

2023 calendar of events

February 12
Lunar New Year Celebration

March 16
Annual Meeting / mixer

April 16
Stroll-ish, SPRING

June 18
Stroll-ish, SUMMER

September 9
Stroll-ish, FALL

September 10
Solano Avenue Stroll 47

October 31
Halloween on Solano

First 3 weekends of December
Santa on Solano

December 12
Stroll-ish, WINTER

+PLUS
Social Hour Mixers 1st Wednesday of every month

There are lots of ways to support these events, from hosting a mixer to sponsoring the Stroll!

Annual meeting / mixer

Thursday, March 16
California Bank and Trust
1451 Solano Avenue

Online registration and renewal now available! Visit:
www.solanoavenue.org/join

Solano Avenue Association
Facebook: /SolanoAvenueStroll
Instagram: #onsolanoavenue

Stay informed & share your updates! Visit our official website, www.solanoavenue.org. "Like" Solano Avenue Association and Stroll on Facebook, or subscribe to our e-newsletter by emailing info@SolanoAvenue.org.



Headlines

- **Return of Solano Avenue Stroll a Triumph!**
- **Jennifer Hansen-Romero and the Albany City Council**
- **Quarterly Printed Newsletter**
- **Stroll-ish Success**
- **Reduction in Member Dues**

Return of Solano Avenue Stroll a Triumph: 150,000+ people visited Solano Avenue for the 2022 Solano Avenue Stroll after a two-year hibernation. We wish to acknowledge the Albany and Berkeley City Council(s), the Cities of Albany and Berkeley, Albany Subaru, Mechanics Bank, Pivot Point Commuter Hubs, Waste Management, and Andronico's Community Markets.

Jennifer Hansen-Romero and the Albany City Council: Jennifer has replaced Ge'Nell Geary on the Albany City Council through 2024! To avoid any appearance of conflict of interest, Jennifer has stepped-down from the Solano Avenue Association Board of Directors. Long-time Vice President Jason Bellevue has stepped up as President.

Quarterly Printed Newsletter: In October the SAA printed and hand-distributed a single page update about SAA current events, policy adjustments, and more. We hope you found this helpful and informative. We are planning to continue this effort.

Stroll-ish Seasonal Events a Success: Thanks to our Platinum Sponsors including the City of Albany, Gordo's Taqueria, Waste management, and the Berkeley-Solano Avenue Business Improvement District. The SAA highly encourages businesses to plan their events on Stroll-ish days whenever convenient – we are all in this together!

Reduction in Member Dues: In early 2022 when the SAA Board was making plans to survive a third year without its major source of revenue, the decision was made to significantly increase membership dues. Without the Stroll the Board saw this as the only way to keep the organization solvent and active. Of course we were able to hold a 2022 Stroll, and all signs indicate full steam ahead going forward. In light of that, the Board is reducing the base membership dues this year to \$288, down from \$335. While still an increase from the 2021 dues, we believe this is the right rate with our much-expanded program and all around increased costs. As always, if this rate poses a difficulty for your business, we are always happy to work with you.

SAA Programs

The **Solano Avenue gift card program** continues to bring thousands of dollars of business to the Avenue each year. Every gift card that is sold is \$10 that must be spent at a Solano Avenue business.

- Our active **social media presence** reminds our neighbors of what Solano has to offer. The SAA is hiring a **professional Social Media manager** to step up our game and help us promote the Avenue!
- SAA staff and our Board President continue to **meet quarterly with staff of both Albany and Berkeley to discuss maintenance issues and to advocate for improvements**. Our frequent eyes on the street are invaluable for alerting the cities to immediate problems, and longer term issues.
- The **Blue Glove Crew** continues to clean up the street three days a week, rain or shine – as it has for nearly 15 years! All are welcome to join. They meet on Solano at the BART tracks M, W, F at 7:50am.

These events and programs are only possible with the support of our members. Please renew (or join) today!

Did You Know?

The **Alameda County Transportation Commission** has settled on plans for San Pablo Avenue through Albany that is less extensive than initially proposed. Updates in Albany will focus on pedestrian safety by adding bulbouts and enhancing crossings.

Find out more at www.alamedactc.org/sanpablo

The Solano Avenue Association is dedicated to promoting and improving the Solano Avenue business district and to building community spirit and identity through events, marketing, and aesthetic enhancement.

