

President's Letter



YOU HELP MAKE THE CVA STRONGER

Once again, I want to thank our members for your ongoing support of the Carmel Valley Association. As always, during the first six months of this year, your participation has been critical to the success in meeting our mission "to preserve, protect and defend the natural beauty, resources, and rural character of the Carmel Valley."

With your help, our financial base has become stronger, and our membership has increased. You continue to be essential to our success, and as a result of your help, we are poised to continue to fight future threats to our beautiful valley.

This year our efforts to maintain the rural nature of this beautiful valley have been intense. We have been confronting two major issues that have the potential to impact Carmel Valley in irreversible ways: 1) the Short-Term Rental (STR) Ordinance and 2) the Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA) proposed affordable housing units mandated by the State of California. Your letters to the Monterey County supervisors and planning commissioners on these two issues and your presence at the related hearings have been extremely important.

At the June 12th Planning Commission meeting CVA helped to provide input for a well thought out short-term rental ordinance. A considerable number of CVA suggestions were incorporated into the ordinance. Planning Commissioner Kate Daniels (our future 5th district supervisor) led the way in crafting a reasonable and balanced ordinance consistent with the Carmel Valley Master Plan. Hopefully, it will have been approved by the time

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COMMUNITY ACTION SUCCEEDS IN CHALLENGE TO REGIONAL HOUSING PLAN

by Marianne Gawain

Since 1969 the State of California, through its Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA) process, has held regional governments responsible for developing housing plans that will accommodate the growing housing needs of residents across a range of incomes. Every eight years the state conducts a new RHNA review that allocates a target number of desired housing units to each area. Local governments must plan accordingly, presenting to the state a housing plan (aka "housing element") that shows where the needed housing could be built and demonstrates that policies are in place to support the construction of housing units at affordable levels. If a community fails to meet this state requirement, it becomes subject to the "builder's remedy," whereby proposed projects that meet a baseline affordable housing threshold can go ahead with minimal planning review or public input.

In June the Monterey County Board of Supervisors agreed to submit a plan (unfortunately, not fully public) in fulfillment of the sixth RHNA cycle to the State's Department of Housing and Community Development. The county will need to make adjustments after receiving state feedback; a final approved plan will likely be in place by next summer.

For Carmel Valley residents seeking to provide input into our local RHNA plan, the process has involved some ups and more than a few downs. An early meeting arranged for residents by Fifth District Supervisor Mary Adams gave us a chance to view maps showing possible parcels ("opportunity sites") to be included in the development plan and to provide feedback as to their suitability. Housing and Community Development staff met with residents of other districts as well, receiving

written and oral input from residents and organizations including CVA.

CVA has consistently emphasized the importance of clustering smaller, affordable units, such as apartments or condominiums, in developed areas of the Valley, where transportation and other services such as grocery stores, medical offices, and schools are readily accessible. At the same time, CVA has fought the notion that more market-rate homes should be permitted to sprawl across currently undeveloped pastures and hillsides, especially in the highest fire risk areas. With several high-end developments in the pipeline, Carmel Valley already has sufficient housing stock in the multi-million-dollar price range; more would degrade the Valley's environment and quality of life. Instead, we need thoughtfully planned affordable housing units that meet the needs of local teachers, service workers, first responders, and others of moderate income.

Here in the unincorporated Carmel Valley, where we lack the municipal government protections enjoyed by incorporated areas, we are especially vulnerable to having RHNA plans imposed on us that are very different from those we would choose if we had greater local control. For example, Carmel Valley residents were startled earlier this year, quite late in the RHNA process, when county staff unveiled a new opportunity site proposal that would have placed fully three-quarters of the county's required housing units into Carmel Valley, potentially adding another 50% to the number of homes already here. If built, this would result in ten times more new housing units than envisioned in the 2010 Carmel Valley Master Plan, created by local residents to shape our community's future growth. Fortunately, the Board of Supervisors and Planning Commission

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that you receive this newsletter. A key feature of the proposed ordinance is that it prohibits "commercial" vacation rentals (that is, short-term rentals not managed by a resident) from residentially-zoned areas in the Carmel Valley Master Plan area.

