

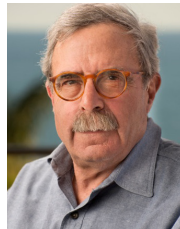


South Laguna Civic Association • Non-profit organization founded 1946 • Dedicated to Protecting the Quality of Community Life

## City Council Denies Heritage Status to South Laguna Trees

By Jim Joseph

**O**n August 20, 2013, by a 3 to 1 vote, the Laguna Beach City Council reversed more than two decades of policy and practice by determining that more than 150 trees in South Laguna were no longer entitled to the protection accorded trees bearing the “heritage designation” in the rest of the City.



In 1989, two years after the City of Laguna Beach annexed South Laguna, City Council adopted Resolution 89.104 integrating the South Laguna Specific Plan, which had governed South Laguna under County jurisdiction, into City plans. Included was a list of trees upon which the County of Orange had conferred the designation of “heritage,” recognizing their historical significance, importance, and benefit to the South Laguna community.

City heritage trees cannot be removed or severely pruned without City permission after a showing by the owner of good cause. South Lagunans have relied on the same protection for heritage trees in their neighborhoods.

However, certain elements in the administration of the City’s affairs claimed that the South Laguna trees were not entitled to the status of heritage trees in the rest of the city but, instead, were “candidate heritage trees.” Throughout the year 2012 the City sent letters to heritage tree owners which presumed that their trees were not heritage trees, and inquired whether the owners desired their trees to be full-fledged heritage trees. Some observers have suggested that the letters were tilted



to emphasize the responsibilities of heritage tree ownership and minimize the benefits. Close to half of the owners did not respond; of those who did, a fifth opted for heritage tree status.

The issue of whether the South Laguna trees became City heritage trees upon annexation came to a head at the above-mentioned City Council hearing on August 20th. The City Manager,

City Attorney, and City Planning Manager were of the view that they did not; the South Laguna Civic Association urged that they did. Becky Jones and Norm Grossman, planning commissioners who helped prepare the 1989 Resolution that contained the list of heritage trees, emphasized that it was the intent that “the trees on the South Laguna Heritage Trees list would be afforded the same protections as those on the City’s Heritage Trees list. To do otherwise, would have been counter to the Planning Commission’s goal of integrating the two communities and applying equal protection for South Laguna under existing City policies and ordinances.”

During that same August 20th hearing, Councilman Whalen, whose vote against heritage tree status was decisive, did state that the status of candidate heritage tree conferred some protection “with respect to any property regarding which development is proposed... I think you can insist on that project protecting [candidate] trees from removal.” However, city staff has determined that there is no way to protect the “candidate” heritage trees long enough for the design review board to rule on their preservation.

Whether these trees, which decades ago the County of Orange singled out for preservation, will survive into the future as “candidates,” remains to be seen. In the two months since the



council’s decision, two South Laguna heritage trees have been cut down.

**A Torrey pine at 32052 Sunset Avenue and a sugar gum at 31596 Brentwood, both on South Laguna’s heritage tree list, were recently cut down by their owners after the Council cancelled heritage tree protections for South Laguna’s trees.**

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

## Attracted to Gravity



Recently, I saw the movie *Gravity*, a very exciting film, indeed, a cinematic marvel.

It reminded me how much we are dependent on gravity and how that force has affected the lives of humans from our earliest days on earth. Our forebears were well aware of the change of seasons, heralded by the two equinoxes and the two solstices. But they didn't comprehend that these events happen because the earth is tilted by 23 ½ degrees on its axis and revolves around the sun.

These seasonal changes have influenced us in South Laguna just as they have affected people around the world for eons. All four seasons occur on the 21st day, plus or minus one day of their month. The vernal equinox signals the time to plant. Vegetables such as lettuce, broccoli, squashes, and peppers are the order of the day. The fall equinox tells us the days are getting shorter; it is time to shift to other crops: snap peas, radishes, and tomatoes. The winter solstice is the shortest day of the year – at least in the northern hemisphere, which is where we are. Likewise, the summer solstice is the longest day of the year. As you may have noticed, your South Laguna Community Garden tillers, like our agrarian ancestors, have festivals usually coinciding with the solstices and equinoxes.

