



PRESIDENT'S LETTER

EVERYONE NEEDS AN ADVOCATE

by Luana Conley

If the pandemic and enforced isolation have taught us one thing, it's that we all need someone on our side in the face of adversity. A particularly vulnerable population are those who have finally won a scarce apartment in a rent-subsidized development. They will often suffer in silence from poor management for fear of being labeled troublemakers.

The CVA's weekly e-bulletin recently circulated a memo describing conditions at Carmel Valley Village's Rippling River, where the residents are disabled, mobility-impaired, and/or low-income seniors. A list collected by the Residents Association president, Sharon Miles, included a lack of maintenance, such as changing ceiling light bulbs, not considered emergency; an office that was not returning calls, including those regarding safety issues; confiscation of resident property, such as planters, without reasons given; arbitrary towing of cars; a lack of grounds maintenance; and a general absence of communication. After the e-bulletin post, several local readers who have friends among the residents corroborated the complaints and added incidents they have witnessed of abusive treatment by management.

In pre-COVID days, the Residents Association held well-attended monthly meetings where neighbors could share problems and plan get-togethers like bingo, music nights, BBQs, and potlucks. With community spaces locked down, the residents' support system is severely

compromised. They are very compassionate and helpful toward their neighbors when they are aware there is need. But in isolation, problems arise that could be easily solved with a little bit of outside attention.

Long before the pandemic shutdown, Rippling River management imposed a \$50 deposit for residents to use the community room; blocked access to the pool table and table tennis; removed the donated library books; removed therapeutic exercise equipment that was donated by the CV community; limited access to the crafts room; removed residents' computers from the community room without maintaining donated replacements; locked the community room and mailroom at random times; cancelled resident events such as bingo, movie nights, open mic, and monthly birthday parties. Tenants were refused permission to hold sing-a-longs around the donated piano. The little "sharing table" maintained by residents was removed. Their vegetable garden area was rendered off-limits by removal of outdoor seating and a shade, creating a tripping hazard with an open trench, and water and heat temperatures set below state standards for safety and comfort in public spaces.



Garden area maintained by residents.

Photo by Luana Conley



Priscilla Walton

2021 More Relief than Joy

Happy New Year! As 2020 leaves and we welcome in 2021, we say these words with more of a sense of relief than joy.

By any standards, 2020 was an awful year. Yet, even so, last year did highlight some things for which we can be proud.

First and foremost, as a community we stood together through the COVID crisis. We all understood the devastating impact that the pandemic had on our residents and local businesses, and most of us did what we could to help each other through it and to support our local businesses by making safe transactions locally to try to reduce the economic hardships facing both the businesses and their employees.

We are, however, saddened by those few businesses that have not followed the regulations laid down by the Monterey County Health Department. We must continue to protect one another from the ravages of this disease so that we can survive as a community.

CVA members should also be proud of the way you continued to support our work on behalf of the community through the worst of times. **Thank you all for the wonderful financial support you have given us during 2020.** Your generosity helped us meet out matching grant goals and pay our legal bills.

I wish I could say that we don't anticipate more legal costs in 2021. But, unfortunately, as we enter the new year, we are forced to continue to work on several fronts at once. The Rancho Canada litigation drags on. The appeal has not yet reached the court because of the backlog of cases from the impact of COVID on the court system.

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President's Letter, continued from Pg. 1

In addition, we have had to respond to a second Revised Rancho Canada Draft Environmental Impact Report, which is worse than the first Revised EIR, that we are already fighting in court. This ongoing fight will continue to be costly, and the sad fact is that if the Monterey County Supervisors had only followed the laws and regulations that exist, none of this would have been necessary.

We are also closely monitoring the Agha/PLN990274, Vista Nadura LLC and Nader Agha Project on 8767 Carmel Valley Road. You can find the CVA letter opposing this application on our website. This lovely acreage near Carmel Valley Manor must be protected. Fortunately, CVA and the county staff agreed on the recommendation to deem the project application as incomplete. The county board of supervisors voted 5-0 to support the staff recommendation.

September Ranch will be coming on line in the next year. Some of you remember that we lost the battle to stop this development in 2010. But we were able to require 95 conditions be placed on the development. We are now monitoring that development by an international LLC to ensure that all of the conditions are met.

Sadly, the Save Open Space organization was not able to secure the funding to purchase the Del Fino property that you all know as the Carmel Valley Village airport. However, the upside is that the 24 homes allocated to that property in the Carmel Valley Master Plan will not be built there. Instead, the property will be used to grow plants and trees for Griggs Nursery. The new owner has also shown a willingness to work with community members to retain walking and dog paths, along with local historical uses such as Santa's Fly In.

