Wading through the Water Conundrum

If you feel as if you are flailing about or in over your head trying to figure out the confusing and potentially-expensive water issues facing us, our September speaker will throw out a life preserver to help us understand this complex issue. Darby Fuerst, general manager of the Monterey Peninsula Water Management District (MPWMD), will talk about the hotly-debated Regional Water Project and two smaller projects developed by MPWMD, which are part of the regional proposal. While the Marina Coast Water District will build and own the desalination plant, other Peninsula cities will have very little to say about cost controls and governance, even though ratepayers will be footing the bill. In fact, water from the proposed desalination plant has been dubbed by some as “the most expensive water in the world.”

Fuerst believes that Cal Am ratepayers should have representation by MPWMD in the structure of the current plan for a desalination plant. In a July commentary in the Herald, Fuerst pointed out that the MPWMD has tried several times over the past two decades to implement major water projects. The two largest, the New Los Padres Reservoir and a desalination project in Sand City, were turned down by local voters.

At a special July meeting, the Carmel City Council voted 4-1 to authorize the mayor to sign the Regional Project’s “water purchase agreement.” [Monterey voted 4-1 not to sign because they want more say in the governance.]

Councilman Jason Burnett was the dissenting vote for Carmel, objecting to the fact that council members received the agreement at the last minute and weren’t provided with all related documents. Saying that he supports the project in general because he doesn’t see another answer, Burnett thought that, in signing this document, the city would be agreeing that the rates are “reasonable and prudent.” The concern is that Marina Coast Water District’s charges are expected to be far more “reasonable and prudent” for its own ratepayers than for residents of Carmel and other Peninsula cities. Burnett argued that, with a lack of complete information, the council couldn’t really know exactly what it was voting for. Citing the state’s threat to cut our water supply, Mayor McCloud argued that a no vote could delay the project. And, the hospitality industry, she said, is very anxious to move this plan forward. Councilman Ken Talmage expressed some reservations, but in the end went along with the majority.

“Dines Out” at Fresh Cream Restaurant

Our “Dines Out” Committee co-chairs, Mary Ellen Thomas, Barry and Kathleen Swift, have a great dinner planned for Thursday, September 23, at Fresh Cream Restaurant, NW Corner Dolores & 8th, in their new location at the Adobe Inn. Owner Steven Chesney’s venerable restaurant’s cuisine is primarily French with a California twist. Here is the outstanding menu:

❖ Crème Fraiche in Puff Pastry with Black Caviar
   First course choice of —
❖ Seasonal Soup of the day; or
❖ House Greens with Goat Cheese and Pecans
   Entrée choice of —
❖ Australian Rack of Lamb with Dijon mustard, herb bread crumbs, roasted Yukon Gold potatoes, lamb sauce; or
❖ Slow Roasted Boneless Short Ribs with roasted garlic herb potatoes, cabernet demi-glace, fresh horseradish; or
❖ Pan Roasted Natural Boneless Chicken Breast with truffle potatoes, local chanterelle mushrooms, roasted garlic and marjoram scented jus; or
❖ Loch Duart Seared Salmon with Yukon Gold potatoes and local artichokes, pancetta bacon, balsamic butter and Riesling beurre blanc and fresh tarragon; or
❖ Fresh Alaskan Sauteed Halibut with chive potatoes, sweet onion sauce, cabernet reduction and infused oil

Continued on page 4

www.carmelresidents.org ~ carmelresidents@gmail.com
EDITORIAL

Carmel’s lack of action is in stark contrast to Hewlett Packard’s

Should our City Council learn a lesson from corporate America? Hewlett-Packard’s CEO Mark Hurd resigned his post 38 days after receipt of letter from a female contractor alleging sexual harassment. According to the Wall Street Journal, after hiring an outside law firm to investigate, Hewlett Packard’s general counsel said Hurd didn’t violate the company’s sexual-harassment policy but that he demonstrated “a profound lack of judgment.”

Nearly two years after Carmel’s Human Resources Director Jane Miller sent an October, 2008, letter to City Council members alerting them to the workplace situation at City Hall, no action whatsoever has been taken to rectify the problems. Despite public outrage, Mr. Guillen remains on the job; and from most reports, employee morale is at rock bottom.

In many ways, allegations against Guillen—which the city’s insurance carrier found serious enough to award Miller $600,000—are broader and more serious than the “profound lack of judgment” which unseated Mr. Hurd. Implicit in the decision to settle the Miller case is the insurance carrier’s concern that to proceed to trial opened the possibility of a larger award for damages in a verdict against the city. In all likelihood, the city feared further potential damaging testimony from city employees, past and present.