From time immemorial, we have observed that the “shape” of the moon changes all the time; once a month there is a full moon. People long ago named each of these full moons. You probably



know that the full moon in September is the harvest moon. Maybe you even know that the October full moon is the hunter's moon. In case you don't know the others, here they are: November, beaver moon; December, cold moon; January, wolf moon; February, snow moon; March, worm moon; April, pink moon; May, flower moon; June, strawberry moon; July, buck moon; and August, sturgeon moon.

Gravity, along with centrifugal force, also accounts for the tides. For a very long time, we have known that the high tide happens when the moon is overhead. But why are there two high tides every day? Only in recent times (with the help of Newton and others) have we been able to answer this question. In fact, the moon does not revolve around the earth; they both revolve around their common center of gravity. This center of gravity is inside the earth, about 1000 miles below its surface. The centrifugal force from this center of gravity is what causes that second, smaller daily high tide.

Segueing from the past to the future, it has recently come to my attention that scientists are attempting to detect gravity waves! Oh yeah, *gravity waves*? How can that be? If your understanding of gravity stops with Newton's laws, you think (as I did until recently) that gravity is completely constant. But if there are waves of gravity, there must be a speed of gravity. Well, it turns out that Einstein in his general theory of relativity, published in 1915, focused on gravity. The theory postulates that the *speed of gravity* must be identical to the speed of light, a totally surprising conclusion. When and if this is experimentally verified, new marvels are bound to follow.

## Aliso Creek Estuary Restoration

By Mike Beanan

The asphalted parking lot on the inland side of Aliso Creek did not always exist. In fact in the timeline of local history, that 1960s car park is a recent arrival. Long before vast Spanish, Mexican, and American cattle ranches changed the natural landscape of South Orange County, Aliso Beach had a seasonal estuary – a rare coastal wetlands.

This last remaining lagoon in Laguna Beach could be restored.

Fortunately, SLCA worked with County, City, and South Coast Water District to capture a portion of summer urban runoff as a first step in re-establishing the natural creek flow. Without this capture of urban runoff, too much polluted water flowing through the creek will drown any future restoration effort. To prevent this, the Aliso Creek Urban Runoff Recovery, Reuse and Conservation Project is scheduled for operation at the end of this year.

Why restore the Aliso Creek Estuary? Restoration will save a vanishing marine habitat for flora and fauna. As much as 90 percent of California's coastal estuaries are now gone – sacrificed for marinas, power plants, and development. This constitutes a great loss to the environment since estuaries are the nurseries for fish populations like the southern steelhead trout and federally protected tidewater



Above, the healthy San Mateo Creek estuary and sand berm at Trestles Beach. At right, encroachments narrow the mouth of Aliso Creek.



gobi, a keystone species indicating a healthy watershed and coast.

The reason we need to push for restoration now is that others in Laguna Beach see the degraded inland estuary as a prime site for a city skateboard park. Is this the best use for this once pristine and idyllic natural setting? Keep in mind that this site, where Acjachemen Indians lived before local homesteader George Thurston built a cabin in 1871, was the cradle of Laguna Beach; this is where our city was birthed before its center was moved northward to its present location. If such ground is not hallowed, meaning endowed with special significance,

*continues on page 3*

## South Laguna Civic Association Dues

- Individual \$25
- Family/Business \$45
- Supporting \$100
- Sponsor \$200
- Contribution for historical research \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- Friend of the South Laguna Community Garden Park \$100

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (Day) \_\_\_\_\_ (Evening) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

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The SLCA is a non-profit organization; however, your contributions are not tax deductible.

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### In Memoriam

## Blair Ballard, Architect (1941-2013)

By Ann Christoph

**W**e have reason to remember the late Blair Ballard, Laguna Beach architect, with fondness.

Aside from his many major accomplishments, such as the design of the Glenneyre Street parking garage, and the theater complex at the San Juan Capistrano train station, he made a significant contribution to South Laguna. In 1973-1977 when his children were young he was active in an SLCA subcommittee called People for Parks. This committee recognized the need for a children's play park and pushed for the creation of South Laguna Village Green. There were meetings, petition drives, searches for funds, and finally design. Parents wanted fences around the park to protect the children. Others objected to visible barriers and wanted the park to look open.

