you can stay as busy as you like.

Your Social Connection has gone above and beyond with all the fun potluck dinners and shows, 4 th of July parade and free BBQ, a Luau show, Friday night get togethers in the clubhouse and impromptu get togethers around the pool, who could not resist joining in on all the fun.

The Garden Club space has bloomed into a wonderful place to walk by or just sit and enjoy the quiet.

Pickleball – What a workout! Speaking of workouts, we have two regular indoor exercise classes and pool aerobics. We have had several donors come forward to fund the Get Moving class thru the end of the fiscal year, Yay! There is also Shuffleboard, Ping-Pong, Billiards, Darts, Book Club, Bingo, Movie Night, a well-stocked Library, Cooking with Katie and a monthly Breakfast.

All that should keep you busy, and to keep your place looking spiffy, we are offering a dumpster day, paint recycle, battery recycle First ever E-waste recycle and knife sharpening days. So, watch your Hilltopper for details on upcoming events.

So many of these events would not have happened, if not for the ideas and behind the scenes efforts from our residents. As a collective we have untold years of life experiences and talent. In working together, we have created this successful and, I think, harmonious place we call home. If you have an idea about something you would like to do or see happen here, be it a new club, activity or rule change, please bring it to YOUR PEWRA board for consideration.

Now let me be frank with you. If the Krankenwagen has paid a visit to your house, as a survivor, it will fall on you to make all the decisions, pay all the bills and generally keep on going. I encourage you to know these hard details before it happens. You should know where the money is, how the bills get paid, if your name is even on the lease, if not, you will need to be qualified within 60 days or risk eviction. Why put yourself through this unneeded stress. I encourage you to get involved, get moving and get it done!

Respectfully yours,  
Rick Towle



### JANUARY REMINDERS



LOVE YOURSELF A LITTLE MORE THIS YEAR



WORK ON YOUR GOALS BUT NOT AT THE COST OF YOUR MENTAL HEALTH



EMBRACE PATIENCE BECAUSE THAT IS WHAT HAS BROUGHT YOU THIS FAR



LEARN SOMETHING NEW THIS YEAR TO KEEP THE PASSION GOING

KitesAndRoses.com

Fun Holiday List

JANUARY

National Oatmeal Month	National Hot Tea Month
National Soup Month	National Get Organized Month

- 1/1: New Year's Day

1/2: National Science Fiction Day

1/2: World Introvert Day

1/3: Chocolate Covered Cherry Day

1/4: National Spaghetti Day

1/4: National Trivia Day

1/5: National Whipped Cream Day

1/6: National Bean Day

1/6: National Shortbread Day

1/7: Harlem Globetrotters Day

1/8: National Argyle Day

1/9: Law Enforcement Appreciation Day

1/10: Peculiar People Day

1/11: Secret Pal Day

1/12: National Hot Tea Day

1/13: Public Radio Broadcasting Day

1/14: Organize Your Home Day

1/15: National Bagel Day

1/15: Strawberry Ice Cream Day

1/16: National Fig Newton Day

1/17: Kid Inventors Day

1/18: National Thesaurus Day

1/19: National Popcorn Day

1/20: National Cheese Lovers Day

1/20: Take a Walk Outdoors Day
- 1/21: National Granola Bar Day

1/22: National Hot Sauce Day

1/22: National Polka Dot Day

1/22: National Blonde Brownie Day

1/23: National Handwriting Day

1/23: National Pie Day

1/24: National Compliment Day

1/24: National Peanut Butter Day

1/25: National Opposite Day

1/26: National Green Juice Day

1/27: National Chocolate Cake Day

1/27: National Geographic Day

1/28: National Blueberry Pancake Day

1/28: International Lego Day

1/29: National Corn Chip Day

1/29: National Curmudgeons Day

1/29: National Puzzle Day

1/29: Freethinkers Day

1/30: National Croissant Day

1/31: Eat Brussels Sprouts Day

1/31: Inspire Your Heart with Art Day

1/31: National Hot Chocolate Day

Manager’s Notes

Happy New Year Palomar Estates West!