A March CRA News editorial discussed serious problems at City Hall related to the Miller lawsuit, saying in part, “The mayor and council must be held accountable for this situation, because they have direct responsibility for the city administrator and his actions.”

Whether Mr. Guillen resigns, is fired or remains on the job, problems remain.

We are convinced that our city’s lack of openness and transparency has contributed to the scandal.

While released documents may provide some answers, questions will remain: Why has the City Council taken no action against Guillen in spite of overwhelming evidence in the Miller case? Aside from monetary considerations, are there other factors causing their reluctance to act? How will existing harassment, management, and oversight policies change to address the problems? And, more importantly, who will finally enforce them?

The question of what long-range costs the city will bear for the tragic loss of employee morale and damage to its once-stellar reputation may never be answered.

Our March editorial suggested that some city employees “now view the city administrator’s authority as compromised, lacking the ability to motivate or lead, rendering him ineffectual as a supervisor.” Mr. Guillen’s widely-known conduct and management style has brought shame to Carmel, created an unhealthy work environment and drained our city of valuable, talented employees.

There can be a positive side to this crisis, however, if city officials will curtail their tendency to circle the wagons and instead deal with these serious issues and begin the necessary steps to rebuild employee morale and public trust. If corporate America can move forward decisively, why can’t our city?
At the public meetings held for the purpose of adopting the 2010-2011 city budget, villagers weighed in on what was and was not important to them for inclusion in the budget. Often this was a frustrating experience. Everything that we want cannot be accommodated in today’s tough economic times; and what some want can conflict with the wishes of others. However you cut it, the City Council must not let budgetary constraints hurt our village character. Money still must be budgeted for removing dead trees, planting new ones, repairing and cleaning downtown sidewalks, patching pot holes, pulling weeds and collecting street trash. But is this being done effectively?

Tom Parks, a board member of both the Carmel Public Library Foundation and the Carmel Residents Association, strolled past the Park Branch Library and was dismayed by the unkempt landscaping at that important public building. We see other examples of seediness as we walk through the neighborhoods. The northeast corner of San Carlos and 13th is an example. I have removed most of the easy-to-pull milk weeds, but the others demand a weed whacker or stronger arms with a hoe.

In an effort to make the northwest corner of San Carlos and 13th more attractive, my neighbor children, Henry and Megan, and I pull weeds, pick up the beer bottles and papers thrown from passing cars, and our gardener keeps it clear of ivy. The city’s oak trees are growing faster and healthier without the ivy choking and robbing them of winter storm water. Now our neighbors, the city and our visitors can take pleasure in the pretty little “San Carlos Park.”

Ken White, former Carmel mayor and Carmel Residents Association board member, reported at our last board meeting that he recently walked past a pile of smelly garbage outside a bar on Lincoln. While there is nothing that Ken or any of us can do to remove that mess, we can report it, and others like it, to the city administrator. In these austere times money must still be set aside in the budget to keep Carmel sidewalks clean.

Without extreme diligence, Carmel could slip into shoddiness, which would hurt tourism. Who wants to visit a town which is not well maintained? Perhaps it is time to call for citizen action throughout the city to ensure that we put forward our best face not just to visitors but to ourselves.

For years, members of the Friends of Carmel Forest, notably Greg D’Ambrosio and Steve Brooks, have put their muscle to pulling non-native Genista and other invasive plants from Mission Trails Nature Preserve and Forest Hill Park. And 18 years old and still going strong is the Carmel Residents Association beach cleanup. The CRA has contributed 13,334 hours as of the June, 2010 cleanup. Using the scale of $10/hr., which is what the city pays for laborers, this translates into a donation to the city of $133,340. These commendable efforts by forest and beach volunteers have saved the city countless hours of manpower and thousands of dollars.

Working together, we can help the city fulfill its obligation to keep our downtown and neighborhoods safe, clean and attractive and, in so doing, continue to take pride in this magnificent place we call home.
Arbor Day event planned for October

An Arbor Day Event at Carmel's Sunset Center will feature Jim Rieser of Jim Rieser Art Gallery on Dolores Street, speaking on The Iconic Trees of Carmel—Monterey Pine and Monterey Cypress.

Cosponsored by the Carmel Forest and Beach Commission and Friends of Carmel Forest, the program will be held in Carpenter Hall on Sunday, Oct. 17, from 2 to 4 p.m.

