

LA JOLLA LIGHT

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lajollalight.com

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OUR READERS WRITE



The map showing the boundaries of the proposed Maintenance Assessment District in La Jolla Village.

MAD boundaries must be spelled out

Most homeowners having property close to La Jolla's shopping/dining district will be surprised when they learn that outside fees are plotting to have the City of San Diego assess them to help pay for maintenance and "beautification" in the commercial district of the Village. While streets in the commercial district are usually in need of sprucing up, homeowner streets in proximity to La Jolla's businesses are well-maintained and without need of "beautification" through further taxation.

The Enhance La Jolla movement spearheading the so-called Maintenance Assessment District (MAD) is led by individuals and realtors from the commercial district who hope to gain business revenue from homeowner taxes collected and spent in the commercial district. La Jolla businesses already have a financial venue for maintenance and beautification of the commercial district; homeowners stand to gain only an additional City tax.

La Jolla businesses are owned almost entirely by people living some distance away from the Village. The fact that La Jolla business owners have devised a plan to take from near-Village homeowners to increase Village business should cause major red flags among local homeowners, however, most homeowners are lacking the most crucial piece of information: the map/diagrams showing which homeowners will be impacted.

To the La Jolla Light's credit, a small rendition of the map was published in the Jan. 14, 2016 edition of the Light, but neither the Enhance La Jolla website nor any of the reporting site had displayed the map. The unjust nature of this proposed taxation effort is thus still quite well hidden.

James Hudnell
Editor's Note: We're reprinting the Proposed La Jolla MAD boundaries here and noting that the MAD map may also be found online at enhancelajolla.org/the-district/district-map

MAD about fairness

Civic-minded La Jollans should have no problem supporting the goals of beautifying and improving the Village. That is the goal of the Maintenance Assessment Districts (MAD) as proposed by the nonprofit La Jolla Community Foundation (LJCF). The property owners in the MAD are to be assessed to pay for the cleanup and beautification. But let's think about the details. Are the responsibilities, costs and benefits apportioned fairly? We are convinced that they are not.

The proposed MAD encompasses the both the Village commercial area and the surrounding residential areas. The relationship between these areas is strained for one principal reason: parking.

With time-limited on-street parking in commercial areas, parking in surrounding residential streets is fully occupied by office, restaurant and retail employees from morning to midnight, seven days a week. Indeed, residents rarely can park on the streets in their own neighborhoods.

To compound the problem, the employees who park on residential streets litter the gutters, sidewalks and lawns with beverage containers, fast food remnants, discarded clothing and worse. LJCF, whose steering committee consists mainly of Village merchants, has not provided a rationale either for including surrounding residential areas in the MAD or for asking these residents to share the costs of the cleanup.

If the merchants were first to accept responsibility for their impacts on surrounding neighborhoods, they would receive more support from civic-minded La Jolla residents - who, by the way, are also their most constant customers. That acknowledgement and a fair allocation of cost and responsibility are prerequisites for our support of the MAD.

About basic fairness, a more productive approach may be to create residential permit parking districts in adjacent residential neighborhoods approved by at least half of their residents. That would provide an incentive for businesses to provide parking for their employees, and would also solve the litter problem. We cannot remember ever having left a half-empty beer can on our own front lawn.

Ray and Abby Weiss

Raising Soledad Mountain Road speed limit is ridiculous idea

I live on Soledad Mountain Road between Pacific Drive and Soledad Road. I strongly object to raising the speed limit on this small stretch of highway. Many drivers routinely speed in excess of 50 miles hour in front of my home.

A driver, who was driving in excess of the speed limit, sideswiped my daughter's car, which was parked on the street. Luckily, my daughter was not getting into the car at the time.

As you may be aware, Soledad Mountain Road is a two-lane uphill road as it leaves Pacific Beach heading north.

I have often observed cars passing each other at speeds of up to 60 miles per hour while they jockey for position before the two northbound lanes converge into one. It happens so often that the San Diego police routinely set up a speed trap in this location.

The location between Pacific Drive and Soledad Road is the first reasonably level area on Soledad Mountain Road after a long uphill stretch. As a result, cars that are northbound heading uphill from Pacific Beach, have to apply additional gas to maintain their speed uphill.

When these cars reach the level area starting at Pacific Drive, many drivers do not ease up on the accelerator, causing their cars to reach unreasonable speeds in front of my home.

In addition, there is a great deal of bicycle traffic and pedestrians heading to and from the Mount Soledad War Memorial, which pass by my

OUR READERS WRITE (CONTINUED)



Some of Cuban artist José Rodríguez Fuster work, which decorates the fishing town of Jaimanitas.

Pirasteh's public art should not be fined!

I read with special interest the March 24 La Jolla Light article describing artist Nasser Pirasteh's home in La Jolla and his creative art sculptures. I've just returned from an art and culture people-to-people exchange trip to Cuba where one of the highlights was having the privilege of visiting the home of renowned Cuban artist, José Rodríguez Fuster, the "Picasso of the Caribbean."

He is a Cuban hero and has made a project out of rehabilitating and decorating the fishing town of Jaimanitas, where he lives on the outskirts of Havana, with an explosion of mosaic tile work, built into the structures themselves, and bringing the community alive with color and creativity. (See the photo at left).

I couldn't help but reflect on the irony of a local artist being revered in a socialist (communist) society for his creative expression in his community, while we, living in a free democracy, are ready to slap the same type of artistic expression with a fine and threat of removal of the artistic work. We enjoy immense freedoms living here in

the United States, thankfully, but yet it seems we have much to learn from our neighbors to the southeast regarding openness and compassion with artistic expression.

Do you think everyone loves every piece of art that goes up across La Jolla as part of the Murals of La Jolla project? (Which, by the way, I love.) Of course not, yet up they go for each one of us to be moved by — positively or negatively. This is the nature of creative expression and art. Nasser's work is to be celebrated. Move on to real issues in our community!

Sigfried Reich

Lively art is better than bland art

La Jollans should feel honored to have Nasser Pirasteh in his community. This artist has created a visual garden to delight the eye and raise our spirits.

Complain instead about the ugly "sanitized" structures desecrating this community; they are monuments to people hemorrhaging money with no taste.

