a quarterly publication of the Carmel Valley Association
CARMEL VALLEY VOICE
NOVEMBER 2026 *preserving the beauty, resources, and rural character of the Valley since 1949* carmelvalleyassn.org

President's Letter


Marianne Gawain

The Pendulum Swings

CVA, as a community-based and -focused organization, has traditionally directed its legislative advocacy to the local level, weighing in to recommend new county ordinances or changes to existing ones. Shifts in the political culture of our state now make it imperative for CVA to jump into the wider fray regarding statewide lawmaking. Why? Deference to local control in planning and zoning is rapidly being eroded. Partly in reaction to legitimate accusations of "NIMBYism," communities resisting construction of needed projects, including housing, our state legislature is eagerly riding the pendulum as it swings way too far in the opposite direction. Laws purportedly aimed at facilitating legitimate urban infill have been written so loosely that rural Carmel Valley is now being treated much the same as downtown San Jose. Is centralized one-size-fits-all planning and zoning really the best way to enhance the livability of a state as diverse as California? That cannot be so when our communities range from wilderness-adjacent and rural-agricultural areas to suburbs and dense urban centers, and from Sierra mountains to the Pacific Ocean, redwood forests to southern deserts to the Sacramento Delta.

This year's Proposition 45 exemplifies this attack on local control. **Just say No to Prop. 45!** Funded by Silicon Valley tech billionaires and venture capitalists, Prop. 45 would dramatically curtail the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the landmark law that has for decades protected our air and water, and hence our health, along with the integrity and beauty of our environment. Trumpeted by its supporters – for-profit utilities, oil companies, and big developers

continued on Pg. 2

PALO CORONA BRACES FOR EL NIÑO

by Marianne Gawain

Have severe winter weather forecasts set you hard at work in your yard, cleaning out drainage ditches or planting exposed banks in anticipation of the rainy season? Now consider the task facing Eric Morgan, General Manager of the Monterey Peninsula Regional Park District (MPRPD), and Jake Smith, MPRPD Planning & Conservation Program Manager: they must see to it that Palo Corona's large-scale floodplain restoration project is buttoned up in advance of El Niño. The two men recently took a brief break from their work to update CVA on the project's status.

If you've visited the park in the past few months to survey the dramatically recontoured landscape, you may have strolled or rolled down the wide new path from the parking lot to the river. This path is a permanent, wheelchair-accessible feature that will eventually extend eastward along the north side of the river. Not yet on view to visitors is a much larger construction project, the replacement of the farthest upstream bridge. As Eric Morgan explains, this is a major undertaking: the new bridge will span 265 feet, sit high enough to clear even a 100-year flood, and have deep footings sturdy enough to permit emergency vehicles up to 10 tons to drive to the south side of the river.

Second-season work on the floodplain restoration draws to a close this month as the focus turns to stabilizing open ground before what is projected to be an exceptionally heavy rainy season. Extensive earthmoving has created expanses of bare ground. Erosion control measures will include "hydroseeding," that is, spraying a slurry of seed, mulch, fertilizer, and "tackifier" onto bare soil, as well as the use of straw cover, straw wattles, and silt fencing. Much of the seed will not sprout until the ground warms up in spring, and the resulting plants will take a few seasons to fill in. For a head start, native grass and shrub seedlings will be planted in many areas as well, with most of the project's 175,000 new native plants in place by year's end. Will that include poison oak, which is a food resource for native fauna? No, it will not! Poison oak will have to fend for itself.

What can we expect to see in the coming months if we have a wet winter? The most critical element of floodplain restoration is broadening the once deeply incised channel. This has been accomplished, with land next to the river lowered so that the river can spread out during big storms as it did naturally prior to human intervention in the landscape. The very purpose of the project is to allow for flooding—and seeing water spreading out on the floodplain will be evidence that the project is working. We will likely also discover that the river has its own creative approach to recontouring the site. Jake Smith says, "Over time the river will also shift some banks and move sand and gravel around. That is part of the vision, too." Whereas the incised channel created a bottleneck that heightened flood problems upstream, the restored floodplain will provide a release valve so that flood risk to areas upstream will decrease. The Hacienda Carmel residential area just east of Palo Corona is expected to see as much as a one-foot drop in flood height.