What an Amazing Year 2025 was, I am so excited for this New Year and all the amazing possibilities 2026 is going to bring.

Remember, my door is always open and if you need anything or have any questions at all, please don’t hesitate to come to the office. I promise to always help as best as I can.

Your manager, Jessica

## Palomar Estates Residency Association Board (PEWRA)

President - Cathie Byrd; Vice President - Garry Larson;

Secretary- Jo Gehringer; Treasurer - Susan Freidman

**Directors** - Jesse Nieto, Michael Ach, Rick Towle

**Board Meeting: 1<sup>st</sup> Tuesday of the month (6:30) in the Pavilion Room**

## SOCIAL CONNECTION

Merlin Chancellor – Chair, Cindy Palermo – Treasurer, Marilyn Ferri – Secretary,  
Simon Spears, Cathy Bassett, Rusty Bassett, Angela Sirota, Shevaun Teegarden, Heike Corbeil,  
Carol Godett, Linda Kerridge, Cindy Towle, Rick Towle, Lynne Widdison, Malcom Widdison,  
Linda Freeman, Jo Gehringer, Lisa Corrigan

## HILLTOPPER COMMITTEE

Delane Johnson, Fran Miller, Becky Hall, Lynn Thomas, Mary Wallace

## READY ADVISORY PANEL

Bryan Cooper, Mary Wallace, Cindy Palermo, Debbie McQuillan, Fran Miller, Jo Gehringer,  
Lee Tydlaska, Neil Teegarden, Robert Fierro, Ruthann Kirby

## BREAKFAST COMMITTEE

Mikkie Sawyer, LuAnn Foster, Trish Coy, Cathy Bassett, Karen King, Pat Taylor, Marcia Brown, Sheila Miller, Denise Hickey, Toni D'Alessandro, Tish Litz

## GYM COMMITTEE

Larry Brown, Rusty Bassett, Marie McElligott

## RULES COMMITTEE

Jesse Nieto, Mary Wallace, Jo Gehringer, Delane Johnson, Shevaun Teegarden, Christine Parkman

**For Fire, Sheriff, or Emergency in progress, such as break-ins, health problems or a life-threatening situation, call 911.**

**If you have a non-emergency question or to file a report,  
please call the San Diego Sheriff Dept at 760-510-5200.**

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## GAME NIGHT ON FRIDAY NIGHTS

**Every Friday, starting at 6 PM**

Come play cards or domino games  
or bring a game you want to share/teach.  
Mexican Train, Threes, Sequence, Chicken Foot, etc.  
Bring your own beverage.

If you would like to bring a snack to share, that is great also.