Gloria Shattil

house every day. On the weekends, this usually includes large groups of motorcycles. All of this traffic, mostly traveling at 50 miles an hour or more, makes it extremely difficult to back out of my driveway.

Raising the speed limit will only make this problem worse. My suggestion would be to install another electronic speed limit sign, similar to the one that presently exists at the corner of Soledad Mountain and Soledad Road. A good location would be midway up the hill between Beryl and Pacific.

Andrew Shorestein

Time for city to address sea lions at La Jolla Cove

For the past two years, the sea lion population at La Jolla Cove has steadily grown, creating pollution problems in the water and on the adjacent cliffs, which has also contributed to the odor problems near the Cove. As the Lifeguard Sergeant responsible for patrolling The Cove and Children's Pool areas, I've had a good deal of experience with the sea lions. They are capable of climbing the cliffs and interacting with people, and in fact, they've been doing just that. They stare on the rocks and have steadily migrated to the sand where families gather.

Over the weekend, I witnessed several kids put sand on the tops of sea lions' heads, and kick the animals while their parents either looked on or looked away. This is a two-minute snapshot in time, but these dangerous interactions are going on all day, every day.

The current situation at the Cove resembles the same situation that began decades ago at Children's Pool. The parallel between the two is the lack of leadership at City Hall to engage and solve what is quickly becoming a BIG problem. We cannot let citizen groups divide the community while the Mayor sits idly by and hopes a solution presents itself. The City Council allocated money for a park ranger to monitor The Cove, but the ranger hasn't been dispatched to handle this growing problem.

In fact, the Mayor has been more focused on the odor problem. He recently ordered the City's Park & Recreation Department to boost the number of times each month a bacteria spray is applied to the rocks, from two to three. This has had little impact on the guano issue and no impact on the growing dangers from human/sea lion interactions. In

fact, it's very likely that it's only a matter of time before someone gets attacked and seriously injured by a sea lion at La Jolla Cove.

Spring Break will bring conditions not seen for several years. Lifeguards will be challenged by large surf, warm weather, and a strong outgoing tide that will make the rip currents dangerous. When we get this combination of elements, our rescue counts go way up. The large, winter surf has removed sand, preventing our ability to deploy seasonal towers, so keeping an eye on sea lion interactions with beach-goers will be a huge challenge. I urge Mayor Kevin Faulconer to take action and address the growing sea lion problem before it's too late.

Ed Harris

It's good to honor good people

As a follow-up to a column I wrote a few weeks ago for the Light about the credit union security guard who saved me from running over my cell phone, I always chat with him when I'm over there now and I brought him several copies of the column. The last time I saw him, he said, "Boy, Inga do you have fans?" He told me that numerous people had come up to him and told him they'd read the story about him. He mentioned that some wanted to know my real name. "But I wouldn't tell them!" he smiled.

I was so pleased for the attention for him as that man stands outside a credit union six days a week. (Who robs credit unions?) I also asked him if he'd read the article to anyone. "No," he said, shyly. "My grandma taught me that if you do something nice for someone, you should keep it to yourself." Amazing guy.

Inga

What's the rhyme and reason behind some street repaving?

The section of Regents Road from Genessee Avenue to Miramar/Executive Streets is a disaster, but the section of Regents Road from Miramar/Executive Streets to La Jolla Village Drive, while in much better shape, was repaved! Could it have something to do with that lower section of Regents Road being in front of a small shopping center? Hmmmm. "Business is Business," as the saying goes.

BB



Where's the beach? A recent image at La Jolla Shores.

Shores Beach is sorely missed

As vice-chair of the La Jolla Shores Association Board and as a concerned citizen who enjoys walking the beach, I was hoping you could run a story titled "What has happened to our beach?" or something similar!

Susan Thomson Tschern, Ph.D.
City of San Diego Human Relations Commissioner

Editor's Note: Due to Spring Break and the Easter holiday last week, it was hard to reach the experts for comment on where all the beach sand in the Shores has disappeared to! The Light will provide a report on the phenom in the April 7 issue. Stay tuned!

What's on YOUR mind?

Letters to the Editor for publication in La Jolla Light should be 250 words or less, and sent by e-mail to editor@lajollalight.com and must include the full name of the sender, city of residence and phone number for verification. Note: The content of letters are not the opinions of La Jolla Light.



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OUR READERS WRITER

Why I don't support the proposed MAD

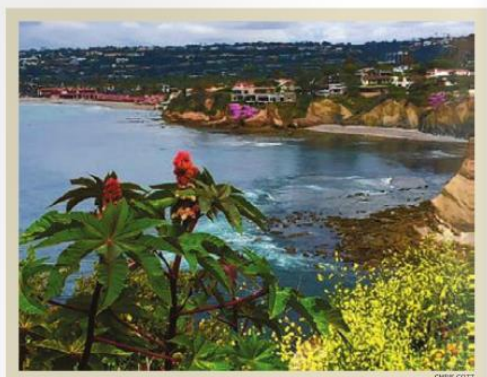
I am against the Maintenance Assessment District (MAD) initiative that is being debated for the No. 1 reason that it is just another tax. As a property owner and future business owner, I think we are paying our fair share. The highlights mentioned for needing this new tax are over-filled trash cans, dirty sidewalks, etc.

I volunteered for more than six months (every morning) picking up trash in the Village. With the help of members of the La Jolla Merchants Association we were able to deal with the city and find solutions to this problem: a couple of trash cans were moved to higher traffic areas and the city service manager in charge of trash pickup was very helpful and hands on — even coming to the Village twice to do a walk-through to see what else could be done.

I question the group Civitas out of Sacramento, which is involved with this whole assessment and wonder why this is so important to them? I remember talking to a business owner one morning and he told me the story of his mother, who every morning personally policed the front and back of her salon before business day. That's more practical than adding more taxes to businesses — especially with the new bill passed raising the minimum wage to \$15.

Jeff Gerwin

Ex-volunteer trash guy



CHRIS COTT

GRAFFITI GONE!

Thanks for the article last week about the recent graffiti and tagging along Coast Walk Trail. I spent a day removing 99 percent of it on Coast Walk.

