



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

Newsletter

THE VILLAGE LAGUNA NEWSLETTER • OCTOBER 2005 • ESTABLISHED 1971

Election Set for Dec. 13

Egly, Dicterow, Frank and Burnham Explain Proposed 1/2-Cent Sales Tax Increase

At a special Village Laguna meeting on Friday, October 28, 2005, Councilmembers Jane Egly and Steve Dicterow, City Manager Ken Frank and Bluebird Slide Coordinator Bob Burnham will explain the proposed 1/2-cent sales tax increase to be voted on in a special city election set for December 13, 2005. The meeting will be at 7 p.m. in the City Council Chambers, City Hall, 505 Forest Avenue, and is being co-sponsored by the Laguna Beach chapters of the League of Women Voters and the American Association of University Women.

Repairs to the June 1 Bluebird Canyon slide have stretched City resources beyond their limits. Faced with major cuts in current City services and infrastructure maintenance to pay for the \$12-\$15 million in slide repairs, the City Council called the special election to seek approval of a 1/2-cent sales tax increase that would sunset after six years. If approved by a majority of voters, the sales tax in Laguna Beach would rise from 7.75% to 8.25% for that period; food, clothing and services are excluded. Visitors would contribute a significant portion of the revenues from this increase based on projections.

Village Laguna encourages the public to attend this important workshop. We welcome members and non-members alike. Come learn more about this issue, ask questions, enjoy great refreshments and share your ideas. Don't forget: Friday evening, October 28, 7 p.m., City Council Chambers, City Hall, 505 Forest Avenue. Please call Doug Reilly at 494-4137 for more information. ≈

Geologist Discusses Landslide Risks

According to local geologist Jamie Fink, water is the number-one cause of landslides in Laguna. Speaking to a near-capacity crowd in the City Council chambers at Village Laguna's September 30 general meeting, she pointed out that water infiltration

often serves as the trigger for slides associated with out-of-slope bedding and faults. She stressed the importance of controlling surface drainage—making sure that runoff is carried to the bottom of the hill—in reducing the likelihood of a slide.

The most vulnerable areas in Laguna, she said, tend to be the southeast-facing slopes, where the underlying Topanga formation dips south along with the slope. (The Safety Element of the City's General Plan contains a 1995 map showing some of these areas and identifying past slides, mudflows and faults.) Assessing the risk for any particular property can be difficult because of the variability of the underlying deposits across a site and the fact that really understanding the situation often requires testing over a wide area. ≈

Flea Market Nets \$4,000 for Bluebird Slide Victims

On October 15, Village Laguna hosted a flea market that raised \$4,000 for Bluebird Canyon slide victims. The proceeds were donated to the non-profit Laguna Relief and Resource Center, which has been collecting and dispensing funds to aid residents affected by the slide. The event was held in the parking lot of the Neighborhood Congregational Church on Glenneyre Street at St. Ann's. Many thanks go to Liza and Steve Stewart, Cathy and Ed Fry, Verna Rollinger, Barbara Metzger, Darrylin and Tom Girvin, Ron Kaufman, Phyllis Sweeney, Doug Reilly, Anne and Ryen Caenn, Arnold and Bonnie Hano, Helen Krugman, Ginger and Tom Osborne, Toni Iseman, Barbara Dresel, Sally Phillips, Bette Anderson, Trudy Joyce, Allegra Mount, Emma Their, Kep and Diane Keplinger and many others who contributed items and their time to make this event a success. ≈

**OCTOBER
General
Membership
Meeting**
Laguna Sales Tax
Election Forum
Friday, Oct. 28, 7 p.m.
City Council Chambers

**NOVEMBER
Board Meeting**
Saturday, Nov. 5, 9 a.m.
Home of Kep Keplinger
1334 La Mirada St.

October 22

Workshop on Design Review Task Force Recommendations

The details of the report of the Design Review Task Force will be the subject of a public workshop on Saturday, October 22, from 9 to 11 a.m. in the Council chambers. Members are encouraged to attend and contribute to the discussion as Councilmembers consider their response to the report. ≈

Village Voices

By Arnold Hano



Back in 1971, a geographer took a look at this community and wrote: "In many ways Laguna is an insult to technical progress and the twentieth century. The pace of life might find better accord in 1870 than in 1970. To some we are a roadblock to what is called progress. But in reality we are everyman's America. This village is different. To maintain our style of life we must maintain its difference." The geographer was and is Jon Brand, later the president of the Laguna Greenbelt and mayor of Laguna Beach. His words echo down the years. The 20th century has given way to the 21st. We have entered a new millennium. And Brand's words ring true. We are everyman's America. That is the survivor's truth.