The conversion of long-term housing to short-term rentals in residential areas not only disturbs the residential character of a neighborhood, but it also has a significant negative impact on the availability of affordable housing, especially in strong tourist/visitor-market destinations such as Carmel Valley. It greatly reduces the availability of housing for long-term residents, thus driving up both rents and house prices for locals. The new STR ordinance would curb the runaway increase in short-term rentals and keep them to a number that is compatible with both the Carmel Valley Master Plan and the residential nature of our community.

The State of California mandates that each region increase the units of affordable housing. Monterey County staff originally proposed 2,500 of the 10,000 Monterey County units for Carmel Valley. CVA insisted on deducting from the total all eligible permitted units in the pipeline. We took responsibility for our share of affordable housing while working to eliminate any more market-rate housing besides those units already in the pipeline. See lead article in this newsletter for

detailed information.

With your critically important help, we have worked hard to find ways to minimize the negative impacts of the new STR ordinance and the affordable housing mandate.

Whether the county has the will to apply the resources needed to properly enforce the new STR Ordinance and whether the state will accept the reduced numbers of affordable housing units in the revised plan are both open to question. What is clear, however, is that whatever the short-term results on these issues, there will be more work for us to do going forward.

I will be finishing my interim return as president of CVA with this newsletter. CVA board member Marianne Gawain will assume the presidency in September. She is a skilled and exemplary leader who I am certain will serve you and Carmel Valley well.

Your continued engagement with and support of CVA is critical to maintaining the fragile nature of this wonderful valley. So, I encourage you to help increase the membership, to be active in bringing issues to us, joining committees, attending events, and supporting us financially, so that we are prepared to fight and win on the new issues that will surely arise.

Thank you for being such a wonderful community. It has truly been an honor to serve.

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If you live, work, or own property in Carmel Valley, please support the CVA today!

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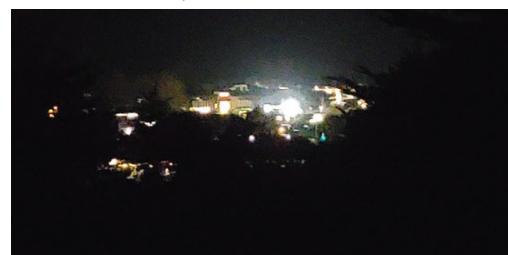
RESTORING DARK SKIES AND NATURAL SOUNDSCAPES

by Charlie Wahle

Last year, CVA created the Natural and Cultural Heritage Committee to help residents, businesses, and visitors protect and sustain our shared connections to the Carmel River watershed. That's a tall order, and we are choosing our priorities thoughtfully. Many of our most pressing ecological challenges, like climate change, wildfire, invasive species, and habitat loss, can seem daunting and beyond the reach of well-intentioned individual actions. Fortunately, some environmental threats are more manageable, and real successes, like reducing local light and sound pollution where we live, can be achieved by a simple flick of a switch. Your switch.

Why Light and Sound Pollution Matters

Pollution from human-generated light and sound is very real and impacts our local communities. Naturally dark starry skies and quiet soundscapes are fundamental aspects of our environment and profoundly shape local ecology and our own quality of life. In nature, light and sound pollution can, in myriad ways, disrupt animal migrations, interfere with predator-prey interactions, prevent successful mating behavior, and drives birds and animals from their habitats (like your yard). On the human side, excessive light and sound pollution can degrade human health, our quality of life, and the overall rural character of Carmel Valley.



A galaxy of light in field of darkness, by John Heyl.

In response to these growing threats, CVA has launched two initiatives to help the people of Carmel Valley take small - but mighty - steps to reduce our unnecessary contribution to light and sound pollution. This article is about making that happen - together.

Dark Skies

We are a species intimately bound to the heavens. 'Starry nights' are prevalent

in our origin myths, children's rhymes, literature, music, and art. But when was the last time you looked up and saw a dome of stark darkness festooned with intensely glowing stars? It's probably been a while. And it's getting harder to do every night. That unwelcome change is often due to interference by the light pollution we generate on land. Our naturally dark and starry night skies are gradually being consumed by excessive, inefficient and non-functional lighting on our homes, businesses, schools, and roads. So, what can we do?

