



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

July 2010 newsletter

Coastal Tour Tickets Still Available

The Village Laguna Coastal Tour on the 63-foot catamaran *Ocean Adventure* is largely booked, but there are still a few places available on the early afternoon (1 to 4 p.m.) trip.

The tour offers a rare opportunity to see our coastline from the water and hear about its social and natural history from local historian Eric Jessen and marine biologist Nancy Caruso. A light snack and a complimentary beverage are included, and there will be a no-host bar. Tickets may be purchased for \$75 per person by sending a check to P.O. Box 1309, Laguna Beach, CA 92652, or visiting Village Laguna's web site at www.villagelaguna.org.



Task Force Looks at Equal Rights for Pedestrians

At our June general meeting we heard from Jane Egly and Les Miklosy about steps that the City's Complete Streets Task Force is considering to get Lagunans and visitors out of their cars. Les, a 1971 graduate of Laguna Beach High School and later of UCI, recalled that our streets and our neighborhoods weren't always clogged with cars and argued that we can do something about it. He pointed out that pedestrian-friendly policies and recommendations are already on the books—most recently in the 2001 Vision 2030 report and the 2007 Climate Protection Plan—but so far (as is true nearly everywhere in the country) little has been done to implement them. We keep studying parking and traffic, he said, when we should be thinking about how to move people rather than cars.

Jane said that settlement history and available resources have a lot to do with this lag and reminded us that we do now

have the free shuttle and the peripheral lots at ACT V and the hospital for summer transportation. The task force is working on a plan for encouraging biking that may meet the Council's concerns about safety and lawsuits. It's also pursuing access for pedestrians and bikers through the gated community at the Top of the World end of the fire road with the idea that kids from Arch Beach Heights could walk or bike to school.

The discussion that followed produced ideas about the possibility of mandating wider sidewalks with new construction, offering students incentives for riding the bus, and working out public transportation to and from the airport.

Both Les and Jane see the task force as not just producing another report but encouraging and facilitating real change. We can help, they said, by individually changing our own behavior—leaving our cars at home.

Village Laguna Coastal Tour

Thursday, July 22

1-4 and 5-8 p.m.

Dana Wharf

34675 Golden Lantern,

Dana Point

August Board Meeting

Saturday, August 7, 9 a.m.

Home of Jinger Wallace

31952 Sunset

Coast Inn Remodel to Include Wine Bar and History Exhibit



A City Council decision on July 6 paved the way for a remodel of the Coast Inn that reflects its historic use as one of the City's first bars and an early safe gathering place for the gay community. The Planning Commission had required only a "good-faith effort" to find a bar tenant for the store-front space of the building, the rest of which is to become a boutique hotel. In response to an appeal of the commission's approval, the Council conditioned its own approval on the inclusion of a wine bar and a historical display. It also asked the applicant to work with the City on enhancement of the AIDS memorial garden at the end of the street on Mountain Road.

The building proposed will certainly be more attractive than the Coast Inn today and probably better-looking than the original building. Everything inland of the four-story ocean-front structure (49.6% of the total, according to

the applicant's calculations—50% being the maximum for consideration as a "remodel") will be demolished to excavate the garage, and what is built in its place will have different doors, windows, and roof (not to mention a pool on the second floor) and major changes to interior spaces.

Designation of the project as "historic rehabilitation" allows it to exceed the 36-foot height limit, to encroach into the blufftop setback, to provide insufficient parking, and to benefit from a waiver of fees. To qualify for this designation, a project is required to preserve either the original structure or the historical use. Preservation of the use seems particularly important for justifying the benefits of the historic label because so much of the structure will be entirely new.

Rules on Outdoor Display of Merchandise Suspended

Responding to the pleas of several downtown merchants who have recently been cited for displaying merchandise in front of their shops without the required conditional use permit, the City Council has voted to suspend enforcement of the permit requirement (which is designed to allow the City some control over the aesthetics of such displays) until Labor Day. The merchandise displayed outside must be confined to a 10-square-foot area on the shop's own property.

Irvine Company Dedicates Land to OC Parks

The Irvine Company's recent dedication of some 20,000 acres of land to the County for parks and open space includes the 172 acres in Laguna Canyon once known to

Lagunans as Option 5 (the open country on the east side of the Canyon Road just this side of the new Irvine development). Option 5 and much of the rest of the land included in the dedication have been protected by conservation easements supervised by the Nature Conservancy for a number of years. What is new is that all this will now be managed by the County, using a \$4.6 million endowment set up by the Irvine Company and the Nature Conservancy, and eventually open to the public.

