



"To preserve and enhance the unique village character of Laguna Beach."

Newsletter

THE VILLAGE LAGUNA NEWSLETTER • APRIL 2005 • ESTABLISHED 1971

Second Annual Village Laguna Walk in the Greenbelt

The April general meeting will take the form of an easy Saturday-morning hike through Sea View Park, where we'll experience the drama of Aliso Canyon as viewed from Niguel Hill, south of the gorge, and view some of the plants that make up the globally endangered Southern Maritime Chaparral habitat. Ann Christoph will talk about the vegetation and the history of efforts to preserve the South Laguna hills. We'll have lunch — bring your own, soft drinks to be supplied by Village Laguna — at the end of the trail near the lookout point. After lunch, members will have the choice of returning on the Sea View Park trail, going on to Aliso Peak before returning to the park, and hiking down to South Laguna. (If you plan to take this part of the hike, carpool and leave a car in South Laguna.)

To reach the park, go south on Coast Highway to Crown Valley and turn left; then east to Pacific Island Drive and turn left; then north to Talavera and turn left. The park entrance is at the end of the street just before the gate to the Laguna Sur development, and there is plenty of parking space along the street. We'll meet at the entrance sign on Saturday, **April 30, at 10:30 a.m.**

LANO Issues Call for a Coalition To Protect Wilderness

In response to a letter from the officers and directors of the Laguna North Homeowners Association (LANO), Village Laguna will be sending representatives to a meeting at **7 p.m. on Monday, April 18**, in the Wells Fargo Community Room, to discuss ways of eliminating threats of intrusion into our surrounding wilderness areas such as the recent one affecting Aliso Canyon. The LANO letter reads: "We view any attempt at encroachment into any Wilderness Area as a very dangerous precedent. . . . We believe that only a very strong showing by our community that the adjoining Wilderness Areas are precious to us will put our Wilderness Areas off-limits to any and all development. To speak with a loud and unanimous voice is the best insurance to preserve this precious resource." ≈

Coming Soon

33rd Annual Charm House Tour



This year's Charm House Tour will be held on **Sunday, May 15**. Five homes in the Central Laguna area, ranging in style from Laguna charmers to modern masterpieces, will be open for viewing. Chartered trams will leave from the bus stop in front of the Festival of Arts on Laguna Canyon Road starting at noon and will serve the ACT V parking lot throughout the day. The last tram departs at 3:30 p.m., and the homes will be closed at 5:30 p.m. As usual, civic leaders will be among the home and tram guides. Tickets will be available by mid-April at shops and offices throughout town or from P.O. Box 1309, Laguna Beach 92652, at \$35 (\$40 the day of the event if there are any left).

Members are invited to help with the tour — call Anne Caenn at 376-5188 to volunteer — and in particular to come to the mailing party at Anne's house, 965 Katella St., on Monday, April 11, at 7 p.m. ≈

Summer Parking Fees Revised

The City Council has recently voted 3-2 (with Pearson-Schneider and Kinsman opposed) to lower the cost of summer parking at the ACT V lot to \$5 and the season parking pass to \$20, and to increase the cost of parking at the City Employees' lot and the Lumberyard to \$10. This move is expected to increase the use of the ACT V lot and reduce the number of cars circulating in the downtown basin during the festival season. ≈



APRIL
Annual Walk
in the
Greenbelt
Saturday, April 30, 10:30 a.m.
Sea View Park

MAY
Board Meeting
Saturday, May 7, 9 a.m.
Home of
Bette and Ken Anderson
611 High Drive

April, 2005

President's Message

By Doug Reilly



Doug Reilly

ACT V, VILLAGE ENTRANCE PLANS: WHERE'S THE BEEF?

The redesigns of the Village Entrance and the Corporation Yard at the ACT V lot were unveiled at the April 5 City Council meeting, and they pretty much comported with the agreement worked out by Mayor Pearson-Schneider and Councilmember Iseman with the rest of the Council. To no one's surprise, cost estimates have increased for both projects. The new yard will cost \$6.4 million, an increase of about \$1 million, and the Village Entrance will cost \$18-\$20 million, an increase of \$2-\$4 million.



