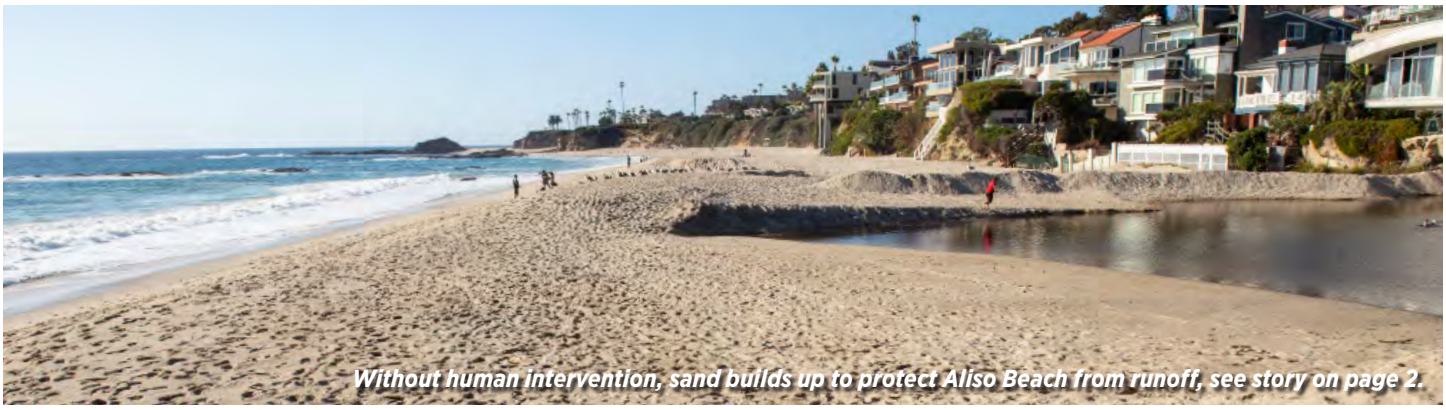
SLCA Bulletin

Summer 2020
southlaguna.org



Without human intervention, sand builds up to protect Aliso Beach from runoff, *see story on page 2.*

South Laguna Civic Association • Non-profit organization founded 1946 • Dedicated to Protecting the Quality of Community Life

Your SLCA dues make a big difference

Through your payment of dues, donations, and community support, SLCA has been able to serve South Laguna effectively in many important ways.

Here's a partial list of SLCA's recent accomplishments, illustrating what your dues have enabled us to address for you and the entire community during the past year:

- **Ocean water quality, beach and marine life protection**

Local kelp habitat and marine life were the focus of the 2020 SLCA Annual Meeting. We filed a complaint with the City about the spill of approximately 1.4 million gallons of raw sewage into the ocean off South Laguna in November, 2019. We followed up on the recent 2,000-gallon diesel spill from Mission Hospital that contaminated the sand and ocean at Totuava Beach. In order to minimize release of polluted creek water into the ocean at Aliso Beach we work with authorities to prevent breaching of the berm at the creek outlet.

- **Community safety**

We've met with local police officers and encouraged the City to expand the number and frequency of beach patrols in South Laguna in response to the increased number of tourists on our beaches. Our Board has supported the City's obtaining a grant to fund fire protection measures in the greenbelt around South Laguna and requested that these measures respect the preservation of the local habitat and discourage invasive exotic plants. We urged Supervisor Lisa Bartlett and Mayor Bob Whalen to close South Laguna's beaches during what seemed the height of the COVID-19 pandemic.

- **Community Garden advocacy**

In addition to our ongoing fundraising to buy the South Laguna Community Garden Park, SLCA Board members have monitored the City's budget concerns during the pandemic in order to safeguard the $500,000 earmarked for purchase of the Garden land. Under the umbrella of SLCA, gardeners manage and maintain the Garden Park for all to enjoy.

- **Community outreach, awareness, representation**

Three times a year SLCA publishes and mails the Bulletin to SLCA members and the City Council updating readers on local issues and news. A team of six Board members makes this happen.

To help South Laguna voters make decisions on civic issues, SLCA organizes well-attended candidates' forums during election years.

Also, SLCA holds annual meetings at which guest speakers address critical public issues and attendees elect members of our organization's Board of Directors.

