



AUGUST 2026

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President's Letter

The Big Picture



Marianne Gawain

Final plans for the proposed subdivision on the Valley's Vintage Airfield are due to the county just as this August issue of the *Valley Voice* goes into the mail. Valley residents

have endured a stressful six-month limbo since the submission of a preliminary plan under the "Builder's Remedy." A legal provision aimed at incentivizing compliance with statewide housing requirements, the Builder's Remedy has had dire consequences in unincorporated Monterey County, greatly reducing opportunities for local input while granting developers broad latitude outside the usual regulatory framework.

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CHANGE IS COMING TO THE MOUTH OF CARMEL VALLEY

by Charlie Wahle

With so much controversy currently focused on Patrick Orosco and Ken Griggs' proposed "Airfield Park" development in Carmel Valley Village, you might assume that all is quiet on the western front - aka the mouth of the valley (MOV). Running eastward from Highway 1 to just beyond Del Mesa and Hacienda Carmel, the MOV is home to diverse businesses, services, Carmel Middle School, Palo Corona Regional Park, and many long-established residential neighborhoods. It is also the historical gateway to the iconic rural landscapes and communities of the wider Carmel Valley.

The Carmel Valley's western front is no longer quiet. After a long period of little growth, the MOV now faces an accelerating push to develop both commercial and

residential properties. And, because Monterey County's required housing plan is still not approved by the state, we remain subject to the punitive conditions of the Builders' Remedy (BR), which effectively strips away most local controls over land use decisions, with potentially disastrous, generational impacts. Additionally, the MOV is identified in the county's pending housing plan as a priority area for new development based on its location, infrastructure, and services. This article describes four important land use changes currently in the works in the MOV and highlights ways you can shape the ongoing evolution of this important Carmel Valley community.

NEW RESIDENTIAL AND BUSINESS DEVELOPMENTS AT THE MOV:

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Carmel Valley residents have been using social media to share heartfelt concerns about the airfield subdivision proposal. What comes through most clearly isn't opposition for its own sake, but genuine worry about safety, trust, and what the Valley will look like for generations to come. One Nextdoor contributor reflected on watching a wooded corner of her former home state of New York paved over for an affordable housing project that never materialized, concluding that while change may be inevitable, it should be approached thoughtfully.

Fire safety weighs heavily on people's minds. Several neighbors noted that Carmel Valley Road already operates near capacity and that added traffic would strain a road system never designed for this kind of growth. One longtime resident described the area's narrow, winding streets as offering "no escape" if fire were to strike. Another pushed back on the developer's claim that new construction would reduce fire risk, calling it "magical thinking."

Others questioned whether homes priced from one to two million dollars, or more, would ultimately provide home ownership opportunities for young families, suggesting they would be more likely to attract established buyers, retirees, or second-home owners. Some residents also reflected sadly that the proposal had eroded the goodwill and trust many people once felt regarding the property's future, recalling a promise that it would not be used for dense development.

By the time you read this, more details will likely have been made public. The CVA will share our broader response as we understand the proposal's particulars. We'll continue listening to residents, sharing information, and encouraging thoughtful public participation. Be sure to subscribe to our weekly bulletin and to the mailing list for FOVA (Friends of the Valley Airfield) at FOVA911.com.

While the community is naturally focused on this consequential project, we can't take our eyes off the bigger picture. In this issue of the Valley Voice, Charlie Wahle outlines the dramatic shifts taking place at the western end of the Valley, and Alex Brant presents the promise and peril of newly available water that will enable construction projects. As you read, ask

yourself how you would like our beloved valley to look in five, ten, twenty years, and beyond. Then ask what you can do today to help make that vision a reality. We may not achieve every goal, but if we fail to engage, we surrender the opportunity to shape the community our children and grandchildren will inherit.

MOV Change, continued from Pg. 1

Carmel Center Road, LLC (CCR on map) is located east of Hwy 1 on Rio Road next to the Carmel Mission Inn and the Chevron station. This BR proposal comprises a 34-unit-multi-family residential complex, including 29 market rate and five affordable housing units. Status: preliminary BR application currently under review by Monterey County.

Carmel Rio Road, LLC Development (CRR on map) is situated on Val Verde Rd immediately west of Carmel Middle School. This new residential development created under the BR will comprise 59 single-family homes and 15 affordable townhomes on 12.5 acres of former agricultural land. Status: approved.

Rancho Canada Village (RCV on map) was initially proposed over two decades ago (not a BR project). This upscale complex on a former 76-acre golf course is adjacent to Palo Corona Regional Park and the Carmel River. It comprises 105 market-rate residential units, as well as 40 inclusionary homes for the local workforce for RCV and other major employers. It provides open space and vehicular access via Val Verde Road. Status: approved and under construction.

