



# CVA Action

The Newsletter of the Carpinteria Valley Association

Volume 40, No. 2

Fall 2003

*As CVA approaches our 40th birthday, we look back over our history and realize how very fortunate we are that 40 years ago members of our community took it upon themselves to create CVA. Their purpose was to preserve the things that make the Carpinteria Valley the unique place it was and still is. Lois Sidenberg was one of CVA's founders, and we would like to dedicate this edition of CVAction to her memory.*

*See the article on this page to learn a little about Lois and the legacy she has left all of us.*

## Lagunitas on the Brink

The Carpinteria City Council is about to approve the Lagunitas Development. They conceptually approved the development and introduced an ordinance adopting a Development Agreement. Brad Stein was the only council member that voted against this project. He argued that this development was too large for our community and that he was representing his constituency by voting against the staff recommendation. Carpinteria is fortunate to have someone on the council that represents the present community. The 1990's were different – the council acted to protect our community and preserve it as a “small rural beach town.” But that seems to have changed.

Now, the pressures of urban development are great, and the state is issuing mandates to counties and cities. So, we may be stuck with nearly 2500 more cars every day on our streets and highways, and 118 pounds of pollutants daily – much more than can possibly be mitigated. It seems so strange that the council would approve a project allowing this much more traffic. The mayor wrote an article for the *Coastal View* this summer that stated, “Remember, under the best circumstances, the 101 freeway widening project will take years to

complete, so whatever you can do to relieve congestion will make life easier for you and everyone else using the freeway.” He also stated, “After studying past failures of freeway expansion to relieve traffic congestion, transportation experts now agree that the key element that has been missing in most roadway expansion plans is the need for land use planning. For example, if we continue to create jobs on the south coast and build housing in Ventura Co., Lompoc and Santa Maria, widening of 101 will solve nothing.” How can he make these statements and then vote to approve this development with nearly 2500 daily car trips and 500 jobs?

This vote, however, does not mean final approval. The city needs to hear from Caltrans to see if they approve the roundabout at highways 150 and 101. This roundabout is the only mitigation, according to the EIR, that will allow the community to endure

2500 daily car trips. The strange twist to all of this is that this is probably one of our few intersections that flows smoothly at this time and now it will be congested.

Many, many voices have been heard asking the city not to approve this development, but somehow their pleas have been lost in numerous late hours of agenda placement and other distracting events. Also, the

***The 1990's were different – the council acted to protect our community and preserve it as a “small rural beach town.” But that seems to have changed.***

“Development Agreement”, although a public document, was crafted between the city and the developers without public input.

So what can you do? It may be too late to change the action taken by the city council. But it is never too late to remember that this action is not in the best interest of our community. It is up to all of us to remember this decision, and the next chance we get, to hold accountable the city council members who supported it. ❖



## Remembering Lois Sidenberg

CVA co-founder Lois Sidenberg was recalled fondly at the dedication of the Lois Sidenberg Coastal Overlook, part of the July 3 ceremony and celebration of several “named” areas of the Carpinteria Bluffs, including Viola Fields

and the Rhodes-Fleming Family Coastal Trail. Speaking to the assembled crowd, Ted Rhodes, President of *Citizens for the Carpinteria Bluffs*, credited Lois Sidenberg with leading the fight, before anyone else, to save the Bluffs from development, beginning in 1968 when Humble Oil wanted to build a refinery there. “Lois was a local activist, concerned with many land use issues including the proliferation of the oil and natural gas industry and its impact upon our coastline and channel waters,” he declared. “Way back in 1964, she and Campbell Grant co-founded the Carpinteria Valley Association.”

Wealthy, witty and outspoken, Lois Sidenberg was a legend in

her own time. She was a driving force in GOO (Get Oil Out), organized days after the 1969 oil spill that gushed 200,000 gallons of crude oil into the Santa Channel. For one of GOO's protests, she hired a helicopter and hovered over one of the offshore platforms, lowering a scathing banner.