Led by CVA's John Heyl, the Dark Skies Team is taking a multipronged approach to bringing back our starry nights. Some key elements currently include

The second year of an innovative internship program with Hartnell College that engages STEM students in learning about and sharing with others the importance of dark skies and how they can be conserved.

A growing effort to educate residents and businesses about simple, inexpensive conversions to dark sky lighting fixtures that can provide adequate, functional lighting with minimal visual pollution.

A collaborative effort with the Monterey Peninsula Regional Parks District to attain DarkSky International certification for our parks.

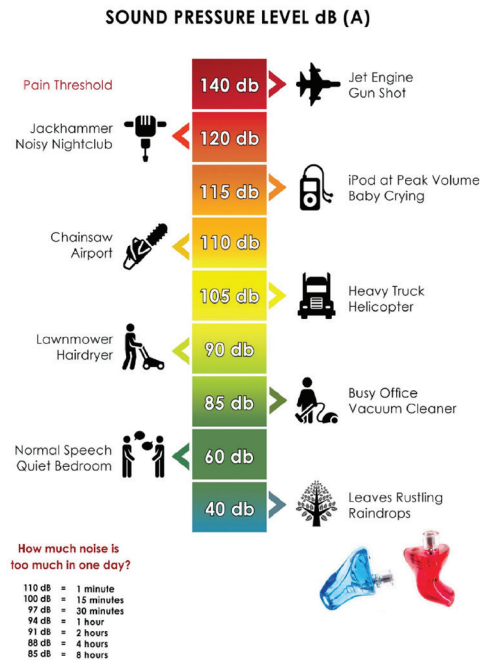
A new project to document all local and state regulations on exterior lighting and to work with the county and others to incentivize greater compliance in residential, business, and other operations.

Quiet Soundscapes

When many of us imagine our natural soundscape in the Carmel Valley, we think of songbirds cheeping, coyotes singing, woodpeckers tapping, squirrels squabbling, frogs peeping, rivers rippling, and waves crashing. Yet, when we actually *listen* to our local soundscapes, that natural symphony is often overwhelmed by motorcycles and super cars roaring, music blasting, leaf blowers blowing, chainsaws ripping, delivery trucks beeping, and loudspeakers blaring. This loss of natural soundscapes is a profound loss for those of us living, working, and recreating in the Carmel Valley. It doesn't have to stay this way.

Led by CVA's Marianne Gawain, the Natural Soundscapes Team has begun a brand new effort to understand the scope and source of this problem, educate the community on ways to avoid excessive noise, evaluate the prevailing governance system to manage noise, and work with interested parties to find solutions for a quieter Valley.

NOISE LEVELS DECIBEL SCALE (dB)



www.noiseban.com

This scale illustrates typical noise levels and impacts on the listener created by different sound sources.

How You Can Help

Together, we can restore Carmel Valley's naturally dark skies and quiet soundscapes. Unlike many ecosystem features that, once destroyed are forever lost, natural darkness and quiet will return as soon as we turn down the lights and the noise. Let's get started.

If you would like more information about CVA's efforts to protect your dark skies and quiet soundscapes, let us know.

Contact our committee members at:
cvvoice@carmelvalleyassociation.org

NCHC: Charlie Wahle

Dark Skies: John Heyl

Quiet Soundscapes: Marianne Gawain

More information at the DarkSky International website darksky.org/.

CV LIBRARY FIRST SATURDAY PROGRAM RETURNS Cloak & Dagger History and Talk on Multicultural Food