The floodplain project is scheduled to wrap up by the end of 2027. At a time of widespread habitat degradation and loss, it is inspiring to see the Carmel River freed to roam over this 40-acre site. It's good news for threatened and endangered species, including steelhead, red-legged frogs, and western pond turtles, and for all of us who cherish the river ecosystem. Kudos to MPRPD for securing enabling grants from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, NOAA, California State Wildlife Conservation Board, and the California State Coastal Conservancy. Note that further recreational facility development at Palo Corona—including a possible dog park that has stirred considerable community interest—would be part of an entirely separate undertaking requiring the Park District to conduct an extensive formal planning and permitting process.



Help Hidden Valley and the work we do in our local community by visiting MCGives starting November 12th

montereycountygives.com/hvms

MONTEREY COUNTY GiVES!

Hidden Valley Virtuosi
2026 - 2027 Season

Led by Tien-Hsin Cindy Wu, violin



Works by Schumann, Brahms and Bowen



Works by Fauré, Chopin, Clarke and More



Works by Schubert, Ravel and Clara Schumann

(831) 659-3115
hiddenvalleymusic.org

President's Letter, continued from Pg. 1

– as a way to enhance "affordability," Prop. 45 is designed to fast-track construction of vast data centers, dams, CO2 pipelines, freeway expansions, landfill gas facilities, and sprawling housing in high-risk fire areas. Prop. 45 would limit opportunities for public comment, slash the number of less environmentally damaging alternatives considered under CEQA to a single option proposed by the developer, and sharply reduce opportunities for legal challenge.

The fact is, recent changes in state law have already bent over backwards to streamline review and permitting for most housing projects, so Prop. 45's claims about housing affordability are window dressing. In Monterey County we have ample evidence that CEQA is not creating a critical housing bottleneck because there are already 25,000 entitled units (with water) going unbuilt; the problem is not permitting but the fact that the prices developers would expect for these houses make them unaffordable to the local workforce. Moreover, Carmel Valley's struggle against inappropriate projects brought forth under the "builder's remedy," a punitive component of the state's housing program, has taught us how destructive it is when local citizen input is not given sufficient weight. Prop. 45 is a set-up for more of the same. And in a particularly devious twist, this proposition, which could pass with a simple 50%+1 majority vote, would make it all but impossible for the legislature to dial back the law's excesses because any subsequent change would require a two-thirds majority of both houses of the legislature and would be required to "advance the purposes of Prop. 45."

Concern about Prop. 45 is widely shared. CVA is proud to be in partnership with hundreds of organizations opposing the measure. The "No on 45" coalition includes health advocates such as the American Lung Association and the California Nurses Association; good-government group League of Women Voters of California; labor groups including California Professional Firefighters and State Building and Construction Trades Council of California; and a wide array of environmental advocacy organizations, among them Earthjustice, Sierra Club, and Clean Water Action. CVA urges all voters to vote "No on 45" to preserve the California Environmental Quality Act, protect local voices in land-use decisions, and safeguard California's air, water, and quality of life.

SUPERVISORS APPROVE SHERIFF OVERSIGHT OFFICE

by Mibs McCarthy

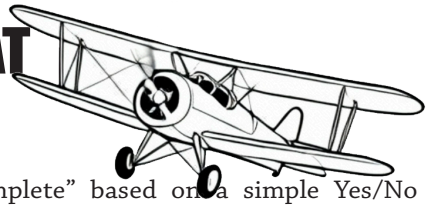
Since Carmel Valley is part of unincorporated Monterey County, its law enforcement agency is the Monterey County Sheriff's Office. The Monterey County Board of Supervisors voted unanimously on August 25, 2026, to adopt an ordinance to create the Office of Inspector General (OIG) for Monterey County. The purpose of this office is to monitor, inspect, and report to the Board of Supervisors on specified aspects of the operations of the Monterey County Sheriff's Office (MCSO). The supervisors also approved a contract with the Office of Independent Review Group LLC, (OIR), to serve as the OIG. The OIR Group has experienced personnel in police practices and oversight and is currently being used in counties and municipalities across the state.