## ACTIVITIES DIRECTORY

<u>ACTIVITY</u>	<u>TIME &amp; DAY</u>	<u>CONTACT</u>	<u>PHONE</u>
<b>Art Gallery</b>	On Exhibit in Pavilion	Sharon Lubert	909-519-8915
<b>Aquarobics</b>	9 am M-W-F	Trish Coy	760-536-9338
<b>Cardio Aquarobics</b>	9 am Tu, Th, Sat		
<b>Billiards (Men)</b>	9 am Tu	Peter Oberg	760-300-8891
<b>Billiards (Women)</b>	1:30 pm M	Gerri Harper	760-500-8681
<b>Bingo</b>	6:50 Th	Delane Johnson	612-240-4049
<b>Book Club</b>	Fourth Friday 2:00 pm	Cynthia Towle	503-317-3544
<b>Breakfast</b>	1 <sup>st</sup> Sat 8:30 am	Mikkie Sawyer	760-690-7825
<b>Bridge</b>	Varies - Call Ann	Ann Webb	702-449-9916
<b>Cooking with Katie</b>	Third Tuesday 4:00 pm	Katie Rodriguez	760-310-8623
<b>Darts</b>	6-8 pm Thurs Game Room	Chuck Thomas	707-799-6555
<b>Dog Park</b>	8 am - 8 pm Daily	Tom Matthews	951-660-0411
<b>Game Night</b>	Friday 6 pm	Linda Kerridge	858-776-6783
<b>Garden Club</b>	1 <sup>st</sup> M 2 pm	Merlin Chancellor	661-670-1336
<b>Community Garden</b>	8 am – 8 pm	Robert Fierro	619-339-0433
<b>Get Moving</b>	Mon & Wed 11:15-11:45	Sparc	
<b>Hand and Foot</b>	Wed 1 pm	Kim Stevenson	760-703-4872
<b>Let's Dine Out</b>	Times vary	Linda Kerridge Cathie Byrd	858-776-6783 530-417-5186
<b>Library</b>	Open Daily	Susan Balog	916-759-2636
<b>Mahjong</b>	1pm M	Kim Stevenson	760-703-4872
<b>Medical Rehab Lending Closet</b>	Open as needed	Rusty Bassett Jesse Nieto	619-301-9551 408-666-8088
<b>Meditation</b>	Tu 10:30 am	Sali Weiss	619-729-3226
<b>Mexican Train</b>	2 <sup>nd</sup> and 4 <sup>th</sup> Tu 4:30 pm	Margie Farrelly	760-855-8416
<b>Movie/Dinner/Dance Nights</b>	Dates Vary	Simon Spears	760-583-1549
<b>Pet Place</b>	Every Day 8 am-8 pm	Vicky Hetrick	760-672-2258
<b>Pickleball</b>	8:00 -10:00 am M-W-F-S	Dana Eads	760-216-7284
<b>Open Play All are Welcome!</b>			
<b>Ping Pong</b>	Tu 10:30 am	Nejla Gharajedaghi	760-536-9583
<b>R.E.A.D.Y. Panel</b>	3 <sup>rd</sup> Tuesday at 2 pm in	Mary Wallace	619-887-0700
<b>Emergency Preparedness</b>	Card Room	Bryan Cooper	858-342-3334
<b>Shuffleboard</b>	1:30 pm M	Rusty Bassett	619-301-9551
<b>Strength &amp; Balance</b>	10 am M-W-F	Dean Kelsey	760-519-1909
<b>Social Connection</b>	Dates vary	Merlin Chancellor Simon Spears	661-670-1336 760-583-1549
<b>Tai Chi</b>	9 am Th	Rudy Cobos	
<b>Tai Chi 24 Yang Style Form</b>	9-10 am Tu	Arnold Epel	760-208-9627
<b>Tennis</b>		Jim Catley	360-301-1566
<b>Yoga</b>	4:30 pm M	LuAnn Foster	480-203-4330
<b>Chair Yoga</b>	10 am Tu		

Hilltopper submissions to [pewhilltopper@gmail.com](mailto:pewhilltopper@gmail.com).

All submissions must be submitted by the 10<sup>th</sup> of the month.

If you notice any errors or omissions, please contact the Hilltopper at [pewhilltopper@gmail.com](mailto:pewhilltopper@gmail.com)

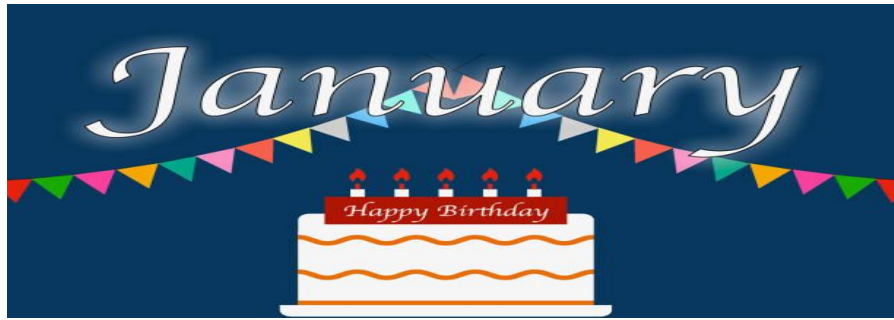
**Hilltopper Distribution – Becky Hall - 858-967-8725**

The Hilltopper may edit articles for publication and will not publish anything of a political, medical, religious nature or solicitations. The Hilltopper does not publish articles submitted anonymously.