State Park Funding Initiative Qualifies for State Ballot

The initiative for funding state parks that members of the Laguna Greenbelt gathered our signatures for last spring has qualified for the November 2 ballot with nearly twice the

number of signatures required. The initiative proposes an \$18 surcharge on annual vehicle registration in exchange for free year-round day-use access to state parks. (Just going to Crystal Cove State Park once would cost nearly this much.) Funds from the surcharge would be placed in a trust fund dedicated to the maintenance of state parks and wildlife conservation.

City Initiates a New Service: Traffic Alerts by E-mail

Residents can now sign up to receive e-mail information about significant traffic delays on major highways or heavily traveled streets due to accidents or major construction projects by logging in to http://www.lagunabeachcity.net/services/traffic_alerts.asp and leaving an e-mail address.



Village Voices

by Arnold Hano

When I was a kid in the Bronx, my brother and I would go up to the roof after supper and stare at the starry sky.

Alfie, three and a half years older and decades wiser, would point out the Big Dipper, and we would trace a path from the bottom of the cup to Polaris, the North Star. He would point to a faint red smudge and say, "That's Mars. God of War." I would nod gravely. And we would find Orion as he strode the top of the sky with his dog at his heel.

Later, during World War II, after the battle of Attu, the most remote part of America, near the Arctic Circle, I would sit outside my tent while the sun slowly set, and I would watch the stars come out. They thronged the sky. Isaac Asimov in one of his sci-fi novels said you could see 4,000 stars with the naked eye. Some years later in another novel, he upped the figure to 6,000. I had no way of counting the stars at Attu, but I would not be surprised if I had been looking at 60,000. One night I counted six falling stars as they tumbled one at a time through the heavens and smashed into dozens of white flames when they hit the atmosphere.

I have not seen a falling star in years. I cannot remember when I last saw the Big Dipper. Orion has vanished.

We have lost our stars. Mars hides behind a shield of haze. A solid curtain blocks off the Milky Way. I would guess that there are children today who have never seen a falling star.

For years Toni Iseman has been striving to bring back the stars. Long a foe of noise and neon, she has

made our days better, and now she wants to give us back our nights. On her suggestion, the Council has directed the Planning Commission and the Environmental Committee to work on an ordinance regulating lighting, and in the next few months they will be reporting on their progress.

We misuse our city lights. We point them down and we point them up. Down is good; it makes our streets safer. Up is stupid. It throws a haze over our city. With smart street lighting, we can see a speeding car, we can see an intruder, and we can also see Orion once more, astride the universe, his belt aglitter with diamonds and his faithful dog at his side.

Aliso Canyon Plans Reappear on Regional Agendas

The County has announced a stakeholders' meeting for South Orange County watersheds—including our own Aliso Creek watershed—for Tuesday, August 3, from 1:30 to 3:30 p.m. at the Laguna Hills Community Center, 25555 Alicia Parkway. If there is news about the SUPER Project, it can be expected to be on the agenda at this meeting. Village Laguna members who are monitoring this project should consider attending.

Meanwhile, the South Orange County Wastewater Authority (SOCWA), judging that the SUPER Project is unlikely to materialize in the next five years, is going ahead with plans for the construction of a new sludge main line to replace the abandoned one along the east side of Aliso Creek. The request for proposals for a preliminary design is silent about the threat of encroachment of the creek on a pipeline in the same place as the old one—a threat stressed by the SUPER Project planners—and rejects the idea of putting the new line on the west side of the creek.

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

Village Laguna Scholarship Awarded to Nia Evans

Nia Evans is this year's winner of the \$1,000 Village Laguna scholarship, and school-board member Betsy Jenkins says that we couldn't have made a better choice. "She's a conscientious student and a wonderful,



talented kid. She lives her life with both passion and principles and will definitely make a difference in the world." She will be going to Cuesta Community College in San Luis Obispo and eventually to a four-year college. Her high school activities centered on theater and running the Zero Trash Laguna Club, which she started in her junior year. Her uncle inspired her to get involved, she says, and opened her eyes to the litter problem in Laguna. The club takes part in the monthly pick-ups and this year added new members with the same passion for the issue as the founding members. Nia writes, "My work in Zero Trash Laguna taught me leadership skills, and of course I learned a lot about the environment and how vital it is to take care of it. I am looking forward to seeing the club grow on campus in the years to come."

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