Supervisor Wendy Root Askew said, "It will give us the ability to ask better questions of the sheriff and provide the public with more transparency about what some of those policies and practices are." Specifically, the OIG will carry out the following tasks:

- review MCSO external and internal complaints;
- review MSCO internal affairs investigations;
- review MCSO officer-involved shootings;
- review MCSO in-custody deaths;
- receive timely notification of death, serious injury, or other critical incidents;
- audit MCSO misconduct complaint and discipline process;
- conduct independent investigations;
- audit MCSO policies, procedures, and training;
- recommend changes/improvements to policy, procedure, or training;
- produce public reports;
- and help develop and participate in community outreach.

This vote comes after three years of efforts by concerned citizens to see that systems, policies, and procedures are in place for the sheriff's office to function optimally and in compliance with legal obligations, to avoid problems or to investigate and resolve them as they arise, and to ensure accountability and transparency.

TOUCH AND GO LANDING AT VILLAGE AIRFIELD?



By Charlie Wahle

Patrick Orosco and his business partner, Ken Griggs, are at it again on the Village Airfield, and it's not just drilling for water. After allowing their preliminary permit application for building 90 units on the airfield to lapse, they have resubmitted plans for another try. A very quick read of the latest pre-application reveals that not much has changed in the size, scope, and impacts of their development scheme. In stark contrast to the 24 units allowable by the Carmel Valley Master Plan, Orosco and Griggs' proposed Airfield Park still comprises 90 units overall (a 275% jump), with 70 single-family homes at market rate, with another 20 below market rate duplexes deed-restricted for rentals only. Of those, 11 are low income and nine are moderate income. So much for listening to the public's concerns about fitting in.

Now what? Orosco and Griggs' new application restarts the county's review process and timeline, giving them 180 days to submit a final application, after which the county has 30 days to certify it "complete" based on a simple Yes/No checklist of its contents. After that largely administrative step, the real public review process begins. That process's duration and opportunities for meaningful public input will depend on whether the county determines up front that the Airfield Park's potential to create significant adverse impacts requires a full CEQA analysis with substantive public review. Keep an eye on that crucial decision-making step.

What should we do now? First, don't get discouraged. Orosco and Grigg's resubmission was expected, even without all their in-your-face well drilling, and it does not change the issues or problems their project creates, or the opportunity and need for meaningful public engagement. CVA, in close collaboration with the Friends of the Village Airfield (FOVA), will continue to fight for a better outcome on our Village Airfield and will keep you informed and engaged throughout this critical community effort. So, stay involved and donate if you can through our respective websites: carmelvalleyassn.org and FOVA911.com.



"In-your-face well drilling at the airfield, photo by Glenn McDowell.

A FEAST FOR OUR NEIGHBORS

by Alan Crockett

The Angel Project and Carmel Valley Kiwanis share a Thanksgiving tradition. Every Thanksgiving, the Carmel Valley Community Center fills with the smell of roast turkey and the happy hum of 400 neighbors sharing a free holiday meal hosted by the Angel Project. Behind the scenes, in aprons, you'll find the members of the Carmel Valley Kiwanis Club cooking up what we proudly call "the feast."

The Kiwanis tradition began about thirty years ago, when member Randy Randazzo organized a Thanksgiving dinner for the 60 or so residents of Rippling River. The whole club pitched in, and the dinner continued for 27 years, until a kitchen was no longer available. Four years ago, when the Angel Project needed a new caterer for its long-running community meal, the Kiwanis stepped in, providing all the volunteers and organization free of charge. And because Rippling River residents had no transportation to the Community Center, Kiwanis members now deliver hot meals right to their door, so our old friends are once again part of the feast.

The spirit of the day has grown even richer thanks to the kindness of local businesses. Local commercial ovens are commandeered for the turkeys, and local chefs and caterers, including Tim Wood of Woody's and Nile Estep of Hacienda Hay and Feed, prepare the side dishes.

Together, the Angel Project's heart, the Kiwanis' helping hands, and the generosity of our local businesses make sure hundreds of neighbors share a joyful Thanksgiving. It's community unity at its best, and a tradition worth giving thanks for. Carmel Valley residents can make reservations for the dinner, hosted by and for the Valley, at carmelvalleykiwanis.com.

VALLEY HOLIDAY EVENTS

by Sandy Schachter

HOLIDAY LIGHTING, November 20th at 11 a.m. and November 21st at 10 a.m., in the Village. Please text or call Danielle Carlson at 619-504-5417 to volunteer to help put up the Village lights.