As a co-founder of CVA, Lois was tireless in her efforts to preserve the Carpinteria Valley's rural character. She never hesitated to cross swords with greedy developers, corporate giants, or tiresome bureaucrats, cutting through their smooth PR hype and dense doublespeak with her acerbic wit. When confronted by an oil company official who said, “Mrs. Sidenberg, is it true you told reporters that you wanted to ‘get rid of those oil rigs?’” Lois replied, “I was misquoted! I said I wanted to get rid of those G— d--- oil rigs!”

Lois was active in CVA into her 90s, attending Board Meetings and avidly following local projects and proposals. Even after she became bedridden, visitors would find her in her large canopied bed,

surrounded by the newsletters and publications of the causes she championed. Her death in 1994 at age 93 left a gap in local environmental circles that we are all called to fill.

On July 3, 2003, on the Carpinteria Bluffs, Ted Rhodes told the crowd, “I would give anything that she could have been here today to see her legacy intact of preserving the Carpinteria Bluffs forever as open space. We truly were a Small Town with a Big Dream, and now today, thanks to Lois's early efforts, we realize the last step of that dream. By the way, one reason for selecting this date for our dedication ceremony is that tomorrow, July 4th, would have been Lois's birthday...”

In our Summer 1995 Newsletter, we wrote, “With the passing of our two co-founders, Campbell Grant in 1992 and Lois Sidenberg in 1994, the torch has been passed on to a new generation, and if you care, that means you.” ❖

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## Carnevale Update

The Coastal Commission is scheduled to hear an appeal of the proposed Carnevale project this week at their meeting in Coronado. The appeal was filed by the Carpinteria Creeks Foundation and Environmental Defense Center (EDC). The Creeks Foundation had originally appealed the approval to the City and then the Coastal Commission based on the City's failure to provide a 20' setback, as specified by the EIR. Other issues related to a fence and drainage structures constructed in the riparian area, neighborhood incompatibility (size of structure), and loss of aesthetic value/views to the large sycamores would be blocked by the residence.

For over ten years there has been a strong interest by the Foundation, neighbors and other environmentalists to protect this site due to habitat for a large number of bird species, open space preservation and creek access. The owner is still unwilling to sell the property at a fair market appraisal.

Watch the news for the results of the Coastal Commission hearing. ❖



## Contact Info:

Here is the contact info for you to make your views known. See the articles in this newsletter for details on the issues and where your input is needed most. Then do your part by sending your views to the appropriate people at the addresses listed below:

### City of Carpinteria

Attn: <name of Planner, or Council Member, etc.>  
5775 Carpinteria Avenue  
Carpinteria, CA 93013  
(805) 684-5405  
Fax: (805) 684-5304  
Web: <http://www.carpinteria.ca.us/>

### Santa Barbara County

Attn: <name of Planner, or County Supervisor, etc.>  
123 E. Anapamu St.  
Santa Barbara, CA 93101  
Web: <http://www.countyofsb.org/>

### LAFCO

Attn: Bob Braitman  
105 E. Anapamu St., Room 406  
Santa Barbara, CA 93101  
(805) 568-3391  
Fax: (805) 647-7647  
Email: [lafco@sblafco.org](mailto:lafco@sblafco.org)  
Web: <http://www.sblafco.org/>

### California Coastal Commission

South Central Coast District Office  
89 South California Street, Suite 200  
Ventura, CA 93001  
(805) 585-1800  
Fax: (805) 641-1732  
Web: <http://www.coastal.ca.gov/>

## Five Housing Myths

There has been much in the news lately regarding the high cost of housing, and what might be done about it. Often the debate is driven by those who stand to gain the most by building more. They achieve greater profit by transferring many of the costs of development (crowded roads, need for more police and fire protection, schools, inadequate water supply, decreased water quality, general lowering of quality of life) to the entire community. Many statements of "fact" are, in fact, myths used to promote development, higher density, loss of agriculture and open space. If we are to avoid being driven to overbuilding by false assumptions, then we need to debunk some of the myths that are used to justify growth.

**Myth #1: If we approve more and denser housing projects, then housing in Carpinteria will become more affordable.** The sad fact is that average local wages don't come close to meeting the requirements for housing affordability. Local home shoppers compete with people from other areas who often have greater financial resources. If you doubled the supply of houses tomorrow, this situation will still exist as long as our area remains a more desirable place to live than other alternatives.

