



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

Newsletter

THE VILLAGE LAGUNA NEWSLETTER • JUL/AUG 2009 • ESTABLISHED 1971

Bluebelt Protection Update

At our June general meeting, Ray Hiemstra of Coastkeeper, a member of the regional stakeholder group in the state's Marine Life Protection Act process, explained the process for designating areas along the coast as marine protected areas under the act. On the basis of information on the resources and criteria developed by a scientific advisory team, stakeholders—64 of them, representing every fishing group imaginable along with marine-science specialists and conservationists—are asked to work in groups and produce maps of proposed reserves, marine parks and marine conservation areas (in order of strictness of protection). So far there have been two rounds of map-making and not a single map that meets the scientific team's criteria. After a third round, a blue-ribbon task force will take over the selection process and recommend a set of new protected areas to the Department of Fish and Game, which will make the final choices. Lack of consensus and lack of funding have kept this 1999 legislation from being implemented for a decade. (The current process is being funded not by the state but by Hewlett-Packard.) The Laguna Beach coast has been identified by the scientists as ideal for a reserve, and perhaps at the higher levels of the process the scientific criteria will prevail. ≈

Cleaning Up Aliso Creek: The New MS4 Permit

Mike Beanan spoke at the June general meeting about progress on the MS4 permit for the Aliso Watershed. "MS4" stands for "Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems," and the permit is a set of regulations, updated at five-year intervals, for implementing the federal Clean Water Act of some 20 years ago. The regulations specify what can and can't be discharged from storm drains into the creek and the ocean. The latest version differs from past ones mainly in (1) proposing numerical limits for pollutants in both storm water and dry-season discharges and (2) identifying water from over-irrigation as a prohibited discharge (formerly it was exempt). The staff of the Regional Water Quality Control Board points out that these changes are needed because pollutant levels have not been reduced by 20 years of business-as-usual and because the evidence that irrigation runoff carries pollutants requires that it be kept out of the creek and the ocean. The board held a hearing on the permit July 1 in Dana Point, and it's expected that a revised version will be heard and voted on in the fall. (Continued on page 3)



Annual Picnic August 3!

Village Laguna's annual picnic will take place on Monday, August 3, at 6 p.m. at Aliso Beach. We'll have a fire for cooking hot dogs and marshmallows. Bring a dish to share that will serve 6-8; drinks and paper goods will be provided. Also bring sunscreen and/or a hat and something to sit on (a blanket or a beach chair). Parking is available immediately adjacent to the beach for \$1 an hour (exact change).

**JULY GENERAL MEETING
PICNIC AT ALISO BEACH**
Monday, August 3, 6 p.m.

AUGUST BOARD MEETING
Saturday, August 1, 9 a.m.
Home of Jinger Wallace, 31952 Sunset Ave.

Village Voices



By Arnold Hano

Seldom has an issue so erupted in angry rhetoric as has the issue of a marine reserve along the Laguna coast. Fishing would be prohibited in the reserve.

The fishermen (and women and children) are screaming bloody murder. They see their livelihood threatened. They see their lifestyle destroyed.

On the other hand are the environmentalists who want to see the Marine Life Protection Act validated here in Laguna.

The tussle is so polarizing that even God argues with God.

At a meeting in the Aliso Creek Inn that brought together the two sides, a young fisherboy called out to me: "Read your Bible. Genesis 1:28." When I got home I read Genesis 1:28; it is God's declaration to Adam and Eve that they shall have dominion over all living things—the fish in the sea, the fowls in the air, the beasts that crawl upon the earth. But I read further and came across Genesis 6:19, God's edict to Noah to build an ark and stock the ark with two members of every species. I presumed God meant a male and a female. And Noah and his family and all the animal species went on to create a civilization anew.

I think we environmentalists win that one.

The fishing crowd points out that they have fished these grounds for years and some of them for generations.

We who want to see a marine reserve established argue back: Yes, you have fished here for years and generations; all we want is a five-year respite, to replenish the depleted fishing store. Take a five-year break. Give up instant gratification. A two-pound lobster today will be a five-pound lobster five years hence. More money in your pocket and a better meal for chowhounds.