ANNUAL THANKSGIVING DINNER, sponsored by the Angel Project and Kiwanis:

Wed. Nov. 25th, noon to 3 p.m., Carmel Valley Community Youth Center. Organized by and for Carmel Valley residents. Reservations at cvangelproject.org.

CHRISTMAS TREE LIGHTING at Carmel Valley Community Park, December 5th, 5:00 pm. Cookies and hot chocolate!

CV HISTORICAL SOCIETY CHRISTMAS PARTY, December 11, 3-6 p.m., Carmel Valley History Center.

ANNUAL SANTA FLY IN, PARADE, AND VILLAGE HOLIDAY PARTY, December 12th, beginning at 11 a.m. at the former airfield and proceeding to the Carmel Valley Community Youth Center. Parade sponsored by the Rotary Club of Carmel Valley and party food provided by Carmel Valley Kiwanis. Please email carmelvalleysantasflyin@gmail.com to assist with the parade. To be IN the parade, please email cvsfparade@gmail.com. To help the community center host the post-parade festivities, please email office@cvcyc.org.





Community Fund for Carmel Valley Hosts Annual Mixer

by Alan Crockett

The Community Fund for Carmel Valley (CFCV) invites the public to its annual mixer on Saturday, November 14, from 2:30 to 5 p.m. at Gardener Ranch in Carmel Valley. Since 2020, CFCV has awarded $162,000 in annual grants to local nonprofits, which include supporting summer education, youth swim lessons, Meals on Wheels, and environmental education. The fund provided $188,000 in assistance after the Carmel Fire and $27,000 to families affected by the 2023 floods. Its endowment exceeds $250,000. Neighbors, supporters, and newcomers are welcome to meet board members and learn how giving strengthens the Valley. The mixer follows the November 12 launch of MC Gives! Please RSVP by 5:00 pm Nov 6, 2026 at: Give.cfmco.org/cfcv2026.



ANGELS GET THEIR WINGS

by Luana Conley

When the annual holiday season rolls around, the Valley's Angel Project and Kiwanis whip into action maintaining the long-time Carmel Valley traditions of the Thanksgiving community feast and organizing the Holiday Store, a charitable store for local families. All team members slide into their roles with most of them having years of experience and well-seasoned community relations. The goal is that the Valley's dinner guests and gift recipients will have a delightful holiday made brighter with their collaborative efforts. What motivates community members to participate year after year with the same level of energy and enthusiasm?

Mike Thatcher's fatherhood got him started, and he found having fun keeps him going. "I got involved helping with my kids growing up. First were church values, then Boy Scouts, followed by Little League - then Kiwanis and the Angel Project. When you join these organizations, you see how your participation benefits others. I'm a lot older now and still have the drive to help. I have made a lot of friends in this great community."



Robyn Rauh has been the Holiday Store's super shopper for over ten years and says, "I have been in charge of purchasing the new coats for the Angel Project's families' children every year, and it always warms my heart to help the parents pick out the "perfect" coat for their child. The goal is to have each warm coat be a different color and style. It takes a lot of shopping time to make this happen, but it is always worth it on gifting day!"

Alicia Doherty has coordinated appointments for the Angel Project Holiday Store for several years. She tirelessly reaches out to families who have come to the store in the past, tracks their children's ages and sizes, and schedules them for a visit, all while shuttling between homes here and in Texas. Her devotion comes from knowing first-hand how hard the struggle can be to raise a family and make ends meet, and her enrichment from the smiles on parents' faces as they select new jackets and stocking stuffers for their children.



Troy Ishikawa began to volunteer for the Angel Project Thanksgiving Dinner in 2013 in hopes of soothing the grief of his father's passing with the joy of his favorite holiday. He relates starting off at the drinks table and then serving desserts until finding his niche bussing tables to help provide a full-service dining experience. Since the Carmel Valley Kiwanis club took over the cooking, Troy sings with his band, "Old Flannel Pajamas," serving up acoustic music. Troy says, "So, why do I continue? Sharing makes everything better!"

Another volunteer who found her spot as hostess at the door for Thanksgiving Dinner finds greeting and welcoming hundreds of smiling and eager Valley neighbors the perfect antidote to angst about the state of the world. Volunteering will bring you into contact with those involved in their community, who enjoy providing tangible benefits to their neighbors, and provides a sense of shared purpose and camaraderie. Try it, it's fun! Get in touch with the Angel Project at cvangelproject.org.

