



Established 1971 To preserve and enhance the unique village character of Laguna Beach

April 2010 newsletter

Charm House Tour Set for May 16

The program for this year's Charm House Tour includes five charming homes in the middle of Laguna. The tour will begin at the Festival of Arts Grounds at noon. Parking is available across the street for \$3. Tickets are ready for purchase at \$40 (\$45, if available, on the day of the tour) from our web site (<http://www.villagelaguna.org>), by mail (P.O. Box 1309, Laguna Beach 92652), or from the following local outlets: Coast Pet Supplies, La Casa del Camino, Laguna Books, Copy & Print Center, Monarch Bay Optometry, Fawn Memories, Rock Martin Custom Jewelry, Laguna Nursery, Silver Images, Gay Mart, and the Hotel Laguna.



Performing Arts in Laguna: A Status Report

At our next general meeting, we'll receive an update on the state of the performing arts in Laguna from three perspectives. Karyn Philippsen will represent the Laguna Playhouse, Lucinda Prewitt Laguna Beach Live!, and Pat Kollenda community theater. We'll meet at the Unitarian-Universalist Fellowship, 429 Cypress Drive, at 7 p.m. on Monday, April 26.

Water-Quality Opponents Take Another Approach

After the new water-quality regulations were approved by the regional board in San Diego, Orange County and the inland cities of the Aliso Creek watershed quickly filed an appeal with

the state board. A second impediment to the implementation of these regulations has recently emerged in the form of Assembly Bill 2407, introduced by Diane Harkey of Dana Point, which would shift responsibility for the watershed from the San Diego board to the one in Santa Ana. Since the new rules have been described as the strictest in the state, it's difficult to interpret this as anything but an attempt to avoid having them applied here. The City Council has voted 4-1 to join Coastkeeper and the National Resources Defense Council in opposing the bill. Elizabeth Pearson voted no, expressing sympathy with the several inland cities that are subject to both boards and a desire to remain on friendly terms with them so that they will help pay for the SUPER Project.

April General Meeting
Monday, April 26, 7 p.m.
Unitarian-Universalist Fellowship
429 Cypress Drive

May Board Meeting
Saturday, May 1, 1 p.m.
(NOTE: afternoon, not morning)
Home of Jackie Gallagher
2845 Zell Drive

Design Review Board Tables Abalone Point Proposal

The proposal to replace the house on Abalone Point, which was expected to return to the Design Review Board in February with modifications that would make it more appropriate to its prominent site, has been set aside for six months while the applicant considers alternatives. A biological survey of the property is proceeding in the meantime.



designed some fifty years ago in such a way that all the houses had views, privacy, light, and air. The proposed house was to be more than twice the size of the original and two-story in a neighborhood limited by CC&Rs to a single story. The board had found it acceptable anyway and pointed to other two-story houses approved in the area as evidence that it was too late to save the neighborhood. The appeal was the second for the project, and three Councilmembers (Egly, Iseman, and Rollinger), in upholding it, made it clear that they considered the house still too big for the neighborhood.

Cell Tower Location Approved for Moulton Meadows Park

Another possible cell tower location was presented to the City Council for approval on March 23, once again with the rationale that it would make it unnecessary for the company (Verizon) to put a tower in the right-of-way where it would be more visible. Similar to the one for the Top of the World Fire Station that was recently rejected, this one would involve 832 square feet of space on the ground and a 36-foot tower disguised as a pine tree. The area proposed is on the hill immediately behind the tennis courts. In contrast to the other site, this one is not already in use by other companies. No notice had been provided to the neighborhood, and only one neighbor was present to raise questions about the appropriateness of placing a cell tower in a park where children play. Verna Rollinger and Toni Iseman voted against the proposal, largely because of the noticing failure, but the rest of the Council approved it. Now the proposal moves to the Planning Commission for the required conditional use permit, and at that point noticing of the neighbors will be required.

Third Thursdays on Forest Back to the Drawing Board

A request by the Chamber of Commerce to continue the closing of Forest Avenue from 3 to 10 p.m. every third Thursday for the next six months was met at the April 6 Council meeting with vocal opposition from the very downtown businesspeople it was designed to benefit. Local retailers reported, one after another, that they had been doing no business at all during the monthly parties on the street. Proponents, having found participants uniformly enthusiastic about it, seemed surprised and disappointed at the opposition. In the end, the Council declined to vote on the proposal and recommended that the Chamber work with the merchants and come back with a plan that works for everyone in the downtown.

Council Stands Up for Neighborhood Character

The Council's overturning of a Design Review Board approval on April 6 may be of wider-than-usual interest because it highlights the challenges of preserving neighborhood character in the twenty-first century. The neighborhood in question is Driftwood Drive, a development

Bluebird Canyon Property Added to City's Open Space



At its meeting on March 23, the City Council approved the purchase from the Hopkins Trust of some 3.2 acres of land in Bluebird Canyon—inside the curve where Bluebird Canyon starts uphill after intersecting with Rancho Laguna. The purchase price of \$480,000, plus closing expenses and a survey bringing the total to \$510,000, will be met by combining the remainder of the Open Space Fund (\$318,399) with \$191,601 from the Capital Improvement Fund. The trust will retain property on the south side of Bluebird Canyon Drive constituting a single building site, on which there is already a house. The Planning Commission will need to determine that the purchase is consistent with the General Plan, adjust the lot lines, and abandon an unused street right-of-way.



