



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

September 2011 newsletter

“Villagers of the Year” Party to Celebrate Elisabeth Brown and Carolyn Wood

Village Laguna members and friends will gather on Saturday, October 8, to honor Elisabeth Brown and Carolyn Wood as Villagers of the Year. The party will be held at the home of Cindy and Mark Evans, 435 Hilledge, from 3 to 6:30 p.m. (Members may remember the house from this year’s Charm House Tour.) A donation of \$85 per person is suggested. For reservations and information call 499-4809.



We know **Elisabeth Brown** as the president of the Laguna Greenbelt, Inc., for more than twenty-five years and as a longtime columnist on the environment for our local newspapers, but much of the work that she has done to preserve open space has been behind the scenes. While she traces her love of the outdoors to family vacations in the Adirondack Mountains of New York, it was not until she moved with her husband to Canyon Acres in the early 1970s that her activist’s nature was kindled. Along with Carolyn Wood, Belinda Blacketer, Jeff Powers,

Ray Unger, and others, she successfully fought development projects planned for Laguna Heights, at the end of Alta Laguna Boulevard above Canyon Acres. During that time she received her Ph.D. in biology from UC Irvine, after having previously earned B.A. and M.A. degrees in the same field at UC Berkeley.

Following her initial foray into environmental activism, Elisabeth joined the Laguna Greenbelt board of directors. In the early 1980s, the environmental impact report for the Irvine Company’s Laguna Laurel project was proposed, and Elisabeth, working with Jon Brand, lent her skills and knowledge to the writing of the responses to it. A lawsuit challenging the EIR was subsequently initiated by the Laguna Greenbelt. (Arnold Hano and Norm Grossman assisted with the fundraising.) After the suit was settled and the Irvine Company and Laguna Beach had agreed to the city’s re-option purchase of parcels in Laguna Canyon, Elisabeth collaborated with Rob Clark, Mary Fegraus, and Carol Hoffman to write grant applications that generated some of the funds to exercise the options and ultimately made possible the acquisition of about 2,000 acres in what is now Laguna Coast Wilderness Park.

Elisabeth has been instrumental in expanding the Laguna Greenbelt, Inc.’s horizons to encompass all of Orange County. She has also made a

October Board Meeting
Saturday, October 1, 9 a.m.
Home of Jackie Gallagher
2845 Zell Drive

Villagers of the Year Party
Saturday, October 8, 3-6:30 p.m.
Home of Cindy and Mark Evans
435 Hilledge

significant contribution to the development of the Natural Communities Conservation Plan, which has helped set aside 38,000 acres of open space in central Orange County. In 1992 she started the public access/volunteer program in Laguna Canyon Wilderness Park, which has to date trained more than 500 docents. A few years ago she wrote a *Back Pocket Field Guide: An Introduction to Orange County Wildlands* that is the essence of that course. Rather than resting on her laurels, Elisabeth has been working since 1994 on what she views as her biggest ongoing challenge: securing viable wildlife corridors to connect Laguna Coast Wilderness Park and the rest of the Greenbelt to inland open spaces within Orange County through the OC Great Park to the Cleveland National Forest.

Carolyn Wood has been president of the Laguna Canyon Conservancy, of which she is a cofounder, for more than twenty years. She is also secretary of the Laguna Canyon Foundation and has repeatedly been reappointed to the city's Parking, Traffic, and Circulation Committee, on which she still serves. She has lived in Laguna since 1968 and worked for twenty-two years for Leisure World's closed-circuit television station.

Parking and traffic were the interests that drew her into community service, and she has long monitored the summer festival parking plan in Laguna Canyon and once advocated vigorously (though ultimately without success) for keeping the ACT V parking lot undeveloped and accessible to the public. With Elisabeth Brown and others, she worked to stop a development that included extending Alta Laguna Boulevard down the hillside to Canyon Acres and then to replace it with city-purchased open space. In recognition of that effort, the knoll on the property—the highest point in the city—now bears her name. At other times she worked to save the canyon from a 3,200-house Irvine Company development, helped persuade the Coastal Commission to reject a massive Caltrans grading project at the Big Bend, led a sustained neighborhood effort to enforce development standards requiring new houses below Alta Laguna Park to maintain public ocean views across them, and gathered signatures in support of a city ordinance that guarantees that land purchased as open space cannot be sold without a vote of the people.

Under Carolyn's leadership since 1988, the Laguna Canyon Conservancy has maintained a regular forum for education on and discussion of environmental issues in the city and beyond its borders. Finally, whenever there has been a threat to the natural beauty of the canyon or, alternatively, an opportunity to enhance it, Carolyn has been there with the facts and the convictions that contribute to wise community decisions.

Lagunans who treasure our natural setting are in debt to these outstanding women.