Lifestyle is argued. There is about the fishing institution an aesthetic character, a mystique. A Norman Rockwell quality pervades the fishing scene. It is undeniably pretty. A good friend of mine who is an inveterate and avid fisherman says that I should stand on a rock at Victoria Cove and watch a young fisherman cast his line into the dark sea. He says solemnly, "If you see that, you'll know what I mean."

Yes, I know what he means. He sees something iconic, thrilling to the eye and spirit. It is an Ayn Rand moment. Well, if recreational fishing were just this young poster boy, I would not object to permitting him to fish in the restricted area. But recreational fishing also includes a shipload of merry-making passengers coming down from Newport into our waters and drunkenly tossing their hooked lines willy nilly into an oceanful of children splashing about.

This is sport, the fishing gang cries. Kelly Boyd says he has been a sport fisherman for years and years. I have a different definition of sport. To me, sport is a contest between willing rivals, of equal or near-equal powers. The Bears and the Packers. The Giants and the Dodgers. Tiger Woods and the rest of the world. Federer and Roddick. If sport is to include a youngster spearing a Garibaldi lolling about in a bed of kelp, then I expect that the next new sport will be a bullfighter from Barcelona taking on a calf.

So the debate rages. We believe that the best reserve would be one that covers the entire Laguna coastline, from Abalone Point to below Three Arch Bay. With the new Edison Reef, just below Three Arch, prepared to generate 50 tons of fish annually, there will be a plentiful harvest for fishermen. But, they argue, how can you enforce such a stretch, seven miles long, three miles deep, with just one marine officer?

Of course we'd like more officers, but a darkening economy makes that impossible. Still, we have dozens of ocean docents and a volley of volunteers ready to see that nobody fishes in that restricted area. We've seen too many tide pools robbed of their glorious population; we've seen the abalone die off. If there are any grunion still running, I haven't see one in five years.

The question arises: Why are there fewer fish these days? One answer, of course, is pollution, and that is not the fault of fishermen. Our inland cities still treat Aliso Creek as a trash bin. This has to stop. Fishermen will tell you that the greatest loss of fish (other than from polluters) is from bigger fish eating smaller fish. And sea lions are hungrier still.

One young fisherman at the Aliso Creek Inn found it hard to believe that Laguna has a nonprofit that nurses sick or injured sea lions back to health and then gently dumps them back into the sea. "I would remove the 'endangered species' designation from sea lions," he says. Then he would remove the sea lions with his rifle.

A volunteer from the sea mammal rescue group says that many of the beached sea lions are starving. There are so few fish.

I have not played the empathy card as yet. Too often we environmentalists are accused of being wimps, of being softhearted, of being a tad squishy. To which I plead guilty. But we are not alone. On magazine assignment years back,

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I boarded a Polaris submarine in San Diego and spent 48 hours traveling beneath the sea up to Vallejo. During my stay, I spoke with the sonar technician, the man who shoots sonar rays into the sea to determine what lies before him. And when the ray hits something, it bounces back, enabling the sub to measure how far the object is from the sub.

The sonar tech let me listen to the sound of the ray striking an object and the object responding. The sound was not unlike that of a maternity ward nursery.

"What is that sound?" I asked the tech.

"That's a school of shrimp," he said. "We've hit them. The shrimp are crying."

We are a community that protects life. Let's not lose this opportunity. ≈

New Land Use Element Receives Unanimous Approval

The revised Land Use Element of the General Plan was approved unanimously by the City Council on July 7. The Land Use Element is the centerpiece of the General Plan and one of the most important tools for determining how our City will look and work in years to come. The revision, the outcome of 17 public workshops and 17 Planning Commission hearings over a five-year period, lists the following goals:

1. Create a community that is sustainable, resilient and regenerative.
2. Preserve, enhance and respect the unique character and identity of Laguna's residential neighborhoods.
3. Preserve, enhance and respect the unique, small-scale village character and individual identity of Laguna's commercial areas.
4. Recognizing that Laguna Beach is a worldwide visitor destination, enhance the visitor experience while maximizing protection of the community's coastal and other natural resources.
5. Promote compatibility among land uses in the community.