by Mibs McCarthy

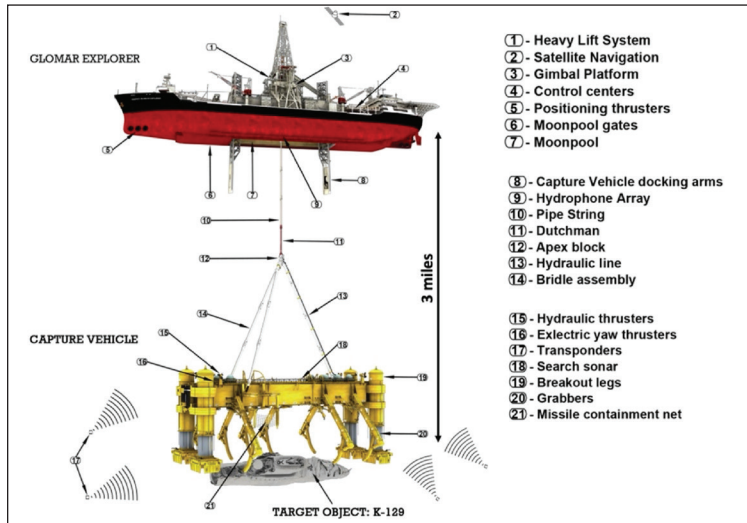
First Saturday programs are back at the Carmel Valley Library, sponsored by The Friends of the Carmel Valley Library, a 501(c)3 non-profit founded in 1980 and supported by donations from the community.

torpedoes, along with the bodies of six Soviet submariners, who were given a formal burial at sea.

“The story of Project Azorian contains twists and turns and drama but, in fact, is real life. There is lots of history, geopolitics, and cloak and dagger, and there

are five connections to the Monterey Peninsula,” says Mr. Clancy.

On Saturday, October 5, Analuisa Bejar, chef and owner of Sunny Bakery Cafe in Carmel Valley, will host a conversation about multicultural food and how it brings us together. She recently arrived from Mexico City, where for a decade she was a food critic at one of



On Saturday, September 7, Mike Clancy will present “Project Azorian: The CIA’s Attempt to Raise the Soviet Submarine and the Connections to the Monterey Peninsula.” Mr. Clancy joined the U.S. Navy’s Fleet Numerical Meteorology and Oceanography Center in Monterey in 1983 and became the Technical and Scientific Director in 2005.

Project Azorian was a CIA project to covertly recover the sunken Soviet ballistic missile submarine, K-129. The K-129 went down with all hands on board approximately 1,600 miles northwest of Hawaii on March 8, 1968, at a location that was unknown to the Soviets. However, in June of 1974, using underwater surveillance technology, the U.S. Navy submarine Halibut was able to find and photograph the K-129 more than three miles down on the ocean floor. This enabled a covert recovery operation using a remarkable ship built specifically for this task, the Glomar Explorer. The ship had 8000 tons of lifting ability, with the bottom of the ship opening up to pull the submarine inside. A portion of the submarine was recovered, about 38 feet, only 1/5 of what was hoped for. The recovered section held two nuclear-tipped

the best-known newspapers and developed recipes and wrote for many publications. She plans to facilitate the conversation about the exchange between Asia and the Americas during Mexican colonial times and the way many wonderful ingredients and iconic classic dishes, like mole, that we identify with Mexico, were born in that period. The exchange lasted the 250 years Mexico was a Spanish colony, and it influenced all aspects of life. She will start by discussing what the Mexican pre-Hispanic table looked like when the Spanish arrived and how this ever-welcoming and open cuisine evolved after waves of migration and centuries of exchanges of ingredients and tools. A few examples of the ingredients traveling on the Manila Galleon fleet were cilantro, mango, lime, tamarind, sesame, and spices like clove, star anise, and cinnamon. Mexican products made their way to Asia as well, where chiles were embraced both for medicinal and culinary purposes, and tomato and cacao were introduced. Chocolate will also be an important part of the conversation and may even be present.

Mark your calendars, and we’ll see you at the library!

Regional Housing continued from pg 1

heard vigorous pushback regarding this proposal, which would have burdened our Valley so heavily, undermining its rural character. Kudos to LandWatch Monterey County, which, working with CVA, suggested an alternative array of development sites throughout the county, focusing on infill opportunities that would reduce carbon-generating sprawl and traffic congestion. Ultimately, the county made a dramatic course correction that reflected those community concerns. The final housing element proposal, though still not consistent with our Carmel Valley Master Plan, takes a number of the most egregious and indefensible housing sites off the table, at least for now. In the meantime, Monterey County has missed its state RHNA deadline, and the “builder’s remedy” is currently in effect, meaning that we have dramatically reduced planning control over potential projects. Several builder’s remedy projects are already under development. Clearly, it is imperative that the county put a state-approved housing element in place as soon as possible.