**THE HILLTOPPER DOES NOT ENDORSE ANY OF THE ADVERTISERS THAT APPEAR IN ANY ISSUE.  
USE AT YOUR OWN DISCRETION.**

To advertise your business in the Hilltopper, call Boe Davis at Mobile Home Park Magazines, 408-744-1011, ext. 3107.





Margie Machado	1		Claudeen Lindsay	10		Cathy Anderson	20
James Preisach	1		Richard Kutner	11		Mike Westbrook	20
Socorro Canales	2		Patricia Litz	11		Terri Maltby	20
Nancy Sims	2		Galla Nikolayev	11		Kay Lilland	23
Geraldine Harper	3		Brent Parkman	11		Dave Kemp	23
Richard Stryker	3		Patrice Richardson	12		Carolyn Novak	24
Mary Wood	3		Sandra Snedeker	14		Robert Hess	26
Thomas Zachery	3		Linda Thomas	15		Janet Hungerford	27
Theresa Prutch	4		Frank Bauder	16		Angela Basher	27
Mike Adams	5		Larry Lunzmann	16		Robin Amposta	28
Onah Nguyen	5		Susie Butler	17		Christine Gootee	28
Bill Paterson	8		Jim Gates	17		James Page	29
Rudy Valle	8		Karen King	17		Marilyn Iverson	30
Robert Peake	9		Shirley Heller	18		Darrell Willey	30
Arlene Hansen	10		Deborah Taylor	18		Sandy Iacampo	31

*If you know of any birthdays throughout the year that we don't have on our list, please send an email to [pewhilltopper@gmail.com](mailto:pewhilltopper@gmail.com) so we can include those birthdays in the future.*

## Directory Changes

Please make the following additions and corrections to your park directory

SPC	DELETE	ADD	PHONE NUMBER
61	Unlisted	Meyer, John	858-342-3758
108	Vacant	Costello, Shauna	425-753-6099
175	Vacant	Clark, James & Alice	619-916-6355
182	Unlisted	Kavalus, Barbara	916-216-2453
237	Unlisted	Johnsen, John/Basher, Angela	707-319-3668

# JANUARY 2026

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
				<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>
				Cardio Aquarobics 9 am Tai Chi 9 am Darts 6-8 pm	Pickleball 8-10 am Aquarobics 9 am Strength & Balance 10am Game Night 6 pm	<b>Breakfast 8:30</b> Pickleball 8-10am Cardio Aquarobics 9 am
<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>
	Pickleball 8-10 am Aquarobics 9 am Strength & Balance 10am Get Moving 11:15 - 11:45 Mahjong 1 pm Shuffleboard 1:30pm Garden Club 2:00 Women's Billiards 1:30 Yoga 4:30	Cardio Aquarobics 9am Men's Billiards 9am Tai Chi 9 am Chair Yoga 10 am Ping Pong 10:30am Meditation 10:30am <b>Board Meeting 6:30</b>	Pickleball 8-10 am Aquarobics 9 am Strength & Balance 10am Get Moving 11:15-11:45 Hand & Foot 1 pm	Cardio Aquarobics 9 am Tai Chi 9 am Darts 6-8 pm Bingo 6:50	Pickleball 8-10 am Aquarobics 9 am Strength & Balance 10am Game Night 6 pm	Pickleball 8-10am Cardio Aquarobics 9 am <b>Hilltopper Submissions Due</b>
<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13 Recycle</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>
	Pickleball 8-10 am Aquarobics 9 am Strength & Balance 10am Get Moving 11:15 - 11:45 Mahjong 1 pm Shuffleboard 1:30pm Women's Billiards 1:30 Yoga 4:30 <b>Let's Dine Out 5:00</b>	Cardio Aquarobics 9 am Men's Billiards 9am Tai Chi 9 am Chair Yoga 10 am Ping Pong 10:30am Meditation 10:30am Mexican Train 4:30	Pickleball 8-10 am Aquarobics 9 am Strength & Balance 10am Get Moving 11:15-11:45 Hand & Foot 1 pm	Cardio Aquarobics 9 am Tai Chi 9 am Darts 6-8 pm Bingo 6:50	Pickleball 8-10 am Aquarobics 9 am Strength & Balance 10am <b>Social Hour Pot Luck with Live Music 4:30</b> Game Night 6 pm	Pickleball 8-10am Cardio Aquarobics 9 am
<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>
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<b>25</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>27 Recycle</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>31</b>
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**It's January 2026... Can't believe it !!!**