Montage Medical Center (MMC on map) was announced in June 2026. This new medical complex in the MOV will occupy the current Carmel Rancho shopping complex, including the former home of Brinton's and Prim's, and will provide a wide range of health services to Carmel, Carmel Valley, and Big Sur residents. Status: property acquired; planning underway.

HOW WILL THINGS CHANGE AT THE MOV

The number of people living in the MOV is about to grow. Combined, these three new developments will create 253 new housing units: 193 (76%) at market rate and 60 (24%) at workforce, inclusionary,

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music and swing dance!*



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hiddenvalleymusic.org

or affordable rates. The new Montage Medical Center, while not adding new dwellings directly, will likely affect local businesses and perhaps the housing supply. Development on this scale will likely impact the MOV's environment, residents, and visitors in a variety of ways, both large and small. Short-term construction impacts will likely include increased truck traffic, noise, dust, and impaired views. More lasting societal impacts in the MOV may include changes in population size and demographics, increased traffic and parking demands, increased water usage, challenges to emergency evacuation, and eventual shifts in the nature of local commercial and hospitality options. Potential ecosystem impacts may include localized loss of natural biodiversity, habitats and agricultural lands, and impaired viewsheds, dark skies, and natural soundscapes. Some of these impacts may be offset by increased park lands and open spaces and the ongoing restoration of the Carmel River watershed in Palo Corona Regional Park.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Whether the trade-offs between the benefits and costs of adding more housing in the MOV are desirable or regrettable depends on your perspective. Your ability to affect these and future changes, especially during the reign of the Builders' Remedy, requires active engagement in the county's land use decision-making processes. Despite the BR's streamlined permitting process, we all have the opportunity, and perhaps the responsibility, to provide public comments on future proposals and in hearings and environmental reviews. Hearings on BR and other projects are typically held by the Carmel Valley Land Use Advisory Committee (CVLUAC), the County's Planning Commission, and Board of Supervisors. Crucial information on how to participate can be found on the Monterey County's Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) website. The MOV may never return to the old days of the Thunderbird Bookshop, or Brinton's, but we can all shape its future.



Vintage card of the Barnyard's Thunderbird

CARMEL VALLEY HOMEOWNERS WIN ON WATER ALLOCATION

by Alex Brant

At the beginning of June, the Monterey County Board of Supervisors made an important decision about how newly available water on the Monterey Peninsula would be allocated. While the outcome wasn't exactly what the Carmel Valley Association recommended, it resulted in a significant victory for homeowners and families throughout Carmel Valley.

The original proposal from county staff would have dedicated 80% of the newly available water to planned housing growth, with 15% available on a first-come, first-served basis, and the remaining 5% held in reserve. The Carmel Valley Association was concerned that this approach heavily favored larger development projects while leaving existing homeowners and local residents with very limited access to one of our region's most valuable resources.

Before the Board of Supervisors' meeting, the Carmel Valley Association submitted a letter encouraging a more balanced approach. We believe that while new housing is important, the people who already live and invest in our community should also have a meaningful opportunity to access newly available water for their properties.

Although the Board did not adopt the allocation percentages we proposed, Supervisor Kate Daniels introduced an amendment that significantly improved the policy. She proposed taking half of the water originally reserved for planned housing growth (25.5 acre-feet) and dedicating it instead to accessory dwelling units (ADUs), junior accessory dwelling

units (JADUs), residential improvements, and similar homeowner projects. In other words, 50% of the original planned housing allocation was redirected to benefit existing property owners and local families.

This is a tremendous win for the people of Carmel Valley.

For many residents, this decision means new opportunities to build an ADU for family members, create housing for aging parents or caregivers, expand an existing home, or make long-planned improvements that previously may not have been possible because of water limitations. Rather than concentrating nearly all of the available water in large development projects, this amendment ensures that existing homeowners also have meaningful access to this scarce resource.

The Carmel Valley Association sincerely appreciates Supervisor Kate Daniels for championing this amendment, and we also thank the entire board of supervisors for listening to public input and improving the original proposal.

Water policy will continue to shape the future of Carmel Valley for years to come. The Carmel Valley Association will remain actively engaged, advocating for fair and transparent policies that strike the right balance between supporting new housing and protecting opportunities for the residents who already call Carmel Valley home.

Thank you to everyone who supported this effort and took the time to stay informed. Community participation truly does make a difference.



Photo courtesy of Warren Pete Poitras. The Carmel River is flowing nicely through Garland Ranch Park in June.

What happens when a mainstay of local business retires and/or leaves town? It depends on the town. In a place like Carmel Valley Village, shoppers may be momentarily dismayed — “Wait! Where did that shop go? What happened? Now where am I going to find those particular things I used to get there?” But a place like Carmel Valley Village, which is not just a place but a well-knit community, will quickly rebound from the shock, as new entrepreneurs step in and revitalize the shops and the community they belong to.