Most recently, SLCA has advocated for South Laguna representation and voting rights in the operations of the South Coast Water District Board.

- **Community livability and public space improvements**

For nearly two decades SLCA has encouraged local LBHS college-bound seniors by offering a $1,000 scholarship. (See article in this Bulletin for coverage on the 2020 recipient.) We advocate for sidewalk connections and landscaped medians on Coast Highway; we worked with the landscape staff of Aliso Creek Plaza to replant the Coast Highway slopes with colorful, drought-tolerant plantings; SLCA collaborates with the City's public works staff to properly maintain the street trees and planted areas near our South Laguna stores. We assist and advise residents who are confronted with design review applications and other city-related issues.

These accomplishments underscore what SLCA has done and can continue doing with sufficient financial backing from our members. Like you, the SLCA Board loves this community and we work tirelessly at protecting it and advocating for it at City Hall.

We encourage you to get involved in SLCA, in any of these issues that you are passionate about. And we ask that you, our members, give us the resources needed to work for you.

Please make sure you are current with your annual dues.

Over 2,000 gallons of diesel fuel spilled locally

By Mike Beanan

The U.S. Coast Guard confirmed that diesel fuel spilled from a tank at Mission Hospital reached the ocean, contaminating the sand and water at Totuava Beach cove, located downslope and seaward of Mission Hospital.

The spill, which occurred early on May 7, is alarming because Laguna's coastline is a Marine Protected Area (MPA). There are fish, lobster and abalone nurseries and it is a place where dolphin feed and young gray whales rest during their migration to the Bering Sea.

On Monday, May 11, the South Laguna Civic Association voted to file a complaint with the California Environmental Protection Agency to urge an investigation as to the cause of the spill and whether there had been diversion measures set up to prevent it. "We are hoping to get the attention of those in authority," said Greg O'Loughlin, president of SLCA. "I'm really saddened by this. Together with the sewage spill at Aliso (Beach) on Thanksgiving and now the fuel, this is a problem."

Twelve agencies are involved in the response to the spill. Mission Hospital hired an oil spill contractor to handle the cleanup.

Loving our village over the years

By Ann Christoph

Our village commercial area is still the center of our community identity and what remains of South Laguna as a separate town. Originally separated from the rest of Laguna by Aliso Canyon and open space north of it, South Laguna was the most southerly of three towns that now comprise the City of Laguna Beach. The others were Arch Beach (at Center Street) and Laguna Beach.

From the 1930s to the 1950s, before Alpha Beta market (now CVS), or Monarch Bay Center, South Laguna's businesses supplied most community needs. Edward's Village Market located at 31721 Coast Boulevard (now Coast Highway), even included a butcher shop. Across the highway was Pomeroy's Village Store (now occupied by Laguna Thai restaurant). Zeeb's restaurant, "where the elite meet the elite," had a very elevated view of its clientele, but it served them in a cottage that still exists behind the mansard roof and modern cladding at 31727. There were also Andre's Bar B Que Pit at 32341, Thora's Restaurant (31639), Neva's Café and four gas stations, Buff's Texaco (32342), George's Richfield Service (31692), Union Service Station (31655), Van's Texaco (31611), and Moore's Hardware (31671). Also on Coast Hwy. were a watchmaker, the post office, and Bob Jorden's Village Pharmacy, complete with a soda fountain, all sharing a one-story building (31678), just north of today's 7-Eleven. A hotel at 31674 (now nail and tailor shops) became Dr. Eric Evans' office in 1948. Raven's Ceramic shop sold their wares at 31732 (Ahba's now). Tony Mancuso manned the barber shop at 31711. It was his store windows that fell victim to a runaway tire that young Ross Cox and friends rolled down Third Avenue — probably the most repeated story told to our history interviewers.

Is this a small town Norman Rockwell could have depicted? Let's help make it real again as we help our businesses recover.

SLCA is preparing a book on the history of South Laguna. Can you help with any historical photos or documents? Donations for this project are welcome!

In memory of Lisa Marks

By Tom Osborne

She thought deeply about matters and acted courageously, never on her own behalf and always for the larger community. She loved music, dance, nature, swims at Table Rock Beach, friends, and especially her sister, Jill. A more curious, modest, generous, freer-spirited person would be hard to imagine.