**So that means we are R E A D Y to start**

**our New Year welcoming**

**“ YOU ” to breakfast**

**Saturday, January 3<sup>rd</sup> 2026**

**“January is the beginning of anything you want.”**

**“The magic in new beginnings is truly the most powerful of them all.”**

**“ January is the perfect time to reflect on the past, appreciate  
the present,  
and look forward to the future. ”**

*Mikkie & her Team*

# Let's Dine Out



It's time to go back again to **Outback Steakhouse**. This is a Let's Dine Out favorite! Enjoy a variety of Steak, Chicken, and Seafood dishes!

**When: Monday, January 12th, 2026  
5:00 PM**

**Where: 177 San Marcos Blvd**

Enjoy a full menu selection and separate checks. Call or text Linda Kerridge to reserve your seat. Call or text me at (858) 776-6783 to reserve your seat and let me know if you need a ride.

See you there!  
Linda Kerridge

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## GET MOVING CLASS IS NOT ENDING!

We got an anonymous benefactor who donated to keep this going. If you would like to step up for further classes, the cost is \$ 600 for a three-month session or \$ 2400 for the entire year. Please contact me or the PEWRA board with any questions or donations.

Thank you  
Rick Towle

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## **PEW Book Club**

Greetings from the Book Club!

Happy New Year from the Book Club!

Since we took December off, this January the Book Club will be discussing our December book selection, "Bridge of Sighs" by Richard Russo. This was quite a long book. So, we are grateful for the extra time to read it!



The Book Club meets the 4th Friday of the month. Our meetings take place in the Multi-Purpose Room at 2:00pm. Please join us for enthusiastic discussions about our chosen books.

Until then, keep reading!

Cynthia (Cindy) Towle 503-317-3544 [towlecandr@gmail.com](mailto:towlecandr@gmail.com)

*"I cannot live without books..."* Thomas Jefferson to John Adams June 10, 1815

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## **PEW Library Donation Guidelines:**

\*Magazines must be no older than 3 months

\*Books must be in excellent condition and no older than 10 years

\*No CD's or DVD's

The library is quite full, so your adherence to these guidelines would be greatly appreciated. You may have noticed that some bottom shelves are empty. I have noticed those books never get checked out, so I am not filling those. Bending over that far for some is not that easy!

There is a bookshelf by the window with free books that are not to be returned to the library. Help yourself to as many as you want. Also, magazines do not need to be returned.

If you have books to donate and are unable to get them to the clubhouse, give me a call or text and I will pick them up.

Happy Reading!