A design solution was found to address both of the above concerns. The berms with retaining walls behind them disguised the protective boundary and



the open looking flower-themed rebar gates made entering the park a special experience. The gates are Blair's creation. Next time you visit the park take an appreciative look at the gates and think of Blair's inspiration and thoughtfulness.

### Aliso Creek *continued*

then what is? Would a skateboard park, with its attendant noise, congestion, and further obliteration of the environment, better serve the heritage and needs of Lagunans than a restored Aliso estuary?

A restoration project for this area is doable. Significant grant funding is available to communities organized for action. Restoration of the Malibu wetlands was the result of community action. The Malibu Restoration Project will improve the health and wildlife of that city's lagoon while reducing ocean pollution. If restoration can work in Malibu, it can also work in Laguna Beach. Do you want to bring the "lagoon" back to Laguna? It is up to us. Working together, we can make it happen. You can help by joining the effort and taking action while there is time. Contact [mike@southlaguna.org](mailto:mike@southlaguna.org) to learn more.

## ● ARE YOUR DUES CURRENT FOR 2013?

**If you care about the community of South Laguna and the surrounding environment, please support SLCA's efforts by keeping your dues current.**

**ALL 2012 MEMBERSHIPS EXPIRED JANUARY 1.**

Clip the coupon on page 3 and mail it with your check in the enclosed envelope to:

**SLCA, P. O. Box 9668, South Laguna, CA 92652-9639**

**Extra contributions are welcome and appreciated!**



P.O. Box 9668  
South Laguna CA 92652-7639

## INSIDE:

- South Laguna's heritage trees
- Aliso Creek estuary restoration
- Garden Park news & events



[caption for 5% Day with Boys and Girls Club members]

## Garden Opportunities in Abundance

By Ann Christoph

Summer and fall have been a success, not only with the best crops so far, but also with many enjoying the South Laguna Community Garden Park. Boys and Girls Club members visited and learned about vermiculture from Michelle Haines and horticulture from Ruben Flores. JoAnn Ekblad, of Whole Foods Market, Laguna Beach, delivered the store's contribution of over \$1700 for the Garden Park acquisition fund. Laguna Outreach Community Arts (LOCA) class members made harvest wreaths with the guidance of artist Shelley Evans. Horticulturist Cristin Fusano inspired us in planting winter gardens.

More opportunities are coming up to enjoy the garden:

- **Saturday, November 9, 10 a.m.** Whole Foods Market team members Felipe Sterling and Tina Chaturvedi will present the "Basic Whys and Hows of Juicing," a demonstration focusing on tasty recipes using winter vegetables.
- **Saturday, November 16, 9 a.m.** Garden work day; meet your neighbors and join together to ready the garden for the Fall Festival.
- **Sunday, November 17, 2-5 p.m.** Fall Festival, potluck, music and rejoicing!
- **Saturday, December 14, 3-5 p.m.** Holiday Sing Along, wassail, snack and dessert potluck.

You are invited! For more information visit [southlaguna.org/garden](http://southlaguna.org/garden). Your contributions toward acquiring the garden property are so important. This is a perfect time to send them. Make checks to CVOC/SL Garden and mail them to the SLCA address.

## Halliburton House Surroundings Assessed by City

In response to a letter SLCA submitted, the City has required that a detailed historical report be prepared to evaluate the impact that development of seven surrounding vacant lots may have on the historic value of the Halliburton House.

The first of these proposed new developments, a house designed by Horst Noppenberger, was introduced at the Heritage Committee in September. The Committee asked that Mr. Noppenberger return with an explanation of how all of the issues raised in the historical report are being addressed.

Meantime the restoration and interior remodeling of the Halliburton house proceeds under staff review. The City determined that the work the owners, Mark and Sharon Fudge, are doing on the house did not require a discretionary permit, or a review at the Heritage Committee.

Haliburton house  
photo requested  
from Greg and  
Ann