

Love Laguna Beach!

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by Cheryl Kinsman



What's covered:

- Laguna heroes
- Water quality on the Council agenda of November 6, 2001

Other major City Council agenda items for November 6:

- Report on the progress of Treasure Island

Laguna heroes: On Saturday morning at 2:30 a.m., a motorcyclist crashed directly in front of the Laguna City Hall after rapidly accelerating away from Laguna Police Officer Robert Gifford during a routine traffic stop on Forest Avenue. The motorcyclist, knocked unconscious and lying in a large fireball from his ruptured fuel tank, was pulled out of danger by Officer Gifford. Police Explorer Lance Larson simultaneously used his fire extinguisher to put out the flames. This was an outstanding effort on the part of both individuals.

Love Laguna Beach! is prepared by Cheryl Kinsman, member of the Laguna Beach City Council, as a service to the people of Laguna Beach. Not prepared, printed or mailed at taxpayer expense.

Water quality on Council agenda. At the city council meeting of November 6th, the Council will consider an issue important for both ocean water quality and our local restaurants. As we all know, we must eliminate sewage spills that are polluting our ocean. A major cause of sewage line blockage is grease from restaurants. The city council is considering a new city ordinance that would require all restaurants in the city to install grease interceptors within 18 months.

Grease interceptors are 750-1000 gallon holding tanks installed outdoors and underground that separate grease from wastewater, allowing only the water portion to enter the sewer lines. Fewer than half of Laguna Beach restaurants have these devices, which require a hole about the size of three office desks and cost \$20,000 to over \$100,000 for installation. Under the proposed ordinance, failure to install grease interceptors will result in severe fines and penalties to the offending restaurants.

I have received input from several of the restaurants in town that they are either physically or financially incapable of installing grease interceptors. The proposed ordinance will simply shut many restaurants down, and the ones shut down will generally be the small "only in Laguna" type that are nearest and dearest to our hearts.

Interceptors should be required for new restaurants and for those existing restaurants where they can reasonably be installed. For those restaurants where grease interceptors cannot be installed, we should offer reasonable alternatives.

For example, since we know where restaurants are located, we can clean their sewers more frequently and charge the restaurant a monthly fee for the extra cleaning. This method is currently used by many other cities. We can require a series of smaller grease traps that can be installed within the restaurant. And we can require the use of grease barrels for used cooking oils. Any solution should, of course, be combined with inspection to verify that the restaurant is complying with whatever requirements are imposed upon it.

Water quality is a very serious issue for Lagunans. We must be sure we get an optimal solution, sensitive to the needs of the environment, our local restaurants, and their patrons. We all know that we have a problem. We all want clean water. We need to work together to find a solution.

Do you know someone who should be receiving this update? Please e-mail me their name and e-mail address and I'll add them to the list!

My e-mail address is Cheryl@LoveLagunaBeach.com