Susan Balog  
916 759-2636



## PALOMAR ESTATES WEST PET PLACE



- WE HAVE HAD ISSUES WITH PETS GETTING LOOSE AND NEEDING TO BE IDENTIFIED.
- PLEASE REMEMBER TO HAVE YOUR DOG OR CAT MICROCHIPPED. PLEASE CONTACT VICKY @ SPC 304 IF YOU NEED ASSISTANCE. VICKY DOES HAVE A MICRO-CHIP READER IF YOU'RE NOT SURE IF YOUR ANIMAL HAS BEEN CHIPPED.
- PLEASE MAKE SURE YOUR DOG OR CAT HAS A COLLAR ON IF YOU'RE IN THE PARK. IT SHOULD HAVE AN ID TAG SHOWING PET'S NAME AND YOUR CELL NUMBER.
- PLEASE MAKE SURE A PHOTO OF YOUR PET IS GIVEN TO THE PARK OFFICE ALONG WITH A FULL DESCRIPTION OF THE PET.
- IF YOU NEED ANY HELP WITH YOUR PET, SUCH AS A VET REFERRAL, REHOMING AND TRAINING, CONTACT VICKY@ 760-672-2258. CONTACT INFO IS LISTED IN THE ACTIVITIES DIRECTORY FOR EASY FUTURE REFERENCE.
- ANY DONATIONS CAN BE BROUGHT TO SPC 304. TAX RECEIPT PROVIDED.

(SUBMITTED BY VICKY HETRICK)



## Cooking With Katie

**Come join us to learn about ways you can cook healthy and delicious meals on a reasonable budget.**

**No Class in January**



Social Hour



Social Connection

**Friday January 16th**  
**\$10.00 4:30 – 9:00 pm**  
**They're back!**

Join us at the Clubhouse for live music with  
**Blue Suede Crew**  
**Potluck, BYOB and 50/50**