We in Village Laguna are the voice of everyman, everywoman. We refuse to be silent in the face of a bulldozing progress. We cherish what has gone before us. It is worth saving. When I sit over lunch at Jon Madison's Garden, I am surrounded by trees over 100 years old. The sound of progress is stilled. A bare half-block away, I cannot hear the cars as they hurtle by. Trees muffle sound. Old trees muffle it best.

People sometimes dismiss Village Laguna as "too negative." They miss the point. They do not hear our voice. We stand for what is best in Laguna. There is nothing negative about an old building, an old sycamore, a creek that wends its way through a canyon. We insist on preserving that building, that tree, that creek. When they are threatened, we act. We are movers and shakers, not watchers and waiters. We are doers. The sidelines are for other folk.

It is not that we resist change. We resist change for the worse. We resist change that destroys. Listen again to Jon Brand 34 years ago: "Change is all about us and the ability to absorb change is the ability to survive. But change can be controlled and channeled to keep Laguna a village. If the change is too drastic, the character of this community will be radically transformed and those values that attracted the artist, the man who marches to a different drum, the people who dislike suburbia, the family that wants a healthy environment—these people will leave Laguna and the village will be destroyed."

So we defy that destructive change. And we will be heard.

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Contributions Arriving for Fund To Put City Records Online

Local business and professional people and community members who are looking forward to having access to City records from their home or office computers have begun sending contributions to the fund set up to help post those records on the City's web site now. Checks should be made payable to the City of Laguna Beach and will be returned if they are not used. Note at the bottom of your check "Server Fund" and mail it to Laura Parisi, City Treasurer, 505 Forest Avenue, Laguna Beach, CA 92651. For additional information, contact Verna Rollinger at (949) 494-9878. ≈



St. Mary's Church Receives Approval to Demolish Guild Hall

Rejecting its staff's view that the project is inconsistent with the Downtown Specific Plan, the Planning Commission is on the point of approving the demolition of St. Mary's Italianate Guild Hall, dating to the 1920s, and its replacement with a building nearly twice its size in a Craftsman-inspired style. Commissioners have found justification for a variance to allow the building to be nine feet taller than the Specific Plan allows in the fact that a similar variance had been granted to another building on Mermaid St. (apparently, in that case, to save a historic structure). The Guild Hall is not on the City's historic inventory, but when the church asked that it be considered for inclusion some years ago, the Heritage Committee assessed it as deserving a K rating (the ratings being E, K, and C). ≈

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Village-Friendly Remodeling Exemplified Downtown



A recent commercial remodel deserves recognition along with the residential ones pictured in past issues for preserving the village character of the downtown.

Tuvalu, shown here, manages to combine a strikingly new look with a number of features that make it fit right into the historic Forest Avenue streetscape — among them its subdivided windows and the fact that they're knee-high instead of floor-to-ceiling — its roof details, which contribute to its pedestrian scale, and its colors and materials. For all this we are indebted to the owner, the designer, and the Design Review Board that helped make it happen. ≈

Community/Senior Center Downsized

The discovery of an extremely high active water table on the site of the proposed community/senior center has resulted in a significant reduction in the scale of the project. Construction of the proposed two levels of underground parking was estimated to cost at least \$4 million more than had been envisioned. Accordingly, the Council has endorsed a revised project that reduces the square footage of the building by 30% and provides 75 parking spaces on grade that will be shared by the seniors and the City. Several Councilmembers had concerns about access to the building as proposed, which will require taking an elevator from inside the parking area. So far only the floor plan has been considered; elevations reflecting the new plan will now be prepared, and meetings will be held with the neighbors of the project. ≈

