

Love Laguna Beach!

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by Cheryl Kinsman



What's inside:

- **When do we get more parking downtown?**
- **Got a spare \$2,000 to \$20,000 sitting around? Then you might want to know about a proposal to make you spend it on your sewer.**
- **How is the city budget faring with the proposed state changes? Not well.**

Thank you for reading this newsletter and for your constructive comments on ways to make it better.

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!

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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.

When will we have more parking downtown?

One of Laguna's most pressing needs is for additional parking. Parking in the downtown area will provide locals and visitors alike the opportunity to explore Laguna's downtown, artistic, and beach areas year round.

In order to clear the way for more close-in parking, the city council has approved the move of the antiquated and rusting city maintenance facility from its current location adjacent to city hall to a facility to be built at the rear of the ACT V parking lot in the Canyon. This will allow additional parking spaces to be created next to city hall.

However, the creation of this additional downtown parking has now been delayed by an appeal to the California Coastal Commission by Laguna Beach council member Toni Iseman, a Coastal Commission board member. The city is now forced to go through a lengthy and expensive appeal process before the additional parking can be provided. The first Coastal Commission hearing on this appeal will probably be at the February 18-20, 2004 meeting of the Commission to be held in La Jolla.

Smile—your sewer lateral is on candid camera.

Your sewer lateral—the pipe that connects your house to the city sewer system—may soon need to be inspected using a video camera if a proposed city ordinance is adopted. This ordinance, which has the goal of reducing the number of sewer spills in Laguna, is being introduced at the council meeting of January 20.

There are probably some reasons that you will want to ask questions about that ordinance. One reason is the cost of the ordinance, both to the city and to the homeowner. There are no cost estimates for either in the draft ordinance.

Cost to the homeowner starts with the \$250 estimated cost of actually video taping the sewer. If there are problems (such as intrusive roots or sewer line

cracks) perceived by the plumber doing the video taping, the homeowner will then be required to fix those problems. Estimates of the costs of such fixes vary between \$2,000 to upwards of \$20,000, depending on the situation. Such repairs are mandated to be completed within 180 days of notification to the homeowner.

The costs to the city will include costs of enforcement and the repaving of streets if many street patches have been done as a result of this program.

The ordinance as written is in need of a "reasonableness test," and needs much more public input before it or its successor is passed. I hope you will be at the City Council meeting of January 20, 2004, to become informed about this proposed regulation.

The Terminator is about to terminate a major source of Laguna Beach revenue. How will this affect our finances?

Governor Schwarzenegger's proposed budget includes shifting city property taxes to the state of California. This will cost the City of Laguna Beach at least a half million dollars annually.

Since Laguna Beach has the highest per capita property tax collection in the county (and probably in the state), we will lose the most per person of any city in the county. This is money Laguna Beach uses to pay for public safety, police, fire and lifeguards.

It is unfortunate that the state fiscal problems, which are largely caused by state policies, are being solved by going to local governments for bail out money. This is money that most localities just don't have.

Fortunately, our city has been prudent and won't go bankrupt like some other cities, which have been floating bonds, acquiring debt to pay for their projects, will. Laguna Beach is an almost debt free city, but we will be severely hurt by what is going on in Sacramento.