Sign up at the clubhouse and pay by January 11th





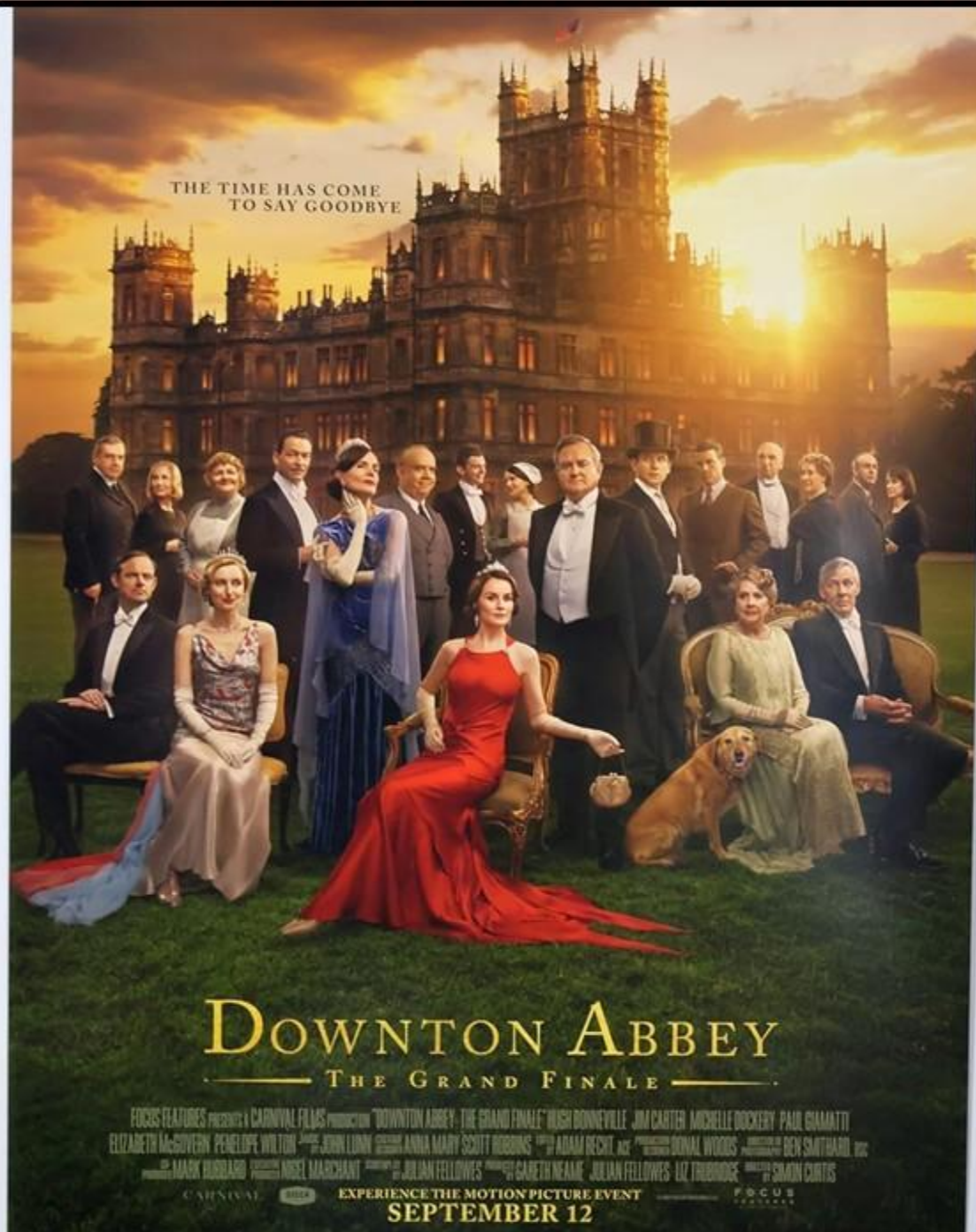
# MOVIE NIGHT

## DOWNTON ABBEY~THE GRAND FINALE

Jan 21<sup>st</sup> – 6:00 PM Movie

Please sign-up as spaces are limited to 30 – Thank you

Movie Night! Popcorn/Soda



Social Connection



# LET'S DINE OUT PRESENTS

## A PEW 'PAL'ENTINE DINNER!



CELEBRATE FRIENDSHIP AND DINE WITH PEW PALS!



**TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 2026**

**DOORS OPEN AT 4:30PM**

**DINNER READY AT 5:00PM**

**COST: \$15.00 PP**



### MENU

APPETIZER, RASPBERRY PORK LOIN, MASHED  
POTATOES, VEGETABLE MEDLEY, ROLL AND BUTTER,  
DESSERT  
BYOB

### TO RESERVE YOUR DINING SPOT:

- PAYMENT IS DUE BY 2.6.26
- Make check payable to the Social Connection
- Place check (or cash which we prefer!) into an envelope and mark it "Lets Dine Out"
- Drop check into the Social connection box in the lobby
  - Your payment confirms your seat!

## PEW Garden Club

For our December garden club meeting we hosted our annual holiday tea party. In addition to our residents here in PEW we invited PEE and Vallecitos. Over 65 well dressed, enthusiastic guests enjoyed a sprawling buffet of everything from tea sandwiches to sweets. The tables were quaintly decorated with arrangements in unique centerpieces from my personal ceramics collection. Before going home each of our guests were delighted to select a festively wrapped plant to take home.

A big thank you to everyone who brought finger food to share. I also want to extend a warm thank you Lynn, Robin, and Lynne for all your help in planning and orchestrating this very successful event! I could not have done it without you!

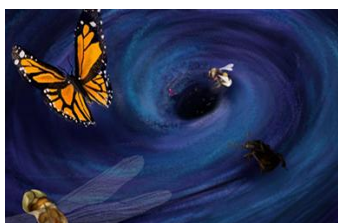


Last month we went on a field trip to Rogers Gardens to check out their holiday decorations. As always it was system overload, so many great decorating ideas and goodies it was hard to resist buying everything in sight. After

all that walking we built up quite an appetite and had a scrumptious lunch.

Please join us in the new year. Our next meeting will be Monday, January 5th, 2 PM at the clubhouse. I am excited to dive into the upcoming planting season and meet some new members in 2026.

Submitted by Merlin Chancellor



## Sowing Seeds Indoors

By Herb Field  
Forensic Entomologist

I've wanted to write this article for a while but something always came up and forgot to get it on my schedule. I'm aware that it is a bit early for the spring/summer planting season as most San Diegans do their planting in April or May, but it is not too late for seedlings that you will plant now for fall/winter crops such as Cauliflower, Broccoli, Brussels Sprouts (one of my favorites), Cabbage, Green Beans and Lettuce.