Land Use Element Workshops Conclude

Village Laguna has submitted comments on the draft of the Land Use Element of the General Plan produced by a Planning Commission subcommittee with input from a series of workshops in recent months. The draft preserves much of value from the original element but differs from it in its specific focus on preserving the distinctive character of Laguna's neighborhoods and the village character of the downtown. Among the suggestions offered by Village Laguna is support for the idea of defining the "compatibility in scale" required of new development in terms of a square-footage limit that would vary with the average house size within 500 feet of the project. The subcommittee's report brings the first stage of the process to a conclusion. The next step is public hearings before the Planning Commission as a whole. ≈



Village Laguna Calendar Available for Purchase

Sales of Janette Heartwood's calendar celebrating Village Laguna and our village have been brisk. Costs have been covered, and from now on, 100% of every sale goes directly into Village Laguna's treasury. Albertson's, Ralph's, Pavilions, and Madison Square and Garden Café are willing to allow us to sell calendars outside their front doors. Janette is looking for volunteers to do this (on weekends, primarily) and hoping that members will sell additional calendars on their own. She will deliver calendars to local customers on request and, for an additional \$3, will mail a calendar to any U.S. address and include a personal greeting. Calendars remain available for \$16 at Coast Hardware, Fawn Memories, the T Shirt Company, the Thalia Street Surf Shop, Toes on the Nose, Tuvalu, Latitude 33, and Zinc Market. To volunteer to sell or to order calendars, call Janette at 494-4448. ≈

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?

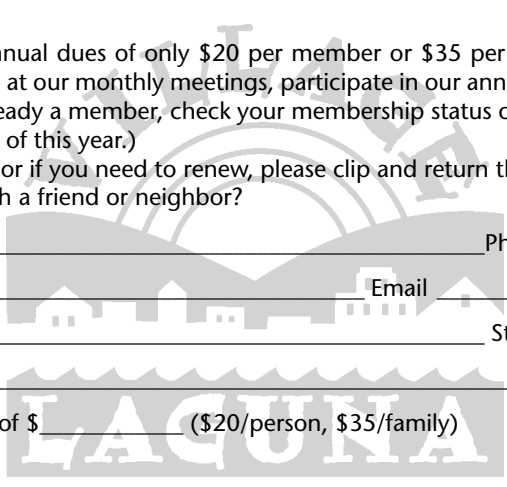
Name(s) _____ Phone # _____

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)





P. O. Box 1309
Laguna Beach, CA 92652

FIRST CLASS MAIL

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 28
GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING
Laguna Sales Tax Election Forum
City Council Chambers

Pottery Shack Outbuilding to Make Way for Underground Parking

The owner of the Pottery Shack has received Council approval for the demolition of the Glenneyre St. building and the removal of its ac-



Existing structure

companying trees in order to construct underground parking on the site. The building that will replace it will be larger (4,533 square feet), and this, along with the loss of the trees and the raising of the level of the parking on the site, will change the appearance of the property from Glenneyre St. completely. Observers of the project from the beginning may recall that the original concept included a big new building at the rear of the property and "extra" parking spaces, and thismost recent modification of the approved plan seems to provide both. ≈



Planned new structure

Environmental Committee Appointed

At the City Council meeting on September 20, seven Lagunans, including two Village Laguna members, were appointed to the new Environmental Committee. The committee replaces the Open Space Committee. Five members were selected on the first vote (with Councilmember Cheryl Kinsman abstaining), with Arnold Hano and Fred Sattler receiving four votes each and Steven Alan Erger, Tom Girvin and Greg O'Laughlin three. The two remaining members, selected on subsequent ballots, are Susan Wilson and James Pribram. Hano and Girvin are Village Laguna members. City staffer Craig Justice will act as liaison. The committee's first meeting will be held this month. All meetings will be open to the public. ≈

Laguna Creek Restoration Begins at the Dog Park

In the next few months, the banks of Laguna Creek at the Dog Park will be restored to a more natural condition by the removal of non-native vegetation and the planting of native trees, shrubs, and grasses. Bob Borthwick and Ann Christoph produced the landscape plan, and the planting will be funded by a Southern California Wetlands grant and Verizon, with contributions from the Beautification Council, the Laguna Greenbelt, the Laguna Canyon Conservancy, the Temple Hills Community Association and Village Laguna. ≈