Local artists will be invited to submit paintings and photographs of pine or cypress, which will be judged by the Carmel Art Association and the Center for Photographic Art. A $250 prize will be awarded to the best painting and the best photograph. The winning art will be on display during the afternoon program.

Refreshments will be served and the event is free and open to the public. Artists are asked to drop off their original artwork from 9 to 10 a.m. on Sunday, Oct. 17 at Sunset Center's Carpenter Hall. Artwork can be picked up the same day at 4:30 p.m. For more information, e-mail or call Barbara Livingston at barbaratlivingston@earthlink.net or 626-1610.

The above cartoon was drawn in honor of the Arbor Day program by Dennis the Menace Sunday cartoonist Ron Ferdinand. His interest in and appreciation for Carmel's trees is greatly appreciated.

Thanks to the Newsletter Mailing Committee

For years, Shirley Humann and her mailing group—Nina Bayer, Alison Cathro, Brie Tripp and Sally Williams, have diligently gathered once a month to fold, sticker, label, stamp and mail the CRA News. And, in addition to the mailing, Shirley has had the job of buying the stickers and stamps, picking up the newsletters and delivering them to the Post Office.

Starting in September, Shirley has decided to enjoy a well-earned retirement. Betty Dalsemer, who is in charge of distribution of newsletters at the Post Office, will take over the mailing.

On behalf of all CRA members, three cheers to Shirley and her hard-working committee!

“Dines Out” at Fresh Cream
Continued from page 1

Dessert choice of —
❖ Grand Marnier Soufflé; or
❖ Madagascar Vanilla Brulée; or
❖ Sac au Chocolat w/Espresso Milk Shake; or
❖ Assorted Sorbets
❖ Coffee or Tea

House red or white wine will be available at $6 per glass (tax included), plus tip.

Please send a $39/person check, payable to CRA, with your entrée choice and your phone number, to arrive no later than Monday, Sept. 20, to Kathleen and Barry Swift, P.O. Box AC, Carmel, CA 93921. The price includes tax and tip.

You will be notified if you have been placed on the waiting list. If you reserve space and must cancel, please call Kathleen or Barry at 625-1426 so your place can be given to someone else.

Please see the CRA’s web site for the year’s schedule of meetings and events.

www.carmelresidents.org

Council meeting broadcast Sunday after meeting, 8 a.m. - noon, Channel 26.

Statewide Coastal Cleanup

The CRA will not hold a regular Beach Cleanup in September. The Statewide Coastal Cleanup will take place Sept. 25 from 9 to noon on many Monterey County beaches. Please check local papers for details.
A driving force—a man of ideas

It was a foggy Saturday morning in July (surprise?) when Clayton Anderson met us at his cottage door. We sat at the dining table with pen, paper, coffee and cookies (lemon and chocolate). Clayton, a tall man with a smile that would make even a curmudgeon think twice, was welcoming and forthcoming. We had expected nothing less.

When we speak of Carmel residents, we in the Carmel Residents Association naturally think of those folks who have been involved in civic affairs. So we've come to you today because you've been a quiet but driving force on behalf of this small village. When did you first come to Carmel?

I first saw Carmel when I attended the famous “Crosby” tournament in the 70's. I met a lady here, we dated and I married her in 1984—a great year for me. I moved to Carmel and subsequently helped found the Carmel Residents Association along with a group of citizens who loved this little village.

What was the character of the town when you first arrived? And who was the mayor at the time?

Charlotte Townsend was mayor at that time. We were mostly full-time residents then; unlike these days. We looked in on our neighbors; we threw block parties, put together rummage sales. And of course it seemed that everybody knew everybody.

You're from the Pacific Northwest. And what was your work, your profession?

Well, I lived in Washington, DC for several years. I worked for the Federal Government, Department of the Interior. I'm proud to say that I helped establish the Job Corp. I was and am an environmentalist, working for the Feds and the states of Washington and Oregon. Oh yes, I designed the emblem for the Bureau of Land Management.

You're a political activist both in governance and the environment. Those are hot button issues these days. Let we forget, you even made a bid for mayor.

I feel that as citizens of this village and this country, and the world for that matter, we have an obligation to do our share to maintain the beauty of the land and the environment. That's one of the reasons I founded the Friends of the Forest in 1990. I'm happy to say it's been a success, bringing awareness of Carmel's natural beauty. And yes, I did make a run for mayor. I lost to Jean Grace.

You've just been presented a prestigious award for your work in the environmental field. And let's not forget that you're the past president of CRA and hold the coveted Citizen of the Year Award from Carmel Residents Association.