Chris Cott

Why I do support the proposed MAD

I know several perfectly intelligent and thoughtful property owners who live within the boundaries of the proposed Maintenance Assessment District (MAD) who are strongly opposed to it. I accept that there will be differences about a MAD and certainly agree with the Weiss' (letter in the April 7 Light) that this proposal will not solve all conflicting uses within the Village.

And even though we don't know yet how it will interface with other groups in the Village, I think it's a concept we should try. We suffer from both a lack of City of San Diego resources to maintain the aesthetics we want and too many merchants who do not maintain their properties in a responsible manner (e.g., think about where you bought your groceries today).

The strongest argument I've heard from private owners is that they feel they are already paying enough property taxes. I've worked with several well-meaning city employees over the last two years on the Whale View Point project; public employees do what they can with the city resources

Ann Parode Dynes

We should ban sandwich board ads in the Village

I am so happy to see an interest in the "eyesore boards," as I call them. They are a distraction; a nuisance to view, walk by and around, and unnecessary. La Jolla would look so much more attractive without them! We deserve more attention from San Diego about this. The city should not only enforce, but simply get rid of the sandwich boards, as this might be the easiest solution to their proliferation.

Anne Gilchrist

Pirasteh's artwork must be allowed to stay

The home of Zari and Nasser Pirasteh on Nautilus is an inspirational gallery that brings daily joy to drivers and nearby school children. A neighbor who dislikes his style has done a disservice to the

allotted to La Jolla but it's not enough to maintain the Village in the kind of condition which it would be as a separately incorporated city, like Santa Monica or Coronado.

The opportunity to incorporate La Jolla as a separate city has past. We can continue to live in a special community that looks neglected and worn, or we can pay less than \$90 a year to support our responsible merchants, and many, if not most, of our non-profits in this effort. I also am pleased by the opportunity, as a resident in the MAD, to potentially participate in its governance and to contact it when I see conditions or situations around the Village that need addressing.

I would love to see the residents of the MAD come together in support of the community where we walk and shop every day. This may be primarily a merchants' issue, but as residents we have a chance to be participants in the evolution of a new approach to beautifying the Village for the betterment of residents, our nonprofits and merchants alike.

OUR READERS WRITE (CONTINUED)

many of us who enjoy this outdoor art museum by filing a complaint with the City Code Enforcement Agency, which calls his new artwork an "unpermitted structure" and demands that he remove it.

This small edifice is, in fact, a sculpture in the form of a small, open-air cylinder in which six or so guests fit comfortably. They can gaze out at his stunning oceanview through the walls' many small apertures decorated with tiles, glass gems, eye fastenings and multimedia inlays. Every inch is a creative adventure. Sometimes, students from Muirlands Middle School gather along his attractive yard, even acting like, for shame, kids let out of school! One neighbor suggested hating a hose on them, but instead, Nasser invites them in and has given them art lessons. Now others come regularly for that gift.

Nasser Pirasteh is an acclaimed artist whose work appears internationally in public spaces and private collections. He was resident artist for Minnesota Schools, 1988 to 1999. La Jollans

are fortunate to have him among us and should protest this punishment.

Phyllis Minick

SCAM ALERT: Never hit 90# on your phone

I dialed "0" to check out the following scam and the operator confirmed that it was correct, so please pass it on to everyone you know. (I also checked out snopes.com the Internet reference for urban legends, folklore, myths, rumors and misinformation.)

I received a telephone call last week from an individual identifying himself as an AT&T Service Technician (it could also be Telus), who was conducting a test on the telephone lines. He stated that to complete the test I should touch nine (9), zero (0), the pound sign (#), and then hang up. Luckily, I was suspicious and refused.

Upon contacting the telephone company, I

was informed that by pushing 90#, you give the requesting individual full access to your telephone line, which enables them to place long distance calls billed to your home phone number. I was further informed that this scam has been originating from many local jails. Do not press 9, 0, # for anyone. If this happens to you, end the call immediately without pressing the numbers. Once you press the code, the company can access your SIM Card and makes calls at your expense. After checking with Verizon, the company also said the scam was true.

Al Thomas

Editor's Note: The Federal Communications Commission has taken the scam and offered these *What You Should Know* tips:

• Telephone company employees checking for technical and other types of telephone service or billing problems would not call and ask a subscriber to dial a specific series of numbers before hanging up the telephone

receiver.
• Telephone company employees would not request subscribers to connect the caller to an outside line before hanging up the receiver.
• These types of calls are made to trick subscribers into taking actions that will enable the caller to place fraudulent calls.
• This scam only works if your telephone is served by a private branch exchange (PBX) or private automatic branch exchange (PABX).

CORRECTIONS

■ The April 7 sports story "Vikings vanquish Knights in rivalry match" should have stated that Drew Henrick of The Bishop's School was a freshman (not sophomore as reported).
■ To clarify a sentence in the April 7 story about the new mural in La Jolla Shores, "Demos Gracias," it should be understood that it is the first and only mural of the 16 existing Murals of La Jolla currently on view throughout La Jolla to be located in The Shores.

LA JOLLA NEWS NUGGETS



PHOTOS BY ASHLEY MACKIN

The stumps along Silverado Street at Girard Avenue, where trees have been cut down.



Gone, but not forgotten, the trees along Silverado Street at Girard Avenue were cut down, some marked with cones.

Lightner says trees cut from Village will be replaced

In her community update at La Jolla's Community Planning Association meeting April 7, San Diego City Council President Sherri Lightner said some trees had been removed in the Village (Silverado Street at Girard Avenue near the Union Bank building, and Wall Street at Ivanhoe near the Post Office). "These trees were evaluated by the city arborist and were removed because they were unhealthy," she said. "But we are committed to replacing them."

Midway Bluff repair project nears completion

The long-awaited Midway Bluff repair project in Bird Rock is nearly complete. Under heavy construction since November, the project includes restoration of the overlook end of Midway Street that has eroded over time and been

damaged by storms. When complete, the project will have repaired the eroded hillside, installed a retaining wall, restored a 600-ft, and enhanced the sidewalk at a cost of \$475,000.

CPA trustee reports shock, surprise over new mural

Although the title of the mural that went up in La Jolla Shores April 4 is "Demos Gracias" (give thanks), not everyone is thankful. After its unveiling, Shores resident and La Jolla Community Planning Association (LJCPA) trustee Janie Emerson reported getting phone calls of shock and surprise from area residents.