The next draft of the Vacation Rental Ordinance will come back some time in February. Fears are justified that pressures for these types of rentals may increase after COVID. We will be monitoring this situation closely. CVA engaged in a count of the existing visitor-serving units, which are what vacation rentals are. We have determined that there are only 37 new visitor-serving units left to be permitted in Carmel Valley east of Via Majorca under the existing cap of 57 in the Carmel Valley Master Plan. The county has not yet subtracted from the cap the additional units built at Carmel Valley Ranch and

Bernardus Lodge. There are still 175 visitor-serving units on the books west of Via Majorca. These were part of the original Rancho Canada Hotel project proposed by Nick Lombardo. CVA has disputed these and has been asking the county to remove them for the last six years. We will continue this fight as well.

COVID is also exerting local pressures to develop more housing as people flee the urban Bay Area to work from home and telecommute from pleasant rural country locations such as Carmel Valley. A potential effect may be to turn a number of homes being used for vacation rentals into long-term residential units. This is a positive outcome. However, it exacerbates the gap between affordable housing for our local population and may result in more high-end homes for the wealthy. CVA will work to ensure that new housing permitted under the cap of 190 new units, which we negotiated as part of the Carmel Valley Master Plan update, be used as much as possible for affordable housing.

So, there is much to do in the coming year. But we know that with your continued support, our community will come together once again to help one another, and that as we do, we will also help ensure that we work together to protect what makes Carmel Valley so special. If we do, 2021 will indeed be a far happier new year! Thank you!

Advocate, continued from Pg. 1

We can help assure that these amenities of Rippling River are restored after the COVID shutdown by connecting with the community advocacy group, Friends of Rippling River (FORR). FORR was established in 2004 and helped residents save the development from being demolished. Before COVID, FORR coordinated educational, entertaining, and informative programs. FORR continues to act on residents' behalf when requested regarding unfair eviction notices and safety and maintenance issues, and it manages charitable funding in partnership with the Monterey County Action Council. If you would like to help, please contact FORR at 831-659-4958 to get background information, and be matched with a resident. Helping others and staying connected is the best way to prevent one's own isolation.

Luana Conley leads the FORR action group.

Condor Population Reviving After 2020 Fires

by Carolyn Rice

Sharp-eyed Carmel Valley residents occasionally glimpse a majestic California condor with a 9.5-foot wing span soaring above the higher elevations of the valley. Kelly Sorenson, executive director of the Ventana Wildlife Society (VWS), said 35 percent of the Central California birds are tracked by the global positioning systems which report their forays into Carmel Valley, although the birds are more likely to be spotted in Big Sur and the Pinnacles. "They are expanding their region," Sorenson noted. Although none of the condors nest in the valley at this time, he expects to see this happen in the future as the flock increases. Sometimes golden eagles, which have two-foot shorter wing spans, or turkey vultures are confused with the condors which have been spotted in Garland Park, at Point Lobos, at Inspiration Point, and in the Preserve and other high elevations.

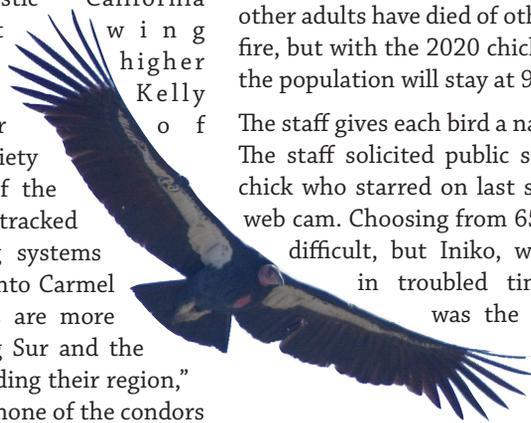
With the species near extinction in 1985, only about ten birds survived in the wild. The remaining condors were captured to raise in captivity to try to save the species, with the VWS beginning its condor program about 20 years ago. After that, the Central Coast condor population increased to 101. But the condors experienced a significant setback in late August 2020 when hit by the Dolan Fire, resulting in a ten-percent reduction of the flock. "The fire burned at night, and they were caught unaware while roosting," said Sorenson, noting that the loss of the birds was upsetting to staff. "It's emotional," he added. Nine adults went

missing and two chicks perished, reducing the population to 92. The current population is still being counted, but Sorenson said a few other adults have died of other causes since the fire, but with the 2020 chick release it appears the population will stay at 92 or close to that.

The staff gives each bird a name and biography. The staff solicited public suggestions for the chick who starred on last summer's VWS live web cam. Choosing from 650 suggestions was difficult, but Iniko, which means "born in troubled times" in Nigerian, was the pick. The winning suggestion came from a Monterey Peninsula woman who wanted to remain anonymous.