Located on Center Street in the heart of Carmel Valley Village, Avant Garden and Home and Carmel Valley Business Center served the

Valley and visitors for several years under the ownership of Randi and Jeffrey Andrews, who recently up and left town to live happily retired in New England. But there was barely a hiatus, since they deftly turned over the gift shop to Erin Massey and the business center to Danny and Katie Padilla. Earlier, the Olivia and Daisy bookshop, also located on Center Street, changed hands, and Kelsey Boyte arrived to expand and deepen the shop’s role of independent bookseller. These three establishments offer a new generation of retail services to supplement the longstanding “anchors,” Jerome’s Market and Masaoka Glass Design.



Avant Garden and Home - Ste. G-1A

Erin Massey is a Carmel Valley resident who grew up in Salinas and graduated from CalPoly with a degree in nutrition science. She worked previously in corporate sales management and was ready and willing when Randi and Jeffrey retired and turned over Avant Garden and Home to its next owner-operator.

The shop continues Randi’s legacy of unique gifts, jewelry, furnishings, and local artwork. Erin is working to include more unique finds for the entire family, with additional collections of vintage and resale, including a variety of

live plants. Most significantly, Erin is establishing the Carmel Valley Collective, emphasizing local artists, makers, and creators of all kinds. She is dedicated to providing strong local support for both local artists and local businesses.

Erin feels strongly about the contributions that small business can make to the Village’s sense of community, and says that, “While growth will occur, it needs to be appropriate for this unique and very special community that is supported wholeheartedly by the locals.” Avant Garden and Home is open Wednesday-Sunday, 11-5.

Olivia and Daisy Books - Ste. G-IN

Olivia & Daisy Books is an independent, community-focused bookstore located next door to Jerome’s Market.

Owner Kelsey Boyte has designed a living-room-style space for readers of all ages, including a comfortable couch, chairs, and a rug where the kids can loll around with books in hand. The inventory reflects a thoughtfully curated collection of books with a strong emphasis on contemporary and literary fiction, character-driven stories, and standout new releases.

The bookstore is helmed by a team of local staff, but the shop takes its name from two spunky village burros, reminding us that we never have to shoulder the burden alone. There is a special connection between the bookstore and its location in the Village: “Now more than ever, I believe small towns need to stay tethered to the human and the humane. I hope Olivia & Daisy can continue to serve as a safe haven for Carmel Valley Village’s creative and intellectual life, and that all small towns can sustain the remaining vestiges of connection and decency that make them worth protecting.”

Olivia and Daisy is open Tuesday-Saturday, 11-5 and Sunday 12-4.



CV Business Center and Bloom Family Law, Ste. G-5

After Danny earned his degree at Cal State Fullerton and Katie completed her studies at Sacramento State and USF Law School, the couple pursued careers in large-scale retail and family law. Then, when vacationing, they fell in love with the Valley and decided to settle down here with their two children and two dogs.

Danny now operates two businesses in this single dynamic space: Carmel Valley Business Center and a retail shop called Sanctuary, along with Katie’s practice. The Business Center provides FedEx delivery and pickup, fax services, digital printing, notary services, and office supplies. He is currently considering launching Private Parcel and Business Suites, offering services such as a commercial street address, wine-friendly receiving, and secure notifications from UPS, FedEx and DHL—for a modest monthly fee. Bloom Family Law provides specialized, multidisciplinary legal support to help people navigate family challenges without court.

Adding color and retail flair to the location is Sanctuary, which features ethically sourced clothing from Peru, artwork, and a popular soap “refillery.” Plans for future expansion include incorporating more toys and children’s items, building an outdoor chess table, and showcasing “hyper-local” artists.

What this enterprising couple finds so appealing about rooting their businesses in CV is what Danny calls “the character of the town – people work hard to be able to live here.” Carmel Valley Business Center is open Monday-Friday, 10-4.



Save the Date

Save the Date for the annual CVA picnic on Sunday, September 27, 11 a.m. - 3 p.m. at the Carmel Valley Trail and Saddle Club. A delicious lunch will be served by Tim Wood of Woody's at Del Mesa, with wines compliments of Hubert Fabre Vineyard Brands, and music by Rick Chelew. Sign up for the free weekly CVA bulletin to stay connected to upcoming events and action items at carmelvalleyassn.org.