"There was no outreach to the La Jolla Shores Association," she said. "I think (the Murals of La Jolla program) is a great idea but to put this on a community is not, and the input has been horrendous from tourists, residents and business owners." Hoping to discuss the item further, Emerson requested a discussion be docketed on the next LJCPA

agenda, 6 p.m. Thursday, May 5 at La Jolla Rec Center, 615 Prospect St. lajollapca.org

Attorney Cory Briggs to speak at Town Council, April 14

Cory Briggs, author of the Citizen's Plan (aka Citizens' Initiative), will speak at the 5 p.m. Thursday, April 14 meeting of La Jolla Town Council, held at the Rec Center, 615 Prospect St. Briggs' measure calls for an increase in the hotel tax to 15.5 percent to help fund an off-the-waterfront convention center and tourism marketing, but not a new football stadium. Under the initiative, public financing of a new stadium for the San Diego Chargers football team would be sought by a vote of taxpayers. lajollatowncouncil.org

Five candidates qualify for Council District 1 seat

According to the San Diego City Clerk, the following people have qualified as candidates for San Diego City Council District 1 (which includes La Jolla): Ray Elba, Bruce Lightner, Louis Rodolico, Barbara Bry and Kyle Heiska. The seat will be vacated by Sherri Lightner, who must term-out in November. The primary election will be June 7. The general election is Nov. 8. Find candidate statements and more information at sandiego.gov/city-clerk/elections/city160607Primary

Tuesday night bridge club seeks new members

The Bridge Club for intermediate (and above) players that meets 6:30 p.m. Tuesday nights at Lawrence Family Jewish Community Center, 4126 Executive Drive, is looking for new members.

Game play begins at 6:45 p.m. with the "very friendly and outgoing" group of players. "Our game isn't very serious, most people come to play bridge to have a good time, which is what we do," said group coordinator Renee Roessing. "We have snacks and coffee, and give away a little bit of prize money, not a lot, just enough to make people want to play more," she added.

The cost is \$3 per person, \$2 for JCC members. Those who are serious about the game, but new to the group, will be guided where to go and be introduced to the group when they arrive for the first time. If interested, or have questions, call Roessing at (619) 528-8398.

POLL OF THE WEEK at lajollalight.com

Last week's poll results:

Do you like the latest mural of La Jolla installed along the Galaxy Taco building in La Jolla Shores?

Yes: 84%
No: 16%

This week's poll:

Would you support regulations over a total ban of sandwich boards in the Village?

Yes No

Answer on the homepage at lajollalight.com

'I didn't build this just to tear it down'

Artist seeks compromise, not demolition, of controversial piece

BY ASHLEY MACKIN

As the deadline approaches for La Jolla sculptor Nasser Pirasteh to either take down an artistic installation on his property at 6706 Avenida Namana, or face fines of up to \$250,000, the artist told *La Jolla Light* he has been seeking a compromise with no avail.

In March, the city issued Pirasteh a notice indicating he has until May 7 to remove a 10-foot dome-like piece fronting Nantilus Street, claiming it is an "unpermitted structure."

"They are trying to force me to tear down this piece of art. I am not going to give up. No one has convinced me yet that this is a 'structure,'" he said.

Countering the piece is actually a "sculpture," Pirasteh said he does not intend to remove the work from his property. "I'm not disagreeing with the law, I respect and understand the law. But the law says I cannot have a structure or a building and I don't. I have a sculpture," he said. "I never thought when I built my sculpture it would come to this."

The San Diego Municipal Code violations defines a "structure" as "an edifice or building of any kind or any construction built up or composed of parts joined together in some definite manner including a wall, fence, pier, post, sign, or shelter." Further, an "accessory structure" is "a structure attached to or detached from a primary structure located on



La Jolla artist Nasser Pirasteh with the sculpture the city claims is an 'accessory structure' on his property.

the same premises that is customarily incidental and subordinate to the primary structure or use. The term accessory structure includes accessory buildings."

The city's notice indicates Pirasteh constructed an accessory structure.

If so, he jokes, it wouldn't be a very useful one. "The sculpture is less than 120 square feet, with openings that cannot be closed, so if it rains, rain is going to get in. If the wind blows, it's going to be windy in there," he said.

Rather than take the installation down, Pirasteh said he has been searching for a compromise the city might find amenable.

"There are plenty of things I see being added to the neighborhood that I don't like, such as balconies, decks or other additions to homes, which I have to look at, but I understand it's their home, so they can do that," he said. Pirasteh added when these home additions are going through the approval process, there needs to be a certain number of people who support it. Comparing that to his situation, he suggested the city poll his neighbors.

"Many others have supported me on this, people have come from the neighborhood to tell me they support me," he said.

An alternative, he suggested, is to have the city provide a location where Pirasteh could move the installation, so it could still serve its artistic purpose.

"I don't have room on the property to move it somewhere else on site (so it doesn't face the street). But if we can find a place for it, I'll move it," he said. "But the city is not offering any other solutions and I'm sure a compromise can be found here."

If no such compromise can be found by the May 7 deadline, Pirasteh said he plans to appeal the city's decision. "I'm going to fight this ... If I lose, I'd want to lose with a solid understanding so I can hold my head high. But I didn't build this (sculpture) just to tear it down."

NOT YET IN THE MLS!



4 bed, 3 bath | \$1,240,000
North Pacific Beach remodel one block to Kate Sessions Park, with panoramic ocean and bay views.



OPEN SAT 8-3 SUN 12-3H
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Sculpture or Structure?

City tells La Jolla artist to take down installation

BY ASHLEY MACKIN

If you've driven down Nautilus Street any time in the last year, odds are you've seen the work by sculptor and La Jolla resident Nasser Pirasteh. His front yard at 6706 Avenida Manana is home to more than 50 sculptures, ranging from pocket-sized to ones larger than a person. But one piece in particular has the City of San Diego asking whether it is just another artistic sculpture or an illegal structure.

The 10-foot dome-like piece with artistic components on the interior and exterior (the exterior is visible from the street) is tall enough for more than one person to enter and sit inside the installation. There are also windows to provide and indoor/outdoor effect. As such, it has raised the concern of neighbors—and the City of San Diego, so much so that the city has issued a notice to the Pirasteh installing

the piece must be removed.