Fortieth-Anniversary Celebrations Bring Erstwhile Activists Together



From left, Philip Rundel, Phyllis Sweeney, Verna Rollinger, Kathy Jones, John Monahan, Bonnie Hano, Roger McErlane, Arnold Hano (with Kathy Jones's poster for the initiative campaign), Larry Ulvestad, and Ralph Benson

Our two celebrations of the fortieth anniversary of the anti-high-rise initiative brought together a dozen Lagunans and former Lagunans who were active in the initiative that changed the face of Laguna forever. At the Laguna Canyon Conservancy dinner on September 12 we enjoyed a slide show of old newspaper clippings about the initiative campaign, with commentary by Ann Christoph, and personal recollections by many of these people (see photo above). At the picnic we also welcomed Lois Wilcoxon (Bill's widow) and Roy Holm's daughter, Peggy Lamberton.

Marine Life Preserve Implementation Postponed

Because the state agency that reviews changes to laws hasn't finished reviewing the recently adopted marine protected areas for the South Coast, it has requested a little more time to do so. The implementation of the preserve along Laguna's coast scheduled for October 1 will therefore be briefly postponed. Meanwhile, a new study by the Scripps Institution of Oceanography at Cabo Pulmo in Baja California has shown that the marine reserve there has increased fish diversity and size by 460% in ten years.

Verna Rollinger Announces Candidacy for Reelection

Councilmember Verna Rollinger has recently announced her intention to run for reelection in November 2012. At a fundraiser at the home of Kathy and Mike Conway on September 25, she asked for the support of the many Lagunans who helped with her 2008 campaign and invited them to help keep Laguna moving in the right direction.



Village Voices

by Arnold Hano

On October 8, Village Laguna will do what it does best. No, not de ning “village atmosphere” or insisting on excellence in land use or telling the Chamber of Commerce what Laguna Beach is all about. All of the above, yes, but there is more. What we do best is party. We eat, drink, and make merry. You know Laguna.

We will honor two women who have helped keep Laguna Laguna—Elisabeth Brown and Carolyn Wood. Liz presides over the Greenbelt, Carolyn over the Canyon Conservancy. We are honoring Villagers of the Year, and both Liz and Carolyn would qualify as villagers of the decade or two or three.

Honoring these women is essentially an honor bestowed a bit late on Jim Dilley, who provided the land that sits undisturbed in Laguna Canyon—this comfort zone, this greenbelt, this breathing space.

How it all happened remains elusive. Jim Dilley wanted pieces of land in the outer reaches of the canyon that were owned by the Irvine Company and others to be handed over to him, free, a gift. It was a dream. He would drive to the Irvine Company headquarters bearing a bouquet of roses for the secretaries. He would ask the Irvine Company bosses for the land, they would say no, and he would return to his bookstore and issue another Victory Statement.

Those Victory Statements piled so high that the landowners could not see over them and somehow assumed that Jim had won, so they graciously surrendered. The land was his. Perhaps it was the roses. And the Greenbelt was born.

Do I believe any of this? A former PR chief and personal friend of mine attests to its accuracy, swearing on a stack of actuarial ledgers.

So that is what we will honor on October 8, at a house that recently was part of our Charm House tour. (Can I de ne “charm”? Of course. Just smell the roses.)

Liz Brown continues in the Jim Dilley tradition, adding her own expertise. She knows the ora and fauna better than anyone. She has the clear eye of the scientist and the ear of a superb essayist. The Greenbelt has thrived under her leadership.

Carolyn Wood is another matter, though the land she represents is also part of Jim Dilley’s legacy. Carolyn is a survivor. A tiny demure gure, with a voice like a timid whisper, she is a erce defender of our wilderness. Simply said, we are honored by her presence.

See you on October 8. Let the party begin.

Open Space Initiative Supporters Launch Web Site

Questions about the proposed initiative to preserve Laguna’s remaining open space can now be answered quickly and easily by visiting <http://www.lagunaopenspace.com>. The web site recently launched by Citizens for the Preservation of Open Space contains a map of potential opportunity areas in addition to the text of the initiative, detailed information about it, and directions for how to get involved. The organizers will be submitting the signatures, which appear to be more than enough to qualify the initiative for the ballot, to the city clerk next month.

Renew Your Membership Now and Get 2012 Free!

Readers who haven’t yet renewed their memberships for 2011 may want to take advantage of a special offer: send in your 2011 payment right now and it will be good through 2012. If you support Village Laguna’s work and are reading this newsletter regularly, please use the coupon below to register as a continuing supporter.

Join us or renew your membership!

Name(s) _____

Address _____

Phone number _____ Email _____

I have enclosed my check for the following membership (I understand the amount is not tax-deductible):

- 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 Arnold Hano

Rock Martin Custom Jewelry sits dead center on Forest Avenue in a wonderful old shingled-roof building. The shop, run by Michael McFadden, features lovely items, with a broad range of pricing from a hundred bucks to a hundred thousand.

Michael is a smart feller; he married the boss's daughter, though that is not his only background. He worked in Antwerp, Europe's diamond center, and he knows his jewels. Let him help you pick out a pair of earrings or a ring or a necklace and you are in good hands. The shop has a quiet, understated look (no glitz here) though each piece is lovelier than the next. I shop for Bonnie's special gifts here, which may be gilding the lily.

Rock Martin is true class. Even if you know you are not going to buy, drop in and look around, say hello to Michael. You will feel richer for the experience.



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