

San Diego Colony of the Mayflower Descendants in the State of California

Minutes of the Colony Meeting: February 21, 2026

The meeting was called to order at 10:00 am by Governor William “Budd” Leef. The invocation was given by Deputy Governor, Martha Anderson.

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Callie Leef. The Pilgrim Pledge was led by past Governor Kathy Loftman. Governor Leef read the Mayflower Compact and noted the original signed document has been lost, but a handwritten copy by William Bradford survives.

Governor Leef welcomed all Pilgrim cousins and colony associates, with special recognition to veterans, active-duty military members, and their families. America 250 anniversary pins for Vietnam-era veterans are available today for those who were unable to attend the November meeting, Governor Leef extended a warm welcome to Donna Watkins, today’s guest speaker.

The Governor acknowledged new members, as well as members visiting from other colonies. He introduced State Board members Sharon Gardner, Secretary, and Amy Conboy, California’s Junior Membership Chair. Ms. Conboy additionally serves as San Diego’s Education Chair and is a member of the GSMD Junior Membership Committee. Recognition was given to past State and Colony Governor Ray Raser, along with gratitude to previous Governors Gail Raser, Kathy Loftman, Judith Reale, and Rick Bailey, who is celebrating 35 years of service.

Governor Leef invited Amy Conboy to present information about this year’s scholarship program. Ms. Conboy announced that San Diego offers a \$1,500 scholarship through an essay contest open to high school seniors and college freshmen. Applicants are not required to be Junior members but must demonstrate direct line ancestry and have sponsorship by an active Mayflower member. Applications must be submitted by May 1. The California Society is also conducting a scholarship contest for high school seniors, awarding four scholarships, with a deadline of March 1. For additional details, please contact Ms. Conboy, who will also be selling tickets for today’s Opportunity Drawing to support the San Diego Colony Scholarship Program.

Governor Leef announced June Carter, Hospitality Chair, is available today to take name badge orders. Further order instructions are included in *The Pilgrim News*.

The Ancestor roll call was taken by Renee Neale, Membership Chair, and Luann Esposito. Pilgrim William Brewster had the most descendants present with ten.

Deputy Governor Martha Anderson introduced Donna Watkins, a speaker popular with multiple Mayflower colonies. Ms. Watkins is the author of “Diverse Gashes: Governor William Bradford, Alice Bishop and the Murder of Martha Clarke, Plymouth Colony 1648” and “Women and Children of Plymouth Colony.” Her topic today is “The Hanging of Alice Bishop,” who was her ninth great-grandmother. Ms. Watkins explores the Pilgrim judicial system; its punishments and Officers, including the position of Messenger. The author’s original research of Plymouth court records reveals that John Holmes was the executioner. Ms. Watkins’ attention to detail and commitment to accuracy enhances her presentation.

Governor Leef and Deputy Governor Anderson thanked Donna Watkins and presented her with a Certificate of Appreciation and an Honorarium.

Martha Anderson led a meal blessing before a breakfast buffet was served.

Amy Conboy, assisted by Luann Esposito, led the Opportunity Drawing. The \$201 raised will support the Colony scholarship program.

Governor Leef presented America 250 Vietnam-era service pins to veterans who hadn't previously been able to receive them.

Governor Leef welcomed new members and invited Membership Chair, Renee Neale, to introduce two first-time attendees: Dan Odell, descended from John Alden, and Terry Dickinson who descended from William Brewster. Both received gift bags and had their photo taken to mark the occasion.

Governor Leef announced that the Winter Edition of the San Diego Colony Pilgrim News has been published and emailed. He expressed appreciation to Judith Reale for her outstanding work on the newsletter.

Members contributing to the America 250 Rose Parade float were asked to come forward. Renee Neale shared that she and her husband, Michael, spent over eight hours applying seeds to the float's rock features, describing it as a rewarding experience. Governor Leef also recognized Ray Raser and Kathy Loftman, who rode on the 2020 Mayflower float, and Vicki May, who helped prepare flowers and staff the 2020 float showcase.

Governor Leef emphasized the importance of keeping dues current. The State will not maintain memberships for those behind on dues. Contact Steve Douglass, State Membership Chair, for reinstatement. Life memberships are no longer offered due to financial constraints, but existing Life Members should check in annually with Steve Douglass to maintain active status.

Governor Leef announced that elections are coming up, with voting scheduled for the May meeting. Several positions are open for the next two-year term. With over 300 local members, you are encouraged to volunteer and continue the society's work and traditions. Those interested in serving should reach out to Martha Anderson or Governor Leef.

Governor Leef polled the attendees for interest in participating in the June Flag Day Parade. It's a fun, easy walk in La Mesa and the Colony has participated before. Period costumes are optional. Responses were mixed. The Board will discuss it further.

Other Reports

Secretary: Sharon Gardner, reported that the minutes from the Compact Day meeting, 11/22/25, were approved by the Board and are available on the "sandiegomayflower.org" website. Governor Leef stated he will email members with the password for this website.

Treasurer's report: Connie Bloodworth stated our financial reports for the year have been submitted to State. Finances for the year 2025 are as follows

		<u>Checking Income</u>	
<u>Savings Start</u>	\$1252.11	<u>Checking Start</u>	\$ 24392.64
Receipts interest	.51	scholarship	\$ 938.00
<u>12/31/25 Total</u>	<u>\$1252.62</u>	interest	1.18
		meetings	8078.00
		dues	1604.00
		misc	14.30
		<u>Checking Disbursements</u>	
		scholarship	\$ 1500.00
		misc	1666.69
		Web	209.00
		postage	21.54
		meetings	8844.85
		honorariums	100.00

Announcements

The next Colony meeting will be on Saturday, May 16, 2026. We will conduct Board Member elections and the installation ceremony for the 2026-2028 term. We will also host a guest speaker.

Martha Anderson offered a Benediction.

Governor Leef thanked everyone who attended and participated. He closed the meeting at 12:15 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon Gardner
Recording Secretary