As the sixth RHNA cycle winds down, California’s housing “needs assessment” appears to need assessment itself. Despite sitting at the core of California’s housing planning process for decades, RHNA has repeatedly failed to create the moderate and low income housing we need in Monterey County (and elsewhere statewide). As currently implemented, affordable housing is created through “inclusionary housing,” whereby developers are given permission for market-rate projects only by including a certain percentage of affordable units on-site or elsewhere. In practice these affordable units often go unbuilt, while the more profitable houses go up. To their credit, Monterey County’s supervisors and planning commissioners have instructed staff to explore how the county can support construction of affordable housing without tying it to approval of large numbers of unneeded luxury units. With housing needs more urgent than ever, and with the prospect of our soon being immersed in the next RHNA cycle, fresh ideas, including innovative public-private partnerships, are urgently needed.

You can stay involved in Monterey County’s RHNA process and other housing matters by supporting CVA. For more info email cvvoice@carmelvalleyassociation.org.

TATUM'S TREEHOUSE REACHES IMPORTANT FUNDRAISING GOAL

by Amanda Bakker

The local volunteers who are spearheading the effort to build the Tatum's Treehouse fully-accessible playground at Carmel Valley Community Youth Center have some exciting news to share. After over four years of fundraising, they have hit a major milestone.

In May of this year, they held a very successful fundraising benefit at Joyce Winery, where they brought in over \$100,000 in one evening. On the heels of that success, they received word that they are recipients of a private grant for \$250,000 toward the project. This boost in funding has bumped their total raised to over \$660,000 and puts their project at 80% funded.

Reaching this funding milestone has put them in a position to set dates for their all-volunteer Community Build, as well. Leathers and Associates is a world-renowned playground design and construction company based on the East Coast and helped create the beautiful design for Tatum's Treehouse that was unveiled in 2019. A team of leaders from Leathers and Associates will come to Carmel Valley and lead the Community Build process, which is now scheduled for November 11-17, 2024.



The expansive Tatum's Garden in Salinas is a virtual amusement park filled with kids from 9 am to sunset daily.

In the midst of all of this excitement, there is still much work to be done. The committee is meeting regularly, making plans to bring fundraising to 100%, and actively recruiting volunteers who are interested in getting involved in any of the available committees. You can find more information about this project and how to sign up as a volunteer or sponsor a piece of playground equipment by visiting tatumstreehouse.com.

Volunteer: tatumstreehouse.com/volunteer/
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The gauge measures progress towards the goal for the playground in the Village.

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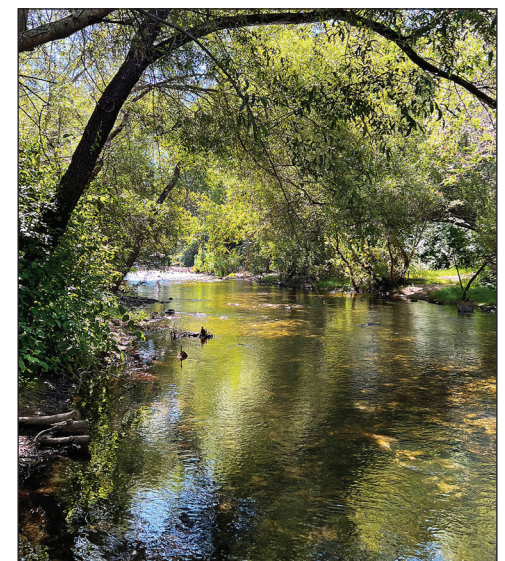
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This shot was taken an early July morning looking east across the Carmel River flowing placidly through Garland Ranch Park. By Warren Pete Poitras.



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Thanks to Warren Pete Poitras for his banner photo from Mesa Trail in Garland Ranch Park.

We welcome your comments, photographs, story ideas, and offers to help or join a committee. Drop us an email at cvvoice@carmelvalleyassociation.org. Subscribe to our weekly e-bulletin at carmelvalleyassociation.org.

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