STRETCH LAB

We are an assisted stretching studio aimed at helping you move and feel your best! With the aid of our highly trained Flexologists, we offer people of all ages and lifestyles a customized one-on-one assisted stretching program.

BENEFITS OF STRETCHING

Increase Performance
Increase Flexibility
Reduce Muscle Pain
Reduce Muscle Tension

26135 Carmel Rancho Bl. #E105
(831) 308-0906
CarmelRancho@StretchLab.com

First Time Visitor Special Price
50 minutes Only $59
25 minutes Only $39
Open M-F 8-6, Sat. 8-2
Closed Sundays

CV FORUM REORGANIZES

by Marianne Gawain

A big bouquet of thanks goes to Larry Bacon, outgoing president of the Carmel Valley Forum, for his years of service to the community. Larry, who operates the financial advising firm Bacon & Company, is an avid horseman and honorary cowboy who has long worked to protect the rural beauty and character of the Valley he loves to explore on horseback.

With Larry's retirement, the Forum has appointed new officers: local businessman Jeffrey Greenberg, CVA Vice President Charlie Wahle, and Beatrice Bernard, who has previously brought her professional bookkeeping expertise to several Valley non-profits.

As a 501(c)(3) non-profit whose mission aligns closely with that of CVA, the Forum accepts tax-deductible donations, which can be used for grants to support CVA's 501(c)(3)-qualified activities such as community service and education. The Forum can also accept donations from donor-advised funds and planned legacy gifts from estates. If you would like to support CVA above the basic membership level and receive a tax receipt, you may send a check to the Forum, P.O. Box 1475, Carmel Valley, 93924. Please specify "CVA" in the memo line. You may also make a contribution through the Forum to its fund dedicated specifically to Carmel Valley Airfield Defense or to the Forum's general fund, held for wider uses. The Forum provides a great new way to leverage your support for CVA beyond the basic annual membership dues, which CVA relies on to fund its general operations. Annual dues of $35/person or $50/household should be submitted directly to CVA through our website or by mail to PO Box 157, Carmel Valley, CA 93924. Dues are not tax-deductible.

Carmel Valley Association
P.O. Box 157
Carmel Valley, CA 93924

PSRT STD
U.S. POSTAGE **PAID**
Carmel Valley, CA
Permit No. 2

**********ECRWSSEDDM**********

Local
Postal Customer

BOARD OF DIRECTORS
Marianne Gawain, President
president@carmelvalleyassociation.org
Pris Walton, President Emerita
Charlie Wahle, Vice President
Sandy Schachter, Secretary
Andy Sudol, Treasurer
Mahir Agha
Alex Brant
Deb Evans
Kim Forrest
John Heyl
Mibs McCarthy
Marlene Martin
Eric Sand
Bob Siegfried
Arleen Tarantino
Jamison Watts
Jeff Wood
• Janet Brennan, Advisor
• Luana Conley, Advisor,
Newsletter Production Manager
• Karin Strasser Kauffman, Advisor
Contact the Carmel Valley Voice:
cvvoice@carmelvalleyassociation.org

Banner photo of Mesa Pond in Garland Park from Warren Pete Poitras.

VISIT CVA

CVA ANNUAL PICNIC - FUN HAD BY ALL



Buffet by Chef Tim Wood, photo by David Dilworth



Photos above and below by Mibs McCarthy



October's annual CVA picnic was graced with perfect weather, a wonderful meal served to a happy crowd of 120, and a few words from local representatives about their part in the local community.

SERVING MONTEREY COUNTY SINCE 1956
PENINSULA psts Inc.
SEPTIC TANK SERVICE
Celebrating 60 Years
• Sewer & Drain Lines Cleared
• Hydro-Jetting
• Televised Sewer Lines
• Grease Trap Pumping & Maintenance
• Septic Systems Pumped, Serviced & Repaired
• Sump Pumps Serviced, Repaired and Installed
• Trenchless Technology
STATE CONTR. LIC. #494738
Senior/Military/New customer/5% discount
PACIFIC GROVE • MONTEREY • CARMEL • PEBBLE BEACH
SALINAS • CARMEL VALLEY • SEASIDE • BIG SUR
www.psts.net 831-659-2465