6. Provide a diversity of land uses that enhance the community.
7. Protect, preserve and enhance the community's natural resources.
8. Minimize the impact of the automobile on the character of Laguna Beach and emphasize the pedestrian-oriented environment, safe sidewalks, landscaped buffer zones and alternate means of transportation.
9. Provide comprehensive public services and infrastructure.
10. Ensure that proposals for new development, subdivisions and major remodels are sufficiently evaluated to protect public health and safety and natural resources.
11. Proactively participate in the planning activities of regional and adjacent jurisdictions.

Under each of these goals is a set of related policies and actions (e.g., "Policy 2.1. Maintain the diversity and uniqueness of individual neighborhoods" and "Action 2.1.1. Evaluate the adopted building envelope and lot coverage standards and amend as necessary to ensure that the building scale of proposed development is compatible in scale and mass with surrounding residences").

The whole document can be viewed in the agenda bill for the July 7 meeting (#18) on the City's web site (laguna-beachcity.net). The next steps are environmental review and then certification by the Coastal Commission. ≈

Aliso Creek, continued from page 1

Representatives of the county and every city in the watershed except Laguna Beach spoke against the regulations. Our City Council is on record as supporting the board's efforts to clean up the creek.

The City complies with the current regulations by conducting over 1,000 inspections annually to locate potential prohibited discharges, issuing citations and fines, sweeping the downtown streets six to seven days a week and the rest of the town once a week, picking up 500 pounds of dog waste a year from city parks, regularly cleaning storm drain inlets and diverting dry-season nuisance flows to the sewage treatment plant. ≈

Join Village Laguna! Pay annual dues of only \$25 per member or \$45 per family (Basic membership) 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 the mailing label. For example, 1/1/2009 means you paid your membership dues for 2008 and you need to pay your dues in January 2009 to remain current.)

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 \$_____ for the following membership:

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

*Contact Treasurer Doug Reilly at 494-4137 or reillyd@cox.net if you want automatic payments monthly or quarterly

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



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**July General Meeting
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FIRST CLASS MAIL

My Favorite Local Business

By Bonnie Hano

In September 2006, Laguna Beach Books opened. It's a wonderful full-service bookstore in the Old Pottery Place on Pacific Coast Highway at Brooks Street.

Jane Hanauer, from her early Nancy Drew beginnings, saw her lifelong dream of owning a bookstore come true when husband Joe bought and renovated the historic (and seriously deteriorated) Pottery Shack. And the bookstore itself is a dream. It has a wide and complete selection of fiction and nonfiction and the best children's section we have seen in years. This is great for Arnold and me—we like to welcome new arrivals with books to help start their libraries.

Laguna Beach Books sponsors authors' nights. Elizabeth George and Lisa See are just two of the famous writers who



have come to talk about and sign their books. The store's book club (everyone invited) meets on the third Tuesday of the month at 6:30 p.m.

A trip to Laguna Beach Books is a Laguna event. The staff is welcoming and helpful. Jane says that she staffed the store with friendly people who love to read. They must be doing something right. In an age when independent bookstores are closing, Laguna Beach Books has increased sales every year. ≈

Water District Adopts Conservation Ordinance

In the face of the water shortage, the Laguna Beach County Water District board of directors (our City Council members wearing different hats) voted on June 16 to institute new regulations about water use. The ordinance calls for (1) no sprinkler watering between 8 a.m. and 8 p.m., (2) no runoff, (3) no hosing down of hard surfaces, (4) no hosing down of vehicles, (5) no unauthorized use of a fire hydrant, and (6) no serving of water in restaurants unless requested. Watering of plants can still be done from a container or with a handheld hose with a shutoff nozzle, and washing of hard surfaces and vehicles may be done in these ways or with a cleaning machine that recycles used water. Leaks must be repaired within three days of notification by the district, water features must have recirculating pumps, and hotel guests must be provided the option of not having clean towels and linens daily. ≈