Lisa Marks (June 8, 1958 – January 19, 2020), our South Laguna friend, neighbor, and coworker, died of brain cancer. She was a long-time South Laguna Civic Association Board member and some of us also served with her on the City's Environmental Committee in the early 2000s, during which she worked on drafting the Council-approved Climate Protection Action Plan.

A UC Irvine graduate in mathematics, Lisa went on to UC Berkeley where she earned a master's degree in that subject. Seldom did she talk numbers, however, unless doing so would illuminate points she wanted to make about a subject on which she was passionate: the environment. Climate change, ocean water and air quality, responsible management of our hillsides to address fire risks, and organic farming occupied much of her thinking and drove her political action.

My wife, Ginger, and I among numerous others visited Lisa in hospice at her home. Her musician friends brought instruments and played and sang for her. Lisa faced death fearlessly with Buddhistic-like detachment and was at peace when she left this world. Clearly, she had touched the lives of many people and in doing so left us richer for having known her.

Garden art prevails over virus

By Ann Christoph

The South Laguna Community Garden Park had to cancel all of its programs this spring because of the pandemic — no classes, potlucks or even group clean-up days. The Garden plants ignored the virus and bloomed beautifully this spring because of the late rains. We couldn't resist inviting artists to come and paint it — we saw it as our version of Monet's Giverny. Local artists of all ages have been visiting the Garden and producing colorful works of art. A competition, including a special division for children, ends June 30. The winning piece will be featured in our fall fundraising invitation — another Farm to Table Dinner is scheduled for October 3. We don't know if such a gathering will be feasible, but regardless, all the paintings will be offered in an on-line auction benefiting the Garden. Artists will set the opening bid, and they will donate some or all of the proceeds – their choice. The Garden and the art competition have been bright spots in these times.

Kelfie, the garden elf, loves being a good example for the Garden's mask-wearing policy.





Artist Sandra Morrison paints watercolors amid the California poppies and garden beds. (Ken Hughes photo)

Stopping runoff at Aliso Beach

By Mike Beanan

Banding together with inland water districts and County of Orange, Laguna Bluebelt and SLCA were able to protect the naturally occurring Aliso Beach sand berm two summers ago and local sea life recovered quickly. Now, unfortunately, enforcement has stopped. Vandals once again are digging out the berm, releasing 1 to 5 million gallons of polluted urban runoff to South Laguna beaches affecting unsuspecting visitors and marine life. ***If you see the berm being broken, please call OC Parks: 714-973-6855 or Laguna Beach Police: 949-497-0701.***



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IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS

Laguna Beach Police Dispatch
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Marine Safety & Protection
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SUPPORT SOUTH LAGUNA!

Julia Henry wins 2020 SLCA Professor Morrie Granger Memorial Scholarship

By Tom Osborne

LBHS graduating senior Julia Henry, age 18, and her younger brother, Evan, have regularly and expertly greeted and registered attendees at SLCA's Annual Meetings. Our Board members, in particular, enjoyed talking with both of them at these gatherings, and getting their views on happenings in town and the wider world.



Ms. Henry's outstanding academic record and involvement in local civic affairs won her this year's Professor Morrie Granger Memorial Scholarship offered by SLCA. (The $1,000 award is named in honor of our deceased Board member and notable UC Irvine biology professor.) Ms. Henry will be attending selective Occidental College in Eagle Rock, a suburb of Los Angeles. She plans to major in diplomacy and international affairs. Throughout high school she loved Model United Nations and, especially, classes dealing with subjects related to government and foreign relations.

Not all of her learning about individual action in the public sphere, however, came from books and classes. Time spent at the South Laguna Community Garden Park offered a different, experiential-based learning. "As a child I remember helping neighbors assemble the lower part of the garden, and watching the community come together to support something. When groups come together to fight for something they care about, they can enact significant change. To put it simply, there would have been no Garden without South Laguna working for it."

For now, at least, Ms. Henry is aiming for an eventual career with the U.S. Department of State or the United Nations. Whatever this young woman does career-wise, we can be sure she'll be good at it, and that society will benefit. Said Ms. Henry, whatever "career path [I take], my motivation is to help people in need and make a positive impact on my community." Her values, level of thinking, and work ethic should raise the spirits of all of us.