**Myth #2: California's population is going to grow tremendously in the coming years, so Carpinteria/Summerland must supply its fair share of the needed housing.** Worldwide, there are many millions of people who would like to live here if given the opportunity. We could triple our population and not come close to accommodating the demand for affordable housing in this area. Do we want to sacrifice our area's livability in an attempt to reach an unachievable goal?

**Myth #3: Taxes will be eased by spreading the tax base.** Several studies have shown that after a certain moderate size, increasing a community's population creates an ever-increasing shortfall in ability to pay for basic services.

**Myth #4: Smart growth will preserve our quality of life, while supplying more housing.** When does smart growth end? In ten years, if we have grown 15%, are we done? If we double in size in 25 years, will that do it? Will our children be able to afford to live here? Will they want to? As we grow beyond our local resources, and import food and water from greater distances, is this smart in the long run? The fact is that any growth that doesn't address these issues is far from "smart".

**Myth #5: We must heed Sacramento's mandate for more housing, or bad things will happen.** What bad things will happen? Are they worse than the very clear loss of quality of life and increased expenses of overcrowding? How was the mandate arrived at? Was it derived from debates in the state legislature, or was it born

## The Freeway Dilemma

Unfortunately, adding a lane to a congested freeway results in a phenomena called "induced growth". When traffic is freely moving, there are a greater number of trips and the freeway can return to its congested state in a remarkably short time. How many people in Los Angeles do not visit Santa Barbara because of the traffic? Add another lane and they will all be here, temporarily. All capacity increases are growth inducing, as people notice they can drive faster, they move further from work (to get cheaper housing) or take jobs further from home.

Carpinteria is unique in that there is no parallel route to U.S. 101, or any real possibility of one.

We have to make do with 101. Any new lane is many years away. This is why we need careful study to make sure that we are making the most efficient use of the present lanes. We need to maximize flow rate. An article by Chao Chen et.al. titled "The Freeway Congestion Paradox" gives experimental data on a number one lane in Los Angeles. At 5:00 A.M. there is no congestion and a flow of 2,100 vehicles per hour (vph) at 60 mph. By 7:00 A.M. the speed has dropped to 15 mph and the flow is 1,300 vph. To efficiently use the freeway lanes speed must be maintained.

From the above referenced paper:

"Congestion forms once the density of vehicles on a freeway exceeds a critical value, after which vehicle speed and vehicle flow both drop below what they were before the onset of congestion. Proper ramp metering prevents too many vehicles from entering the freeway, avoids congestion and, paradoxically, increases both vehicle speed and flow. The double gain in terms of reduced travel time and increased flow far exceeds any improvements that could be achieved by constructing more freeway lanes."

Our freeway problem needs careful study to consider this and other possibilities. ❖



## LAFCO Approves Annexation to Water District

On May 19, Santa Barbara's Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) voted 4-1 to approve annexation of Rancho Monte Alegre into the Carpinteria Valley Water District (CVWD). Supervisor Gail Marshall was the only dissenting member, echoing CVA's position that "water means development." CVA has long maintained that the annexation project, linked to CVWD's placing of a storage tank on the ranch, was driven by the ranch owners' desire to increase the marketability of the ranch, currently for sale for \$26,000,000. The 3125-acre ranch has 39 legal parcels, but potential lot-line adjustments could increase the possible number of new houses, presently estimated at 52 by CVWD's EIR.

LAFCO establishes public policy regarding "governmental boundaries, urban patterns, the provision of public services, and jurisdictional relationships between local agencies," considering such issues as "urban sprawl, agricultural preservation, and orderly governmental boundaries." The Commission is made up of 2 County Supervisors, 2 city council members from the cities in Santa Barbara County, 2 Special District members, and 1 public member, with alternates. CVA was disappointed that the makeup of the panel making the final vote was different from

that which had listened to CVA's input at the previous meeting. It was also frustrating, after the close of the public testimony period, to be unable to rebut misinformation in the panel's discussions, including the assertion that the City of Carpinteria was "in favor of the project."