According to a statement issued by San Diego Development Services Code Enforcement, "A Civil Penalty Notice and Order (notice) was issued on March 8, 2016 for an unpermitted accessory structure constructed in the front yard. The residential development regulations prohibit structures (as defined in the San Diego Municipal Code) to be constructed within the front yard setback area. The Notice requires the removal of the structure from the front yard by May 7, 2016."

Pirasteh faces fines of up to \$2,500 per day, per violation, should he fail to comply.

The San Diego Municipal Code defines a "structure" as "an edifice or building of any kind or any construction built up or composed of parts joined together in some definite manner including a wall, fence, pier, post, sign, or shelter." Further, an "accessory structure" means "a structure attached to or detached from a primary structure located on the same premises that is customarily incidental and subordinate to the primary



ASHLEY MACKIN

La Jolla artist Nasser Pirasteh with the sculpture in his front yard the City of San Diego claims is a structure without a permit that needs to come down.

structure or use. The term accessory structure includes accessory buildings."

However, Pirasteh is unconvinced what he has built constitutes a "structure" or "accessory structure," and said he plans to appeal the city's request.

He told *La Jolla Light*, "In my opinion, the definition of sculpture and the definition of a structure need to be looked at fairly. When it comes to structures, they have all

the rights, rules and regulations, but ... this is a sculpture."

Of its encapsulating nature, he added, "Sometimes we hug a sculpture, sometimes the sculpture bugs us. I feel like the city is not giving me anything to make the city beautiful, but they are ready to punish me and that's unfair. I am a public artist, we do things to make the area more beautiful."

Although a neighbor generated the complaint to the city, several

other neighbors have rallied to Pirasteh's side.

John Humphrey, who lives in La Jolla part time, said the installation gave him an emotional response as only art can. "I was jogging and there are about a mile of houses between where I'm living and here, and this house is the only thing I've ever responded to emotionally. It stopped me in my tracks," he said. "What is here provides a certain beauty that you don't see in most



ASHLEY MACKIN

The view of Nasser Pirasteh's sculpture from the street.

neighborhoods. For someone like me who is from the Midwest, La Jolla's beauty brings up a lot of emotions. When you add something like this, it's a whole other component that I would hope the Village would build off of."

Added friend and neighbor Nile Elwandani, "I grew up in La Jolla and it's always been an artistic

community ... from a pragmatic standpoint, I don't see how he is breaking the law. (The piece is) on his privately owned property, it's not tall ... and it's one of many sculptures in the front yard. I'm sitting on a sculpture that doubles as a bench, does that make it a structure? There is a tree house, does that make it a structure?" She opened, "Art has become

something that you are not supposed to touch, and that's why people don't relate to art anymore. They have to keep an arm's distance away from it. They can't interact with it, so it doesn't touch them emotionally. It's great to be able to sit in a piece of art or go inside a piece of art."

Agreeing with her, neighbor Ellen Jacobs added, "I would love to see it

stay where it is. The entire outside is full of sculpture and he's given us an outdoor gallery. It's so generous and so wonderful. For a city that purports to care about public art to not honor what he has done seems really ridiculous."

Pirasteh said he spent nine months constructing the piece. "I was constantly redrawing and reworking it, so it has been a work

in progress for months. The philosophy I have is that when you have an abstract idea in your mind, it can look one way, but once you have it in a tangible form, it takes different shapes, so gradually I had to work on it continuously."

Now that it's complete, he said he has no intention of taking it down. He said he has a hearing scheduled to appeal the city's request.

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ART: To be or not to be? This is the question.

BY NILE EL WARDANI, PH.D.

These days La Jolla is struggling to find its center, its identity. Will La Jolla be allowed to be an artistic village by the sea, as it started out to be? Or will conservative

homogeneity take over?

There is a new fight in town. Perhaps it will replace the decades-long fight over whether the sea lions or the children should inhabit the Children's Pool? The new fight: ART, to be or not to be? This is the question.

Seuss were creating his eccentric home and art in La Jolla today, would his neighbors (and San

Diego) city threaten to destroy it?

Just up the hill from Mainland Middle School is the home of one of La Jolla's living eclectic/fascinating artists. Nasser Pirasteh designed and built with his wife Zari; their exceptional and rare home, from the ground up. Their home is surrounded by Nasser's art. There is a huge mural of flying horses, more than 60 sculptures of stone and metal, a super fantastic

GUEST COMMENTARY

Gaudi-esque water fountain in the shape of a huge fish and so much more. Nasser is totally inspired by nature. Fish and horses play and swim throughout the garden overlooking the Pacific Ocean. Local school children stop by daily to admire the beautiful home, where adults and youth regularly stop by to take art classes. It was my son and his friend that brought my attention to the home when we drove by "Look at that awesome place!"

But build on to your hat, a new sculpture that Nasser spent 10 months erecting is under attack. It is in the shape of a dome and looks like Mother Earth's spacecraft, but not just any spacecraft. This craft transports one's imagination in to the starry midnight skies and deep into the sea where soft corals sway and sea anemones protect clown fish. This innocent sculpture, apparently, is not loved by all. Did everyone love Barcelona's Gaudi or La Jolla's Dr. Seuss in their day? Someone lodged a complaint and the City of San Diego has threatened Nasser with destruction. Beginning May 8 — if the sculpture is not demolished — the City will fine Nasser and Zari \$2,500 a day. The city has not yet scheduled a public hearing,

which was requested in writing by the couple on March 17. This seems illegal or unconstitutional or downright unfair, penalties before a hearing? Assumed guilty before proven innocent? Is this American? Important facts: This sculpture is on Nasser's private property and Nasser has an impressive resume as an internationally recognized artist.

So while La Jolla tussles for its newfound identity with the commission of 14 new murals going up around town (BLAH BLAH BLAH — enough said) others are trying to strip La Jolla of its identity as an artistic village by the sea.

Where do you stand? Stop by the corner of Nautilus Street and Avenida Mainan and share your feeling on art in La Jolla. The sculpture has come to life and has shared its story on the big white wall surrounding its home. You are welcome to write or draw whatever you like in response. The arts of La Jolla and San Diego need to unite on this issue. Nasser hopes to receive support from fellow artists. For a start, muralist Lorenzo Huasteco, who painted the mural in La Jolla Shores and Murals of La Jolla curators ought to stop by and partake of Nasser's art. The people of La Jolla and San Diego can also have their say, a chance to vote between conservative homogeneity or artistic expression. My vote: ART — Let it be.