Yes. The Service to Community Award from the University of Puget Sound. And I'm gratified to have been presented with the “Citizen of the Year” award.

As a Carmel resident, you established the Beach Cleanup program several years ago—in 1992. And it's still going strong. On average, how many volunteers come out on Saturday mornings?

We meet once a month. Between thirty and forty folks meet on the beach. Over the years of its existence we've contributed over 13,000 hours of community service in cleaning Carmel Beach.

Any thoughts on the present city administration? Is Carmel moving in a positive direction even with budget cuts that all cities are wringing hands over these days?

I would like to see less micro-management of city departments by City Hall. But I'm pleased with Jason Burnett's election.

I think he has already made a positive difference in the openness of city government.

You have a wife. She's a member of CRA and the editor of this publication. Do you think she'll approve of this interview? After all, she owns a blue pencil.

(A hearty laugh) She's the best thing that ever happened to me. Except when she's working on the newsletter—then it's all business and I stay out of her way. Well, most of the time.

Have we missed something? Anything else you'd like to add?

Today there are over 600 members of Carmel Residents Association. The CRA has become a force for maintaining the quality of life, the community character, the culture and the beauty of Carmel-by-the-Sea. I think we can all be very proud of that.

Thanks, Clayton. CRA is proud of you. And Carmel is a better place because of you and others who have contributed so much.
Another perfect Fiesta in the Forest!

As always, CRA’s popular twilight BBQ was a smashing success! Because of space constraints, more details will be printed in the Oct. CRA News. For now, enormous thanks to event chairs Jane Diamond and Tony Diamond and to the many volunteers for a job well done.

DID YOU KNOW?

Why tour buses aren’t found on Ocean Avenue?

Thanks to long-time Carmel Residents Association member Harriet Shanner, we obtained an article written in 1978 by the late Arthur Strasburger, Jr., chairman of Old Carmel. The group, widely seen as the predecessor of Carmel Residents Association, was formed according to Strasburger “in frustration—from a feeling that the powers-that-be in Carmel (government and non-government bodies) did not always have the wishes and needs of Carmel’s 5,000 residents in mind when decisions were made ... to save what is left of Carmel to save.”

Strasburger noted that, in his opinion, the group’s most important accomplishment was the tour bus ordinance. Put together by an ad hoc committee made up of five Old Carmel members, the ordinance required tour buses to unload their passengers “close to but not really visible from Ocean Avenue,” so that they would not dominate the business district during the summer as they previously had.

The system which resulted from this ordinance, with buses unloading on Junipero on the east side of Carmel Plaza, remains in place today. The only difference is that they now have to pay to park.

New CRA officers

The Carmel Residents Association Board of Directors has elected officers for the coming year. Barbara Livingston will serve a second term as president; Dick Flower will take the post of vice president; Kathy Fredrickson will be secretary; and Jim Emery will serve another term as treasurer.

The CRA Board wishes to assure our members that we do not sell, trade, lend or in any other way share our mailing list with any organization or company. This list is held in the strictest confidence for our organization’s use only.
Carmel-by-the-Sea, long thought to be immune from the budgetary woes of ordinary cities, has found that it too is facing a structural problem of expenses rising faster than revenues. In June, the City Council adopted a budget which is balanced by taking a half million dollars from reserves. Had the Forest Theater renovation not been put on hold and several vacant positions left unfilled, the deficit would have been twice that much.

Warned over a decade ago by then City Administrator Jere Kersnar that without a significant new revenue stream Carmel was heading for serious budgetary problems, the City Council has finally agreed to seriously address this shortfall.

Carmel Residents Association’s Budget Committee* Chair Jim Emery made substantive recommendations to the City Council at its June 16 workshop, which are summarized below:

• There is a consensus that the city’s financial structural problems cannot be dealt with by drawing on reserves. The problems require serious attention to reducing expenditures and finding new sources of long-term revenue.

• The city should defer all major capital projects, most notably the Forest Theater renovation. Maintenance expenditures should be limited, but not in cases which would jeopardize public safety or result in substantially greater future expenses because of the continuing decay of our infrastructure. Tight constraints on hiring and pay increases should be established.

• An increase of 1 or 2 percent in the Transient Occupancy Tax (TOT) should be instituted, not merely as a stopgap measure during our current financial difficulties, but as a permanent revenue increment. There is little evidence that a modest increase in the TOT would have a measurable effect on demand.