During the public hearing, members of CVA, the public, and the County's Planning and Development Department all raised serious concerns about the project. Concerns ranged from the commitment of 999 acre feet per year to the ranch in exchange for a 9 acre feet storage tank, and the magnitude of the 20-foot-wide road and bridge that CVWD will build to more remote sites on the ranch, currently inaccessible in the rainy season. Despite LAFCO's decision, CVA maintains that the Water District has been ill-advised to piggy-back this project onto its storage tank project, thereby benefiting a private entity at the cost of the general public—in terms of both money and remaining available water.

CVA will continue to track this project. Unfortunately, we fully expect that in the future, either on this project or on similar ones, we will have a clear demonstration that water means development – usually to the detriment of our community. ❖

## Is Slant Drilling Right for Carpinteria?

With new limitations on transporting oil by tanker, Venoco has set its sights on Carpinteria to drill up to 35 slant-drill oil wells. A drilling structure, which might reach to 15 stories height, will be located at the aging Carpinteria plant. Aesthetic, noise, light and pollution issues may cause tremendous impacts not just to nearby residents but to the entire South Coast.

While our city council has been quoted in the Santa Barbara New-Press as saying that oil revenues may be a financial windfall, it will be up to the residents to decide if the \$\$ (if any – it is not clear the city is entitled to any significant lease income) is worth the tradeoffs. Perhaps we should ask the people of Avila Beach how they feel about what happened to their community.

The Carpinteria plant was previously owned by Chevron and has been owned by Venoco for the last 5 years. The plant operates under an old 1960's permit that is just 3 pages long. The city has been hard pressed to enforce even the simplest of the few conditions over the years, and because the plant has been "grandfathered" in from the 60's, there is far less safety review than occurs with energy facilities in County jurisdiction. Oversight of energy facilities requires sophisticated administration of complex issues and multi-agency rules and regulations. The city has stated they will contract such oil issues to the County for the present, but this is no guarantee for the future. This is not a project that is way off in the future. The initial steps are already taking place. Venoco is asking to move an odorant facility close to the Arbol Verde neighborhood. City staff had recommended approval of this project without any CEQA review, but a small group of people pushed for environmental review, and the city legal counsel agreed. Soon the EIR will come back to the city, and the council will need to hear the voice of the community on this first important step. Please contact CVA and get involved now before it is too late – your input is important. ❖



"...the roadway segments in the study area including U.S. 101 currently operate acceptably..."

*13 fateful words... but do you believe them?*

The statement quoted above is taken from page 4.5-2 of the Lagunitas final subsequent EIR certified by the Carpinteria City Council on July 28, 2003. Once an EIR is certified, it becomes the official "truth" for all decisions involving the project.

Now how about this assertion: Since U.S. 101 is operating acceptably, it is allowable to add another 2,390 car trips per day.

*Do you believe this?*

*Four out of the five members of the Carpinteria City Council apparently do!  
(since they voted to approve the Lagunitas development)*

## Does Public Opinion Matter?

Does the Carpinteria City Council represent the constituency that voted them into office? Are they known for welcoming public comments? Do they have their own agenda? Carpinteria has recently experienced three projects that have been very controversial, and a great number of community members have reacted with negative comments. Regardless of the numbers and the outcry, the commissions and the council have voted for the projects. Furthermore, it is very difficult to make a point before a governing body. They limit amount of speaking time and sometimes subject matter for public comment, but the applicant isn't limited. Often the hearing on the project is scheduled for late hours, or the audience waits for hours to speak. Many decisions are made behind closed doors, and the public is not invited. It is difficult to be privy to these decisions. One bright spot in this controversy is that the mayor has opened his "Coffee Grinder Office" to everyone Tuesday afternoons. It is easier to talk one to one to a council member.

In recent city decisions regarding new development, these reasons were given for a vote to approve the project being considered:

- The applicant has done everything we have asked him to do.
- The council asked the applicant to change his direction and we have to support him.
- The city will be sued if we don't approve this project.
- The next project will be worse.
- We need affordable housing.
- The developer is giving the city a great amount of money.

There could have been many reasons for not allowing the projects:

- The project is too large and does not fit in the neighborhood.
- The project is too close to the creek setback.
- The project is a safety hazard.
- Prescriptive rights have established a trail through the project.
- The project has unmitigatable impacts.
- The project brings too much traffic to our highways and streets.
- The project does not comply with the city's ordinances.
- The project degrades another wetland and creek.
- My constituency does not support this project. One council member used this reason for a "no" vote.