The ACT V lot last summer

The only missing piece of the puzzle is how the projects will be funded. The Council committed only to finance the ACT V Corporation Yard move, and promised to find funds for the Village Entrance within five years. That is very different from the commitment voiced by Elizabeth — originally proposed by Toni — at the January 15 workshop that there were two votes for the sale of bonds (maybe combined with funding for the new senior/community center) so that both projects could be built, one right after the other. Instead, the existing corporation yard near City Hall will be redesigned to provide 190 public parking spaces, employee parking and various maintenance and storage facilities that are not being moved to the new yard.

At the meeting, we asked the Council to direct staff to prepare a plan for the bond issue as soon as possible, but it declined to do so. Financing with bonds makes sense for these projects. They can be issued with a simple majority

vote of the Council and can be paid from existing revenue streams. The compromise worked out for these projects over many months included a commitment to build the Village Entrance soon after the corporation yard move. We need to hold Elizabeth and Toni to their commitment. Councilmember Jane Egly voiced her support for bond financing at the meeting, so that should make three.

The new ACT V plan provides 264 parking spaces instead of 173 under the old plan. It is still unclear how many will be available for visitors during the day versus evenings and weekends, but it will be more than previously planned, and it should enable ACT V to continue to serve as the interceptor parking lot that helps keep traffic out of downtown. We expressed our continued concern about the fueling station at the new Corporation Yard, as it will be so close to the wilderness park, but Toni said that it was part of the deal and that it will be heavily protected against the risk of fire. How the circulation system will work, particularly for trucks having to turn into the yard across southbound Laguna Canyon Road traffic, hasn't yet been worked out, but Elizabeth and Toni have committed to quarterly workshops, so we'll have the chance to explore these issues further.

The new Village Entrance plan incorporates various functions from the existing corporation yard, including meter, sign and vehicle maintenance; vehicle parking and storage. It provides 580 spaces (it will be interesting to see how many will be used from September through June), the creekside park and a restored historic tower. We just need to get it funded. ≈

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Traffic and Parking Problems on the City's Agenda

John Montgomery, director of Community Development, and Dennis Myers, new chair of the Parking, Traffic, and Circulation Committee, brought us up to date on the City's efforts to get control of traffic and parking issues at our March 28 meeting. John pointed to three areas of activity: development of a parking, traffic, and circulation plan for the downtown; study of the feasibility of residential preferred parking districts; and the parking workshops being conducted by Councilmembers Jane Egly and Steve Dicterow.

The downtown plan has just been sent back to the drawing board, a first attempt at data gathering having produced results that didn't seem a good match to the community's experience. This time the consultants will be using the latest computer modeling and gathering data not just on the downtown but on the Canyon Road all the way to El Toro Road. Developing a plan that balances access to the coast, business needs and residents' convenience will come later.

The study of residential preferred parking districts indicates that residents are happy with the way these districts (the City now has three) work, but the creation of new ones raise issues of spillover into neighboring areas, Coastal Commission resistance to any limitation of visitor parking in the coastal zone (which encompasses the whole city), overhead and the shortage of parking everywhere.

Dennis Myers said that the PTC Committee has traditionally dealt with micro issues, individual requests and concerns, but he hopes to move the committee toward more in-depth examination of broader issues. He would like to see downtown employees parking at ACT V and riding the shuttle to work, and feels that a similar approach should be taken to providing peripheral parking on the county's land at Aliso Creek. He would also like to see residents parking their cars in their garages and imagines an annual citywide garage sale to help clear some space for this. ≈

Flowers Return to Farmers' Market

After an absence of years, cut flowers will once again be available at the Farmers' Market. When the market's permit came up for renewal last month, the City Council voted unanimously to eliminate the ban on flower sales. ≈

Lest We Forget

"Save Aliso Canyon" Stickers to Be Available Soon

In a recent open letter (*Laguna Independent*, April 1) John Mansour of the Athens Group describes the discomfort experienced by "some county leaders" with the Montage's golf course proposal for Aliso Canyon as "a missed opportunity" to restore the Aliso Creek watershed. Tom Wilson, speaking to the Laguna Canyon Conservancy on April 4, assured us that until the end of his term in 2006, the golf course isn't going to happen. The message seems to be that the proposal may not be truly dead. To keep the issue visible in the months to come, Voices of Wilderness is going ahead with the distribution of window stickers that read "Save Aliso Canyon — Again!" Visit the website — savealisocanyon.org — to order yours. ≈