Village Voices

by Arnold Hano

If you would like a glimpse of what Laguna Beach will look like a few years hence, here's a preview, based on

the actions of the City Council at its April 6 meeting.

No more plastic bags at the checkout counter. If you want a paper bag you may have to pay for it. So why sweat it? On our own we can simply say no more plastic, no more paper at all. We will shop the way our cousins who live in Aix-en-Provence shop every day. They carry permanent bags with them, smartly knitted bags that last for years. Bonnie and I would tag along to the bakery, the butcher shop, the fruit stands, the long tables of fragrant cheeses. Shopping this way was the second-best thing we did in France—eating always the first best. The French eat well, drink well. and still manage to outlive us.

Now city staff in Laguna will look into how best to get such shopping bags into each household. It will happen. And plastic bags will no longer choke marine life. And fewer paper bags mean fewer trees to be toppled.

It's been suggested that the house where Hortense Miller lived be nominated for a spot on the National Registry of Historic Places. Assuming that all goes well, the house will have a plaque on the outside wall attesting to the fame of Hortense Miller's home.

Hortense would have scoffed at such ostentation, but Laguna will be the better for it. Houses are worth saving. Gardens are worth saving. Hortense Miller deserves attention. The world has become too citified. Here, on the lip of Allview Terrace, we leave the city behind and glory in the wonder of Nature.

We still have no effective anti-mansionization ordinance, but a mind-set seems to be developing—that mansions and neighborhood compatibility can't coexist. Not everyone agrees. The owner of a house on Driftwood Drive decided to add a second story plus some decks and a larger garage, more than doubling the size of the original residence—all this in a neighborhood of mostly modest-sized one-story houses. When the project reached the Design Review Board, neighbors opposed it. DRB okayed the plan. Two neighbors appealed to the Council. Loss of light, air, and privacy became the issues, all of which could be remedied if excess mass were whittled down. The Council agreed with the appellants

and sent the project back to DRB for modification. DRB made minor changes. The neighbors appealed a second time, and the Council agreed with them a second time. Neither the Planning Commission nor the DRB appreciates the Council's occasional overturning of its decisions, but the Council remains the final arbiter.

I don't know how it will play out. But I do know that individuals can stand up to mansions, and sometimes it is the mansion that yields.

You will see fewer spearguns on the beach. You will see fewer dead fish washed up on the sand or belly up in the water after hook-and-release. You will see more and lushier kelp beds. The Marine Mammal Center will see fewer half-starved sea lions, unable to find their usual catch of fish. The Council reiterated its support of a marine reserve the entire length of the city's shoreline. No spears. No hooks. No traps. For five years, if the Department of Fish and Game agrees, there will be a respite, a time-out for fishing in our immediate waters. The lobsters will fatten up. The fish stock will grow. Kelp beds will be replenished. Our ocean will thrive.

Such was the will of the City Council on April 6. The official color was green. The official dessert was Village Flavor.

Join us or renew your membership!

Name(s) _____

Address _____

Phone number _____ Email _____

I have enclosed my check for the following membership:

- Basic - \$45/family, \$25/individual
- Supporter - \$120 per family (includes 2 t-shirts)
- Sustainer - \$240 per family (includes 2 Charm House Tour tickets and 2 t-shirts)

Contact Treasurer Richard Picheny at 499-0505 or rpicheny@gmail.com to arrange for automatic monthly or quarterly payments.

Mail to Village Laguna, PO Box 1309, Laguna Beach, CA 92652



P.O. Box 1309
Laguna Beach, CA 92652

FIRST CLASS MAIL

My Favorite Local Business

by Betsy Jenkins

A magical experience filled with beauty and serenity is easy to find with a trip to Laguna Nursery (1540 S. Coast Hwy).



Gary and I have enjoyed buying our plants at this location for three decades, but current owner Ruben Flores has taken it to a whole new level. Artistry and whimsy pervade every nook of the large, landscaped showrooms and outdoor spaces. Brightly colored metal flowers and hearts, as well as the soothing sounds of cascading water, surround every type of green plant imaginable. I have found wonderful gift ideas here, and I indulge my own need for green more often than I should. My most extravagant purchase was a fountain that features a glass globe shimmering with water that falls into a concave silver disk. It still makes me happy every time I look at it! The renovated 1920s bungalow at the back, fronting Glenneyre, houses gorgeous gift baskets, culinary treats, birdhouses, candles, etc. Far more than just visiting a nursery, shopping here is like a mini-vacation right in our own town.

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