OUR READERS WRITE



La Jolla artist Nasser Pirasteh with his sculpture, which the city claims is an "accessory structure" on his property and visible from Nautilus Street.

Citizens must rally in support of artwork

As three-year residents of La Jolla, we have been learning about the wonderful heritage of art expression in this special neighborhood of San Diego. From the Museum of Contemporary Art to Dr. Seuss to the outdoor performances of the La Jolla Playhouse and UCSD, it's a place that celebrates the unusual and idiosyncratic.

The whimsical private sculpture garden of professional artist and teacher Nasser Pirasteh, set along a roadway frequented by middle school and high school kids and their parents, reminds the next generation every day that art is to be seen and not hidden away. Except when the City of San Diego decides to apply local building codes to an obvious gazebo.

Will our city leaders blindly follow rules meant for greedy landlords and selfish iconoclasts or make a thoughtful exception in the name of personal expression and beneficial art? We hope enough San Diego citizens stand up for an urban environment that allows for the occasional exception to the rule.

Grant and Yvonne Bentley

POLL OF THE WEEK at lajollalight.com

Last week's poll results: Yes: 50% No: 50%

This week's poll: **Does it upset you to see people's dogs inside public buildings?**

Yes No

Answer on the homepage at lajollalight.com

OUR READERS WRITE (CONTINUED)

Do not miss the craftsmanship in disputed artwork

The photo you printed of Nasser Pirasteh's disputed sculpture unfairly misrepresents it. In the rendering, it appears to be a carelessly painted hovel. In fact, the sculpture is a meticulously designed and exquisitely crafted study in filtered and reflected light, comprised of costly and fascinating materials: a penetrable prism at least as worthy of long study as the local murals touted by your newspapers.

Pirasteh's presence in the doorway demonstrates that this "structure" is scarcely larger than any humdrum gazebo, which homeowners may purchase and install in their yards without recrimination — but no one inhabits it or throws parties in it. Your article neglects to mention that Pirasteh's entire yard constitutes an outdoor museum of remarkable original sculptures. In my view, just his extraordinarily beautiful mural of galloping horses along the north wall of the property qualifies this home for landmark status. I wish he lived next door to me in fairness to a gifted artist, who generously makes his creations visible to us all, surely this work should be regarded as but a single formal — not utilitarian — element integrated within a uniquely lovely garden.

Freya Smallwood

Here's more support for artwork's survival

La Jolla, as aptly meaning "beautiful," should encourage the introduction of beautiful artworks and not discourage them, let alone destroy them.

Both sides of Nautilus Road connecting the top of Soledad Mountain to the Pacific Ocean have special magical appeal to visitors of La Jolla. Without a doubt, this particular artwork of Nasser Pirasteh under question — strategically located with full view for the passerby — adds beauty to the ambience without intruding or interfering with anything or anybody.

There seems to be lack of knowledge for understanding the definition of installation

art. I've been using Nautilus from Soledad Mountain down to the edge of ocean for my daily meditation practice for the past 18 years and will definitely be sad not to see this colorful sculpture if it is removed.

Emil Zolfaghari
An 85-years-young citizen

New mural detracts from Shores' beauty

Walking home recently, I looked up to see the "painting" above the taco shop here in the Shores. I am horrified! It is "visual pollution." It does not belong on a building exterior, possibly in a gallery, and then one may choose to see it. I have not that choice. We have enough distractions in our lives. We do not need this attack on our senses. I am disgusted. It is sanctimonious graffiti. Shame on you, La Jolla!

Katherine Henry

Beware of 'service dog' scammers

I, totally, agree with Joanie Connell (letters April 21 issue) regarding dogs in Vons — or any other stores or restaurants, for that matter. It has become apparent the "service/emotional" dog certification is a poorly regulated business that it is used by people who, basically, only want to take their dogs into public places where their dogs would not, otherwise, be allowed. I've spoken to the Vons' manager and have even written to Congress on Scott Peters' office regarding this abuse of a privilege that it is used by some, but has served out of control.

The ADA states that a "service animal" must perform a special task for the owner, and stores have a right to ask exactly what service the dog performs. To say that you need to "pet the animal," does not qualify.

After tripping over a dog inside Vons, I called the ADA to verify the rules. Stores seem to be intimidated, and afraid to ask dog-bringing shoppers "what service is performed?" Many times Vons looks like a pet shop. One day there were three dogs in the store — a pink poodle, a Chihuahua in a

rat sitting on his dirty blanket, and a very nervous and unhappy terrier.

Vons, and other stores, should not allow this abuse to continue as it cheapens the needs of a people who have REAL needs for help. Also, the law should be changed to specify what qualifies as a "service animal" and even in the companies on the Internet selling service dog documentation, and little vests, for around \$39.95.

As a side note, I'm not some old crank who hates animals, but quite the contrary. I've always had pets and support way too many animal causes. To bring disability just to take your dog along with you is a disgrace. It's an abuse of a good law and a slap in the face to people with REAL needs. Write your Congressman to insist on regulations regarding qualifications for service animals, and speak with Vons, and other stores, that turn their backs on this abuse.

Mary Hayes

Dogs don't belong inside grocery stores

Rudes to Joanie Connell for bringing up the subject of dogs in our local grocery store, via a letter in the April 21 La Jolla Light. As a caretaker of canines, we've had dogs in our household in La Jolla for 25 years plus. It is a joy to walk them in the Village and be greeted by merchants happy to offer them a cool drink or a treat.

However, the grocery store is not a place for our pet! I cringe watching folks bring their dogs — yes, sometimes two — into the store as they pursue the produce!

On Monday I watched as a female shopper bring her fussy friend in the shopping cart basket and then proceeded into the store. Outraged! What if I place my child/grandchild there and they are allergic to dogs?

These dogs are not certified service dogs, so let's please leave our canine companions at home!

Cristina Sear

Proud to see local volunteers in action

As a native La Jollan of 57 years, I want to

draw attention and praise for jobs well done: First: I walk the Shores Beach regularly and have noted how well maintained the beach looks lately. This beach has not looked this good for decades!