The Value of Membership

The Solano Avenue Association is an incredibly active and effective merchant association. Apart from producing the incredibly popular and successful Solano Avenue Stroll street festival, the organization produces other periodic events that bring people to the street and promote the businesses on the avenue, while also representing the business community's interests to Berkeley and Albany. The number one reason to be a member of the Solano Avenue Association is to support an organization that is doing so much to help us all be successful. But there's more to membership too!

Discounted Rates for All SAA Events

SAA Members can sign up for a space at the Stroll and Stroll-ish events for a dramatically reduced fee (even for free!). If you are planning to participate in the Stroll, SAA membership has a very clear benefit.

Participating in the Solano Avenue Gift Card Program

SAA Members can sign up to accept Solano Avenue Gift Cards as payment in their businesses. The SAA sells thousands of dollars worth of gift cards every year -- every one of which must be used at a Solano Avenue business.

SAA Member Emails

Our SAA Members email list is an invaluable source of important news about the cities, region, and business community. Apart from being the best source of information for SAA events, SAA member emails share security alerts, construction notifications, opportunities, and much, much more.

There is so much value to SAA membership! Find out more (or join) at www.solanoavenueassn.org

Message from Former SAA President Jennifer Hansen-Romero

As we enter this new year we will be faced once again with new challenges and new celebrations.

But I believe in the silver lining in it all...

As for the SAA, I am sad to say I need to step down from the board and the position of volunteer president of Solano Avenue Association, as the new appointee to fill the position left behind by Albany City Council person and prior mayor, Ge'Nell Gary. We will miss Ge'Nell's enthusiasm, community spirit and willingness to participate with the Solano Avenue Association. I am very appreciative to help serve our communities in this role on the Albany City Council.

As many of you know, I ran for Council to fill one of the 2 open full term positions, it was a very tight race, but ultimately I ended up in third position, which extended me the role to be appointed as Council person Gary's replacement. I look forward to serving our community in this new role, but will still continue to help and volunteer for our amazing Solano Avenue Association supporting our local businesses in Albany and Berkeley. I encourage others to join in as well! Please come to our Annual Meeting to learn more and perhaps join in as a board member to help continue to bring exciting programs, opportunities and connections to our wonderful community! I look forward to seeing you there!

*All my best,
Jenna*

Four Things you should be Aware of:

Changes with Association Emails

The Solano Avenue Association is creating two separate emails groups, Information / SAA Events and Business Promotions. Business Promotional emails will go out on Thursdays, twice a month. Please send us your promotional items by 5pm on the Wednesday before to be included in the following day's email. Promotional emails will be shared on social media as well.

Board Members

We are always looking for new ones, join the SAA Board, it's FREE and fun!

Event Sponsors

We need you! We hope we can count on you in 2023.

Social Hours

First Wednesday of most months, care to host one?

Did You Know?

SAA Board Meetings are open to anyone. We love to have visitors, whether merchants, employees or community members interested in learning about the SAA and Solano Avenue. The Board meets the second and fourth Tuesday each month from 8:30 to 10AM. You can even attend via Zoom if that is more convenient. Contact us for more information.

Board of Directors –

President

Jason Bellevue *RAF Investment Services*

Vice-President

Tod Abbott *Full Orbit Web and Marketing*

Secretary

Peggy Smith *Allstate Insurance*

Richard Smith *Allstate Insurance*

Robert Abrams *Abrams Claghorn Gallery*

Allen Cain *Operations Manager (Paid Staff)*

Recent Board Members

Ge'Nell Gary *Albany Resident*
Rafael Rangell *YMCA – East Bay Area*
Secretary – Jan Snidow *The Mane Alley salon*

Welcome to Solano! –

New business ventures!

KAI Real Estate	1820 Solano
Pizza Twist (Pending)	1821 Solano
Dark Horse Jewelry	1749 Solano
Signal Coffee Roasters	1707 Solano
Kate Campbell Piano Studio	1639 Solano
Wind & Brass Instrument Repair	1621 Solano
Best Day Ever Tattoo	1112 Solano

Under new Ownership / Relocation:

Felek Acupuncture one year at 1152 Solano
Solano Smile moved from 1183 to 1498 Solano

Partnerships –

City of Berkeley business district network
YMCA - Albany

The SAA is an important voice advocating for the businesses in Berkeley and Albany. If you know of something the cities should be addressing, please let us know.