• Paid parking could provide a promising source of significant new revenue. The city can draw on the 18-month parking study done a decade ago by a widely representative group of employees, citizens and business people. Parking fees offer the dual advantage of requiring only a majority vote of the council, while providing the city all of the new revenue.

• Street maintenance is a serious problem. Over the years we have been spending considerably less than the amount recommended in a professional study. The current budget relies solely on grant funds that cannot responsibly deal with the growing deterioration of our streets, resulting in a far greater cost in the future. One immediate step would be to allocate all of the Truck Impact Fees to street maintenance.

• There is a growing recognition throughout the state that the current levels of pensions and other post-employment expenses for public employees are not sustainable. The city must take early steps to contain the projected growth in these costs (e.g., through renegotiating retirement benefits, a two-tier wage policy, force reductions, furlough or contracting out selected services). Any manpower reductions should explicitly recognize the need for corresponding service reductions.

• Sunset Center remains a serious cost to the city, with no obvious path to significantly relieve the current level of expenses. Attention should be paid to finding imaginative ways of mitigating the burden, or gaining greater benefits from the lightly-used facilities, for example, by offering half-price tickets on the day of a performance, or allocating idle space to worthy nonprofit organizations that cannot afford to pay the full cost.

We believe that steps should be taken immediately to consolidate Carmel voting with the state, county, and other cities. The current practice of having a separate vote is expensive, inconvenient, discourages wider voter participation, and raises potential added security problems.

• We believe that steps should be taken immediately to consolidate Carmel voting with the state, county, and other cities. The current practice of having a separate vote is expensive, inconvenient, discourages wider voter participation, and raises potential added security problems. [The item was placed on the August council agenda but postponed at the last minute and is now scheduled for the Sept. 14 meeting, after our press deadline.]

• Legal and post-employment agreements remain a serious drain on city resources. [See editorial on page 2.] It is essential that the costs be confronted and steps taken to reduce them.

• The 2010-11 budget should take account of changes expected from any consolidations of services with other peninsula cities.

* Other CRA Budget Committee members are Betty Dalsemer, Dick Dalsemer, Greg D’Ambrosio, Richard Flower, Skip Lloyd, Monte Miller and Barry Swift.
Letter from Art Association

On behalf of the Carmel Art Association Board of Directors and our friends and supporters, we want to thank you for your recognition. So many times the long established businesses are taken for granted, and for your group to show your appreciation with this award [Certificate of Appreciation presented at April, 2010, CRA meeting] means a lot to our organization.

We continue to honor our original mission statement to bring the artists and the people together.

We will place this certificate in public view with pride. Thank you once again.

Susan Klusmire, Director

Carmel Beach Fire Rules

The city has a nice hand-out listing the rules for fires on Carmel Beach—a helpful reminder for all of us.

1. Fires are permitted only south of 10th Avenue.
2. All fires must be extinguished by 10 p.m.
3. No fires larger than 3’ x 3’ x 3’.
4. All fires must be at least 25 feet from the slopes.
5. Do not burn trash or any wood containing nails or sharp objects.
6. Extinguish fires with water, not sand.
7. Leave the coals open and visible to pedestrians.
8. Do not throw items such as firewood, chairs, barbecues, etc. down or over the beach bluffs.

[At the August Forest and Beach Commission meeting, former commissioner Steve Brooks pointed out that allowing fires to burn out on their own is preferable to putting them out with water because the coals burn to white ash, leaving less visible residue on the sand. City Forester Mike Branson plans to amend the above rules to incorporate this idea.]

Barbara Livingston writes, “An exciting new shop has opened in the Stonehouse Terrace, west side of San Carlos, south of 7th—Eco Carmel, Your Source for Green Living and Natural Health. Kristi Reimers, proprietor, is the daughter of Gunnar Reimers and niece of Niels Reimers, owners of Stonehouse Terrace.

“All the green products in the shop are made of sustainable, non-toxic materials. You can find paint, baby clothes, pet accessories, children’s school and art supplies, electric kitchen composters, railroad tie benches, recycled glassware, a gizmo that measures the electric output of all lamps and electric appliances, wondrous table and floor lamps, mattresses and bed linens, household cleaning products, skin products and much more.

“Stop by to meet Kristi and revel in the incredible variety of products which she has assembled for your use or as gifts for friends of both sexes and any age.”

What is CRA all about?

The Carmel Residents Association is committed to the protection and enrichment of the traditional quality of life in Carmel-by-the-Sea and the preservation of its heritage and natural beauty through education, community activities and advocacy.