A privately owned Carmel Valley conservancy not connected to VWS is called the Conservancy for the Range of the Condors. Don Gruber, the executive director for the conservancy, said the 300 acres of open space are located far into the valley, with steep hills covered with chaparral and oaks. Besides increasing the fly-over range for the condors, the conservancy provides space for mountain lions, bears, bobcats, and other native animal species to thrive. From the conservancy property, a hiker can view distant Gabilan mountains and the Los Padres at Anastatia Canyon. The Carmel, River, and Dolan fires all threatened the conservancy, with fire coming within two miles of it, Gruber said. Cal Fire cut a 60-foot-wide swath for one mile on the property, doing a good job of preserving trees.

Gruber offers hiking tours on the Range of the Condors. Please call him at 831-238-2787 to arrange for a guided tour.



CARMEL VALLEY

Angel Project

"2020 STYLE" SUCCESSFUL

by Sandy Schachter

Let no one say that Valley residents are not creative in the face of a challenge. The angels took flight again this past holiday season as the Carmel Valley Angel Project, under the direction of board president Christine Williams, successfully accomplished its mission in spite of the difficulties encountered with the pandemic.

The traditional Community Thanksgiving Dinner, organized as a drive-through event by appointment, served 450 meals, many more than the usual number. Many thanks go out to chefs Michael Jones and Jerome Viel, the Carmel Valley Community Youth Center, and all the volunteers who helped make this event a success.

The Angel Store, traditionally a "store" where families needing some extra help during the holidays can choose clothing and gifts, was also transformed into a drive-through event in December, with parents making appointments to pick up stockings full of goodies for their children under 18. Sixty-four families, including 163 children, were served. Residents of Rippling River also woke up Christmas morning with gift bags on their doorknobs. The Angel Project board is grateful to Our Lady of Mt. Carmel church, Father Dennis, and the church board for continuing to make the gift distribution possible there and to the Carmel Valley Recreation and Park District for providing access for storage of supplies and gifts each year.

Donors to the project should feel great satisfaction in knowing they took part in making the season brighter for deserving Valley residents.



Angel Project volunteers.
Photo by Christine Williams

CVA BOARD ELECTION

It is time to elect the CVA Board of Directors for 2021.

The slate is as follows:

CONTINUING BOARD MEMBERS:

- Rick Manning
- Marlene Martin
- Mibs McCarthy
- Priscilla Walton

NOMINATED BOARD MEMBERS:

- Marianne Gawain
- John Heyl

Any CVA member in good standing may nominate other candidates by gathering 15 member signatures and submitting them by February 21st. If other candidates are submitted, ballots will be sent out by e-mail (or mailed, on request) by March 1st, with votes due back by March 14th. If there are no new petition candidates, the slate will automatically be appointed. Board terms begin on April 1 and last for three years. The results will be announced in the CVA e-bulletin.



Santa Fly-In TRADITION CONTINUES

Story and photos by Danielle Carlson



Ella De Beukelaer, age 8, virtually meeting with Santa and Mrs. Claus

With the current pandemic and the local airstrip in the process of being sold, the Carmel Valley Community Youth Center (CVCYC) knew they were going to have to get creative with how to celebrate the 62nd annual Carmel Valley Santa's Fly-In. The helicopter, parade, photos with Santa and Mrs. Claus, yummy food, and fun festivities the community is used to couldn't safely happen, so what could they do? Board members Josh Stratton & Danielle Carlson came up with the idea of an Elf Cam & Santa Cam: a socially distant and COVID-safe way for all to interact with Mr. and Mrs. Claus, unofficially dubbed the Un-Fly-In. CVCYC also got in touch with retired Carmel Valley

Fire volunteer Brent Buche, who drove Santa and Mrs. Claus through the Village in a vintage Carmel Valley fire truck as a nod to days when Santa used to deliver gifts to Valley residents on Christmas Eve.

On December 12th at 10 a.m., Santa and Mrs. Claus boarded the fire truck and toured the Village for two hours while being live-streamed via Elf Cam. Once the tour was over, Santa and Mrs. Claus were dropped off at the CVCYC event hall, where they Zoom video chatted (free of charge) via Santa Cam with all the good little children. One little girl called in all the way from Mississippi! The question asked by most wide-eyed believers was, "Besides candy, what do reindeer and elves eat?"

Aside from some bandwidth issues during the Elf Cam stream, the whole event went smoothly, all thanks to the volunteer board members of the CVCYC. Big thanks to third-generation volunteer Ashley Alto for tirelessly assisting with moderating the webinar and getting the word out about the Un-Fly-In through the new CVCYC e-newsletter. The success of the Un-Fly-In opens new doors for Zoom-hosted community events as we continue to move through the new and challenging socially distant world.