Second: Contrary to a long-standing trend to leave in disrepair maintenance to unresponsive, inefficient and expensive government bureaucracies, it is refreshing to see how community volunteerism and collaboration can band together to fix our deferred maintenance issues. The refurbishing of the Mt. Soledad Memorial by responsive, efficient, and cost-minded locals is getting the job done in our lifetime.

Cameron Campbell

St. Jordi's Day fest at Warwick's was fun

Everyone agrees that Warwick's is indeed one of the treasures of La Jolla. Saturday, Warwick's celebrated the Catalan festival of books, roses and love, bringing this grand tradition of St. Jordi's Day from Spain to La Jolla.

Myrna Naegle

CORRECTION

The photo-caption in the April 7 feature on the San Diego Crew Classic should have stated that Michael and Liz Copley present The Copley Cup every year at the rowing regatta, and that the award is sponsored by the Copley family and the David C. Copley Foundation.

What's on YOUR mind?

Letters to the Editor for publication in La Jolla Light should be 250 words or less, e-mailed to editor@lajollalight.com and must include the full name of the sender, city of residence and phone number for verification. Note: The content of letters are not the opinions of La Jolla Light.

Concours Best of Show: 1936 Delahaye competition convertible

BY SUSAN DEMAGGIO
The Best of Show trophy and French Curves Class winner at the La Jolla Concours d'Elegance at Scripps Park on April 10 went to the 1936 Delahaye 135 Competition Disappearing Top Convertible, owned by Ken and Ann Smith of La Jolla and Rancho Santa Fe.

The Smiths believe it exemplifies the very best of the golden years of automotive design, "a one-off piece" by famed coachbuilders Figoni & Falaschi of Paris, considered the finest craftsmen of the period. The 3.5-liter six-cylinder Figoni Delahaye which Ken Smith gusses to be worth \$12-\$15 million) was the first of the streamlined competition cars.

"I bought it from a Southern California car collector; saw it at a show and went weak in the knees," Smith said. He explained that these cars were equally at home on the streets of France as one of the many weekend race rallies of the

SEE CONOURS, A24



No stranger to the Concours scene, this '36 Delahaye has won more than 20 Best of Show awards from other events and has been consistently judged by the Classic Car Club of America at 100 points, a perfect score in their highest Premier Level. Club Delahaye France authenticates it to be correct in all respects and numbers matching original records.

COURTESY

OUR READERS WRITE

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PEARL PRESS



JANE WHEELER

Support for artwork grows — Children from the neighborhood arrive last week to leave words of encouragement on artist Nasser Pirasteh's wall at Nautilus Street and Avenida de Manana in an effort to help him keep his art sculpture up in his front yard.

Nasser Pirasteh with the artwork in question at his La Jolla property.

Time to 'Make Art, Not War'

"Without fine art civilization will die" is the core of Nasser Pirasteh's art. He creates and shares his love of art for our community to see and experience. Residents of all ages have passed by the corner of Nautilus Street and Avenida Manana and felt the whimsy, delight and joy from his work. Having art alive in the community has created some of the most intriguing cities in the world — Barcelona, Paris and Rome, to name a few.

Art is here to inspire and create wonder for all ages. It is expressed from the soul of the artist and flows out to affect the viewer in numerous magical ways.

It is time for art to play an important role in our community and all communities so its transformational qualities can be expressed.

It is interesting that numerous McMansions in our Village and Blind Rock have been approved by the city, yet a simple Gaudi-like sculpture is threatened to be destroyed, one that a child would love to play in all day.

The awe-inspiring Watts Tower Sculpture in Los Angeles was almost demolished, yet because community members loved it and fought for it, it's now a place-maker for the area and an art center for the community, as well as a catalyst for change and gentrification.

We should be grateful to have a fine artist like Nasser in our Village and embrace his art alive in our neighborhood. Please support him by signing the petition to save his sculpture, write him a letter, or sign your name and a message on his wall. To sign the online petition, visit bit.ly/Artpetition

Jane Wheeler

Fanmaker, Blind Rock Artist Guild

More support for artwork

My name is Lily Gover and I'm in the fourth grade at the Gillispie School. On April 21 you wrote that Nasser Pirasteh has to tear down his structure at 6708 Avenida Manana or pay a \$250,000 fee. Will you please write just one sentence in your next newspaper about how silly that is? I drive past it everyday on my way to school and think how pretty it is. Without it, that road would not be the same.

P.S. I really enjoy reading your newspaper. It is so interesting!

Lily Gover

One's joy is another's not-joy

It is difficult to understand why anyone would object to Nasser Pirasteh's work of art. It is always a joy to see what he has done to entertain us on our trips up and down Nautilus Street. I do hope there will be a solution in his favor.

As for the complaint last week about the dogs in Vons, I am in the store at least once every week and I have never encountered an unruly dog blocking the aisle or making any kind of disturbance. Like Mr. Pirasteh's artwork, the dogs always bring a smile to my face and a happier experience grocery shopping.

There are many more important things to grouch about, for instance, those two monstrosities on Neptune, the ruination of the "living room" in La Valencia Hotel, and other large buildings destroying the Village atmosphere we cherish.

Dorothy Andersen

POLL OF THE WEEK at lajollalight.com

Last week's poll results:

Does it upset you to see dogs in public buildings?

See story Page A3

■ Yes: 62%
■ No: 38%

This week's poll:

Will the caution sign posted at The Cove by the health department deter you from swimming there?

See story on Page A1

□ Yes □ No

Answer on the homepage at lajollalight.com

OUR READERS WRITE (CONTINUED)

Re: Dogs and art — The law is the law

I agree that we in La Jolla have a "dog problem." You can't blame the dogs; it's really about the owners. The owners, unfortunately, have become rather presumptuous and inconsiderate. So many of them allow their dogs to foul lawns, yards, etc. They also allow them to run unleashed on our beaches. And we all know that bringing dogs inside Vons (and many other stores) is against all health codes. Laws are laws, why do dog owners consider themselves exempt?