There are a few things that will make germinating seedlings easier and you should consider a small investment to have the best results. Before we discuss that I need to convince you that growing your own seedlings is better than buying seedlings at the garden shop. First, seedlings can be expensive. The average seedling in a 4–6-inch pot is \$6-10 bucks. Second, you won't bring home hitchhiking critters and/or diseases. The seedlings you grow will be healthier and stronger. Third, is variety. You will be able to select the varieties of vegetables that fit your needs or appetite. You will be shocked at the dozens of varieties of just green beans!

So how do we get started? I suggest the purchase of a heat pad. The germination heat pad can be purchased for less than \$10.00 and will last nearly forever. I have one that is 20 years old. They come in various sizes but the most common is about 10" x 20". You can get them bigger but this is a good size as a starter kit.

You can grow seedlings in nearly any container you want; I had a friend use old worn-out cupcake tins because they already had individual spaces. I use used 6 pack plastic plant planters from previous purchases but you can buy them for a few cents each.

More importantly than what you grow them in is what planting medium that you use. The best product is one that uses milled sphagnum moss, but a good potting soil will work in a pinch. I purchase my seedling starter soil from Gardeners Supply out of Vermont or use Miracle-Gro Potting soil. If you can find a mix with sphagnum moss in it, it will retain moisture better which is essential for germination.

Where you buy your seeds is important! I've bought seeds from just about every company you can imagine, some are great like Burpee, Urban Farmer and Territorial Seeds and some are lousy like Reimer Seeds.

Be sure to check if available what the germination rate is for the seeds that you buy because if the germination rate is 60% then you will need to sow extra seeds to get the number of seedlings you need.

Also, be sure to plant the seeds at the depth recommended because if you plant them too high in the soil, they may dry out quickly and not germinate and if too low they may rot before the seedling reaches the surface.

So, you've selected your seeds, you've found a soil that works for you, you have found something to grow them in, what's next? Moisture retention is vital for the successfully germination of any seed. Once you place your containers on the heating pad the seed "cells" will dry out faster than normal but the warmth is essential to germination. You can buy those plastic domes for under 10 bucks that allows light in but keeps the warmth from escaping or simpler use saran wrap and cover the trays until you see the seedlings starting to sprout. You can also slide the trays into zip lock bags, just be sure to open them occasionally to get fresh air in.

So that completes the primer on seed germination. I strongly suggest that you give this a try, it's fun, allows you to have a diverse selection of plants that are stronger than anything you'll buy in the stores.

Finally, don't throw away last year's seeds! I know that they have a date on them but that is as much a marketing tool as it is anything else. Seeds kept cool and dry will germinate many years past that date and your seed collection will increase your choices of plants year after year!



Above is my seed box with many years of collected seeds! The box is over 100 years old!! For questions, please direct them to [entomologyservices@gmail.com](mailto:entomologyservices@gmail.com)

# Donation Guidelines for Social Connection Events

## Guidance for Donating Seasonal and Décor Items

We sincerely appreciate the generosity of individuals who wish to contribute seasonal and décor items for our Social Connection events. Your support helps create a welcoming and festive atmosphere for everyone.

### Limited Storage Space

While we are grateful for your gifts, please be aware that our storage space is very limited. In order to manage donations effectively and ensure that items can be put to good use, we ask that you do not leave donations in the storage closet.

### Donation Procedure

1. Before leaving any donation—regardless of the type—please reach out to Merlin Chancellor.
2. Merlin Chancellor will consult with our decorating committee to determine whether we can utilize the item for our events.
3. Only items approved by the committee will be accepted and stored appropriately.

Thank you for your understanding and for helping us maintain an organized and efficient process for receiving donated items.

*Submitted by Merlin Chancellor*





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**Phone: (949) 515-5100 ext.305**  
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