Imagine a situation where the whole community finally agrees that "there is too much traffic on our streets, bridges, and highways", yet the City Council approves a project that allows nearly 2500 more daily car trips. Oh, wait, you don't have to imagine it... just read the "Lagunitas on the Brink" article on page 1!

Does Public Opinion Matter? CVA believes it does. Apparently, as a community we have just not found the best way to make our opinions heard. We invite you to join CVA in our ongoing efforts to study the issues, and to be heard. We need your viewpoint, energy, and commitment to our community. Use the form on the last page of this newsletter to let us know what issues you are most concerned about. ❖

## Carpinteria Valley Association

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The *Carpinteria Valley Association (CVA)* was founded in 1964, and continues its mission of providing education and advocacy on issues related to land use planning, development, and the environment in the Carpinteria Valley and the surrounding south coast region.

### Board of Directors:

Susan Allen  
Vera Bensen  
Anna Carrillo  
Al Clark  
Samantha Green  
Bob Hansen  
Dave Hill  
Roxie Lapidus  
Katie Roberts  
Royce Stauffer  
Mike Wondolowski

## A Call to Action!

The title of this newsletter is *CVAction*. The emphasis here is on the "action" part! Our hope is that in providing you with information on key projects and issues affecting the Carpinteria area, you will be motivated to take action.

We hope you see value in the work of CVA. Although we are an all-volunteer organization, we do have expenses. Please fill out the form below, and return it with your check for \$5 to join CVA. Your membership allows us to continue our work. Be sure to include your email address if you have one. Email is a very timely (and cheap) way for us to update you on important issues. We promise a low volume of messages and no spam!

In addition to money, it takes many volunteers to help CVA accomplish its work. We need volunteer help in many areas, some skilled, some not. Use the form to let us know how you might be able to help out.

You'll see on the form that CVA has an educational arm called *Carpinteria Valley Foundation (CVF)*. CVF focuses on public education on issues and on the public process. Our belief is that if the public is fully informed about important issues, and knows how and when to make their voices heard, then our public officials will know what the community wants and needs. If we don't tell them, then we get what they *think* we need! Please consider making an additional donation to CVF to help fund our educational efforts.

You can see that there are a multitude of ways for you to take action. It is up to you to help determine the future of our community. ❖



We're on the web!  
[www.silcom.com/~cva/](http://www.silcom.com/~cva/)

On our website, you can find a full-color version of this newsletter, as well as past editions!



### I want to join CVA!

- I want to join CVA! I am enclosing \$5 for my annual membership (Our annual renewal date is June 1. Thanks to all who have already renewed this year!)
- Enclosed is my contribution to support the CVA lawsuit against the Carpinteria Water District to force the preparation of an adequate EIR for the proposed annexation: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Note: Contributions to Carpinteria Valley Association are not deductible as a charitable donation for tax purposes.

**Additionally, I want to support the public education efforts of the Carpinteria Valley Foundation. Enclosed is my donation:**

- \$20 Individual     \$25 Family     \$50 Supporter     \$100 Benefactor     Other: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Note: Contributions to Carpinteria Valley Foundation are deductible as charitable donations for tax purposes.

#### I am interested in the following issues:

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Santa Barbara County planning issues                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Open field agriculture issues   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Carpinteria City planning issues                         | <input type="checkbox"/> Water issues  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> City of Carpinteria General Plan                         | <input type="checkbox"/> Affordable housing issues   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Venoco's facility / general oil development & monitoring | <input type="checkbox"/> Zoning enforcement  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Use of lands owned by the Carpinteria School District    | <input type="checkbox"/> Environmental impacts of development (e.g., traffic, parking, air quality, biological issues, etc.) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Greenhouses  |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Specific development proposal: _____                     |  |

#### I want to help! I will help on:

- Technical analysis of environmental documents
- Attending public meetings
- Telephoning and/or mailing
- Database maintenance
- Website development and maintenance

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Mail this form to us at:

Carpinteria Valley Association  
P.O. Box 27  
Carpinteria, CA 93014

*Thanks!*