The Carmel Valley Community Youth Center built a hall in 1952, added a public pool in 1964, and is a volunteer-run 501(c)(3) non-profit organization doing all it can to stay an important part of our community during this pandemic. Please consider a tax-deductible donation; your support is



Michael Jones, Patricia Porter Taylor, and Jerome Viel - Two chefs and a lead volunteer. Photo by Christine Williams

greatly appreciated. Your donations go directly toward hosting events that keep the community together, such as the Santa's Fly-In. For more information, please visit www.cvcyc.org, and sign up for the mailing list to stay informed about upcoming events.

Special thanks to Griggs Nursery owners Ken and Catherine Griggs, who after purchasing the airstrip have offered to provide landing and parade space for the 63rd annual Carmel Valley Santa's Fly-In in 2021 and beyond. The CVCYC remains hopeful and looks forward to seeing you there and at all of their upcoming events!

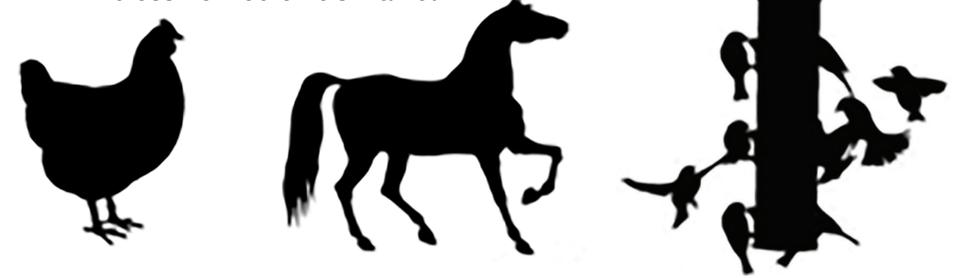


Santa and Mrs. Claus

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Carmel Valley's Famous Monterey Jack Cheese

by Elizabeth Barratt



David Jacks

Legends abound about how our famous local product, Monterey Jack Cheese, got its name and where it was first made. Possibly the best-known account starts with Carmel Valley's first cheesemaker, Señora Juana Cota de Boronda, whose family owned Rancho los Laureles. She produced a white-yellow, semisoft cheese variously known as queso casera (homemade cheese) or queso del pais (country cheese), which she sold to the area's few neighbors.

The cheese is simple to manufacture: milk is heated, the whey drawn off, and the curds pressed into a cloth bag. This is then weighted for a period of time, either by a press, or some other heavy object (some claim it was a house jack). Carmel Valley old-timer Joe Hitchcock, in his memoirs of the early days in the Valley, remembered the youngest Boronda son telling

him about an old Indian named Roman, who would purchase Mrs. Boronda's cheese to take back to Carmel Mission.

Then there's the Victorine dairy, located south of the Carmel River near the mouth of San Jose Creek. In an interview with Antonio Victorine's great-grandson, Avelino, historian Kurt Loesch learned the story of how the family came to make Monterey Jack cheese. The neighboring Vierra family had been making the cheese from a recipe brought from their native Azores. They marketed the product to local stores in Monterey and Pacific Grove. When they decided to move to Salinas, the Vierras sold the cheese recipe to the Victorines for \$5.00. Mr. Victorine hired two veterans of the Spanish-American war, Juan and Pancho, to make the cheese for him. When he tried to ship it via coastal steamer to the San Francisco markets, it spoiled en route due to the leaky cargo holds. Losing money, he stopped producing the cheese. After that, Juan and Pancho went to work for David Jacks, making the same cheese. Jacks shipped the cheese to



Mrs. Juana Boronda

San Francisco via the train, a faster method, and no spoilage occurred. So-named "Jacks Monterey Cheese," this became one of the other stories surrounding the origins of our popular local Monterey Jack cheese. Carmel Valleyite Domingo Pedrazzi is also credited with making and marketing the cheese, and it was also made at the Hatton Upper Dairy at September Ranch.

Carmel Valley history buffs can take pride that Mrs. Boronda's version of this legendary cheese got its start in the landmark Boronda adobe. Her legend continued after the Pacific Improvement Company purchased the Los Laureles Rancho. The dairy on the property supplied milk, butter, and cheese for guests at the company's premier resort, the Del Monte Hotel, with the remainder sold to local markets. The dairy produced Mrs. Boronda's cheese under the name "Del Monte Cheese."

Elizabeth Barratt is a historian with the Carmel Valley Historical Society. For more CVHS info, visit: carmelvalleyhistoricalsociety.org.



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Page 1 banner photo of CV village entry by Luana Conley.

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