Land Use Element Revision

The Planning Commission is holding a series of workshops to gather public input on the revision of the Land Use Element of the General Plan. The next one, scheduled for April 27, will consider potential goals drawn from the input received thus far, among them, not surprisingly, "to preserve and enhance the community's unique character and identity," "to achieve balanced and environmentally sensitive growth throughout the community," "to protect and preserve the community's natural environmental resources," and "to preserve and enhance housing diversity, opportunity, and affordability." ≈

Heritage Month Begins with a Party Thursday, May 5

The City's Heritage Committee invites us to celebrate the opening of Heritage Month 2005 at Madison Square Garden and Café, 320 N. Coast Hwy.—an exceptional example of a Craftsman bungalow—from **6 to 9 p.m. on Thursday, May 5**. Hors d'oeuvres and entertainment by No Square Theatre and the Ken Garcia Band will be provided free of charge. A list of the other heritage events, including a number of guided walks and lectures, will appear in next month's newsletter. ≈

Join Village Laguna! Pay annual dues of only \$20 per member or \$35 per family and receive our informative monthly newsletter, attend fun parties, stay informed at our monthly meetings, participate in our annual Charm House Tour, and support local city and school board candidates. (If you are already a member, check your membership status on your mailing label. For example, 1/1/2005 means your membership expired in January of this year.)

If you would like to join Village Laguna or if you need to renew, please clip and return this form with your check. If you are already a member, why not share this application with a friend or neighbor?

Name(s) _____ Phone # _____

Street Address _____ Email _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP Code _____

I would like to volunteer for _____

I have enclosed my check in the amount of \$ _____ (\$20/person, \$35/family)

Mail to: Village Laguna, P. O. Box 1309, Laguna Beach, CA 92652



P. O. Box 1309
Laguna Beach, CA 92652

FIRST CLASS MAIL

Annual Walk in the Greenbelt

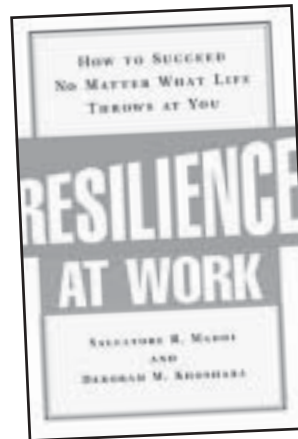
Saturday, April 30, 10:30 a.m.

Coastal Commission to Discuss Mar Vista Project

Thanks to the considerable efforts of Debbie Hertz, the Coastal Commission will be deciding this month whether to entertain an appeal of the project at 31401 Mar Vista. City's position is that the project is not appealable, but the Coastal staff is arguing that in fact the development is within 100 feet of a drainage course that constitutes a stream under the Coastal Act and therefore may be appealed. If the Commission agrees with its staff, a hearing will be held at a later date on the merits of the project. ≈



Architect's photosimulation of the Mar Vista mansion



Another Book Signing

Long-time board member Sal Maddi and his colleague, Debbie Koshaba, have produced a powerful self-help book on stress management called *Resilience at Work: How to Succeed No Matter What Life Throws at You*. They will be greeting fans and signing copies at Latitude 33 on **Saturday, April 23, from 3 to 4 p.m.** ≈

U.S. Supreme Court Rules on Cellular Tower Lawsuits

The *Los Angeles Times* (March 23, 2005) reports a recent decision by the U.S. Supreme Court that federal law encouraging the growth of the telecommunications industry does not allow cities to be sued for damages and fees for refusing to permit the construction of cell-phone towers. (They can still be sued — just not for damages and fees.) The plaintiff was a ham radio operator operating commercially, but the case attracted the interest of the cellular phone industry on his behalf and of the League of California Cities and the National League of Cities on the side of the city, Rancho Palos Verdes. ≈