

# Carmel Residents Association History

## A Retrospective

by Beth Wright

Retrospection is, of course, looking back, which most of us do with nostalgia, but sometimes reluctantly, at mistakes made or goals unrealized. However, in approaching this 20th anniversary year of the founding of the Carmel Residents Association, we the members can take pride in what we've done to protect the quality of life in our one-mile-square village and also to reach out to the surrounding community.

Back to the beginning—

The election of a celebrity mayor, Clint Eastwood, in April, 1986, produced overwhelming media attention which impacted our village. Immediately, many changes were afoot, starting with the firing of the Planning Commission. Because of the charisma of our new mayor, residents were unable to get into packed council meetings and so were prevented from hearing what was going on inside.

A nucleus of residents, alarmed at some of the pending proposals to change the General Plan and sell off city property, joined together and printed *Blue Papers*, which they distributed at the Post Office. These were simple fliers on blue paper, hand-printed in calligraphy by architect Robert Stephenson, with notices of meetings and council agendas. Fortunately, Jim Wright had been retained on the City Council and Marietta "Sandy" Swain,\* former Planning Commission chair, and businessman and former City Councilman Mike Brown shared our desire to make sure the public was informed and were willing to support us, confirm our facts and edit for accuracy.

This group, Concerned Carmel Citizens, was the precursor to the Carmel Residents Association. Among those first volunteers were the late and totally-committed Jane Mayer\* and Anne Woolworth,\* along with June Hardy, Barbara Brooks and myself, Beth Wright. We were particularly lucky to interest Skip Lloyd in the happenings that kindled passion in those early days, who in turn asked J.S.

"Jim" Holliday\* to join the group along with Dr. Ben Heller\* and retired Judge Gordon Campbell.\* And, we were fortunate to have Jim and Skip serve in succession as CRA presidents. Our overriding goals were to preserve Carmel's village character and quality of life, develop creative solutions to the problems related to the influx of tourists and heightened commercialization and to advance the common interests of residents, the business community and property owners.

The first meeting was at Jane Mayer's house with an initial group of some 35 diverse members of the community who supported our efforts. This included the Concerned Citizens, Robert Campbell,\* Charlotte Townsend, Dale Hekhuis, Howard Nieman,\* Noel Mapstead, Fenn\* and Joan Horton, Phil\* and Janice O'Berg, Joyce Stevens, Charlotte Anderson and business com-

munity members Mike Brown, Howard Brunn and Bob Leidig. At Jane's request, Howard Nieman chaired the first meeting but subsequently resigned when appointed to the Mayor's Advisory Committee.

The group's indomitable spirit showed up clearly and loudly. A steering committee, which first met in April, 1987, was selected to draw up the bylaws, outline goals and start a membership campaign. Members were Dale Hekhuis, Ben Heller, J.S. "Jim" Holliday, Francis "Skip" Lloyd, Jane Mayer, Howard Nieman, Joyce Stevens and Richard Tourangeau. Attorneys Lloyd and Tourangeau agreed to write the bylaws *pro bono*.

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Margaret Mead

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The first step was to make ourselves and our efforts known. We turned to old friends and made new ones. Among those who stand out in my mind were Sam Farr, Steve Brooks, David Maradei, Peggy Purchase, Marjorie Montelius,\* Lani Fremier, Bill Bates and Dorothy Lillard.

Our original membership list was based upon supporters of Councilman Jim Wright, who either by letters or phone calls had assured him that he was expressing their views at the City Council. Old Carmel disbanded and their members joined CRA and donated the balance of their account to us through the efforts of Harriet Shanner, acting chair of their organization.

As our voices were heard at town meetings and via letters, we attracted more dedicated volunteers and none more so than Linda and Clayton Anderson, who joined about a year later after they had led a dramatic effort to stop major construction at Vista Lobos and organized the Northeast Neighbors.

And to all the others who have aligned themselves with this endeavor throughout the years—my congratulations. What a great job we have all done to make CRA an organization of stature in Carmel with projects such as the Beach Cleanup, the Citizen of the Year Celebration, a major contribution of over \$26,000 to the library, public forums, timely monthly meetings and a web site.

In many ways our organization embodies Margaret Mead's famous quote: "Never doubt that a small group of committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has."

Most importantly the CRA is ongoing and strongly aware that it requires constant vigilance to maintain our way of life and the very culture and natural beauty that have made it possible.

[Beth Wright is a founding member, former president and current board member of the Carmel Residents Association. She currently serves on the committee planning CRA's 20th anniversary celebration.]

\* Deceased

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