OWLS GET PLATFORMED

by Luana Conley

Five minutes listening to owl aficionado Paul Falworth and you're ready to pick up a hammer and saw and start building a nesting platform. He has an enthusiastic and hopeful approach toward restoring nest locations for the predator birds in areas where their pine tree perches have been reduced. Returning to his Carmel home after a prolonged absence, he noticed numerous pine trees had fallen or been cut down, some for blocking a view, and others gone due to age, disease, or fire fuel mitigation. Paul began musing over the lost habitat for the predatory owls, and was inspired to found Carmel Owls. Owls are known to commandeer abandoned hawk, crow, or heron nests, and often adapt to man-made platforms. He gathered a

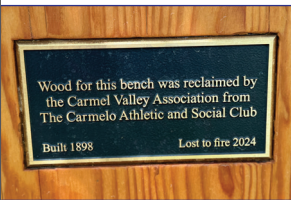
team and found tree trimmers who have the skill and equipment to fasten sturdy redwood platforms securely in likely locations that homeowners offer to the program. Owls are especially appreciated in areas with rat infestations, since they can dispatch up to seven a day during nesting season.

Paul built the first platforms, resembling drawers, and 14 more were built by organizing a volunteer action day. Owls won't nest until February, when a doctoral student will be doing a follow-up study to determine the occupancy rate, and they expect to see results by next April. If you'd like to learn more about owls and this project, please visit carmelowls.org for a wonderfully informative website with delightful videos and DIY plans. Paul expects more locations to be available in Carmel Valley.



photos from carmelowls.org

PARK BENCH DEDICATION FOR RICK MANNING



photos by Mibs McCarthy

A beautiful dedication of a bench in the Village Community Park in memory of Rick Manning was held on June 10. The bench was made with love by John Heyl from wood salvaged from The Carmelo Athletic and Social Club. John Heyl and Ruthie Carter (Rick's wife) share a laugh on the bench.



DICK STOTT, A LIFE OF PUBLIC SERVICE

CVA's directors are saddened by the passing of former director Dick Stott, who died in October 2025. Dick's many years of generous service to CVA included longtime participation on the land use committee and foundational work in organizational operations: he set up our first website, served as membership chair, and edited and distributed our weekly e-bulletin. His patience, wisdom, and technical skills have been greatly missed since he stepped down from the board last spring, when he and his wife Teri moved north to be near family.

A man of many interests and talents, Dick received his B.A. in economics and engineering from Pomona College

in 1962, and later a master's degree in education from Chapman University. After college Dick spent three years in army intelligence and two years studying flamenco guitar in Spain. Dick and Teri moved to the Carmel area in 1968, living for many years in Robles del Rio before relocating to the mouth of the valley in 1987. The Stotts owned Fournane's Jewelry in Carmel from 1970 to 1988. Dick then transitioned to education, teaching mathematics and computer science at Monterey High School until his retirement in 2005, and along the way founding CalEd Software.

The Stotts' sons, Will and Alex, attended Carmel schools from Bay School pre-

by Marianne Gawain

school through Carmel High. Dick served on the District Budget Advisory Committee and as a board member and fundraising chair of Friends of the Carmel Schools (FOCUS). He was treasurer of the Carmel Rotary Club in the 1970s, and later spent seven years on the Riverwood Community Association board. In recent years, at a time of life when they might well have expected others to wait on them, Dick and Teri teamed up as drivers on a Meals on Wheels delivery route.

It was a pleasure and privilege to know Dick, who modeled for us the spirit of community engagement. Carmel Valley is the better for his presence and the lesser for his loss. CVA sends condolences to the Stott family.



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Banner photo of the Village
courtesy Ron Pierce



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WHY JOIN THE CVA? AND WHY NOW?

"In the United States, as soon as several inhabitants have taken up an opinion or an idea they wish to promote in society, they seek each other out and unite together once they have made contact. From that moment, they are no longer isolated but have become a power seen from afar whose activities serve as an example and whose words are heeded." ~Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America* (1835)

by Deb Evans

Right now, August 2026, the Valley is facing some severe challenges to which CVA is responding with its collective might. CVA has been responding to such challenges for over 77 years, sometimes with great success, sometimes with "as good as we can get" ameliorations, sometimes with disappointments, but always with as much community voice as a small, local volunteer organization can muster.

CVA's standing in the county and the community is directly determined by the numbers, dedication, and participation of its members. A critical mass of citizens who care deeply about an issue and speak out through an association such as CVA can and have had a positive impact on the course

of housing and commercial development, environmental protection, fire prevention, sustainable water quantity and quality, and commercial short-term rental expansion, to name only a few important issues in the Valley.

None of these matters is ever completely resolved, none of the threats entirely eliminated, but acting together, we can slow them down or speed them up, scale them to within livable limits, and shape them to better fit our landscapes and lifestyles. Individual property owners have a critical role to play, but influencing public decision makers also requires advocating for our interests with one collective voice of reason, respect, and mutual interest. CVA endeavors to be a channel for that voice, and its volunteer leaders and members work as hard as they can to keep the channel open.

Join the 600 members of CVA and add your voice today by creating an account at carmelvalleyassn.org.

Or join in person at our upcoming picnic: Sunday, September 27, 11 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. at the Carmel Valley Trail and Saddle Club.



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