With regard to the "art" at the Pirasteh house, it is obvious that this is a structure. This particular house is so out of character with the neighborhood that it doesn't surprise me that Pirasteh would presume to place a monstrosity in his front yard for all to see, like it or not. The art we see around the Village is in a public place; Pirasteh's is most definitely not. This is a residential area, not an art exhibit. Allowing an exception here will only encourage others to do the same, and this slippery slope is why the city should enforce its rules and regulations.

Dog owners and homeowners are — surprised — subject to the reach of the law. If they would only accept this, our neighborhood would be much improved.

Bill Smith

Dogs have rights, too

The majority of people who take their dogs into stores are people who care about their pets. They pick up after them, keep them clean and groomed, and train them to behave in public. On a hot day they don't want to leave them in a car or tied up where they can be frightened or stolen. A toddler with a runny nose or dirty diaper can spread more germs on a grocery store cart than a leashed dog can by walking down a store aisle. I hope store managers will welcome all customers, four-legged or two.

Alicia Quackenbush

Discrimination doesn't belong in stores

As a five-year resident of La Jolla and an individual living with an invisible disability, I'm compelled to share my perspective regarding comments about dogs in Vons. I am sadly not surprised by the harsh

judgments of the general public who tend to discriminate against people who bring dogs into stores. What gives people the right to judge someone based upon how they look as to whether or not they are legitimately disabled?

Do you know the struggles some people endure on a daily basis? Surely not. How could you possibly know if someone is "feigning a disability?" This prolific ignorance is a problem in society. Instead of complaining about ADA laws that allow disabled people autonomy, why don't you practice compassion?

Chances are you know someone who is struggling with simple tasks that you take for granted, i.e., going to the grocery store. If a dog helps them achieve independence, why be so quick to judge?

The Vons in La Jolla should be celebrated for its consideration in allowing dogs of all kinds. It is the only store I've been to where I've not been assaulted by ignorance when I bring my small service dog with me, and it is a respite from the public's judging stares.

As for writing your Congressman to "insist on regulations regarding qualifications for service animals," I say that unless you suffer from some serious dog-related affliction, you do something better with your time like educating yourself about invisible disabilities. Who knows? You might become part of the solution rather than the problem. More at invisibleabilities.org, fmaware.org and ehlers-danlos.com

Name withheld by request

New La Jolla mural clashes with Village

In tenor with the letter printed in the April 28 La Jolla Light issue, the mural outside the Galaxy Taco building at La Jolla Shores should be moved inside where it would harmonize and blend with the decor of the establishment. Outside, facing the seashore, it appears as a glaring affront to the tranquil ambience of our Village.

John S. Armstrong

Cruelty to sea lions is truly inhumane

A baby sea lion was born on the beach at La Jolla Cove Friday, April 29. What I witnessed after that both broke my heart and enraged me. A mob of tourists pushed in to take photos and selfies with a clearly

distressed mother sea lion. The lifeguards and Parks & Rec representative did nothing to intervene as dozens of people crowded in. One civilian gentleman begged the mother to back away but to no avail. At some point the mother seemed to reject the pup, no doubt, in part due to the human interference.

I was later told that the lifeguards and Parks & Rec have been told to stand down and not intervene as humans harass the marine mammals because the powers that be want them gone. I have even witnessed a family putting a sick and starving sea lion too weak to even lift its head in protest. I rushed over to tell the lifeguards at The Cove and they simply shrugged.

Surely the good people of La Jolla do not support this level of animal cruelty.

Janet St. Aubin
Webster, New York

Sea lions are not the problem

I'm a 28-year resident and business owner in La Jolla, and yes, I could do without the stretch, but not at the expense of having the sea lions driven away. I'm a believer that the stretch comes mainly from the avian friends that populate the north side of The Cove, where we feed it the most. The sea lions have made The Cove their home and they are a main attraction for tourists in the Village.

I propose an experiment be done: Limit the birds from occupying the area north of The Cove to see what the results will be. Open that area to the public and place picnic tables there so people would be attracted to it. Of course it would have to go through some real cleaning first! This would perhaps drive the birds away further north. The sea lions are not the problem!

Norma K.

Shorts sought for Vikings film fest

I'm Jacob Ohara, a sophomore at La Jolla High School. This year I am taking over the Fifth Annual La Jolla Film Festival from a few L.JHS grads. This film festival is open to all high school students in the San Diego area and we are hoping to spread the word about entering through the La Jolla Light.

The rules are simple: the films must be under 8 minutes long and include a balloon of any kind. Submissions are due online by

May 20 at lajollafilmmfestival.com. Winners will be selected and notified by May 27. The show will take place 7:30-9:30 p.m., Saturday, June 4 at La Jolla High School. All details are on the website.

Jacob Ohara

Any handball players in town?

I'm new in La Jolla and looking to find some handball players to play at La Jolla Athletic Club, 1250 Prospect St. I was told by the manager that the courts are hardly used. There must be some players here! Please advise how I might reach out to prospective players.

Jerrey Allen

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Time to curb events in La Jolla

It seems to me that La Jolla hosts a disproportionate amount of so-called "special events" that disrupt traffic, not only to and from La Jolla, but also inside La Jolla itself. It is not only aggravating for La Jolla residents, but also for the people who are trying to enter La Jolla and for those trying to get around once in La Jolla.

It's time for other places in San Diego to do their share of hosting so-called "special events" and to bear some of the disruptions that these events cause. I'm sure their merchants would also like a share of this pie!

CORRECTION

The April 28 story "Cheetah Charity Runners seek others to help kids with cancer," should have had the spelling of the founders' names as James and Cheryl Sheremeta. Also, the organization website address is: cheetahcharityrunners.org

What's on YOUR mind?

■ **Letters to the Editor** for publication in La Jolla Light should be 250 words or less, and e-mailed to editor@lajollalight.com and must include the full name of the sender, city of residence and phone number for verification. Note: The content of letters are not the opinions of La Jolla Light.

Rockin' event raises funds for Muirlands Middle School

The band Indigo Drive played for the crowd at the annual Muirlands Rocks event, 2-5 p.m. May 1 on middle school grounds at 1056 Nautilus St. The fundraiser featured student performances, games and activities, food and prizes to benefit the Muirlands Middle School Foundation and was open to the public.



Silly poses make joyous memories in the photo booth.



Indigo Drive takes the stage to entertain.

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