



Las Virgenes Homeowners Federation, Inc.

Post Office Box 353, Agoura Hills, California 91301



MARCH, 2005, MEETING (www.lvhf.org)

Thursday, MARCH 17th, 2005, 7:30 P.M.

The Place – Diamond X – Take Las Virgenes to Mulholland; turn left on Mulholland. For the next 3/4 mile, Soka will be on your right, and the proposed Malibu Valley Inn will be on your left. After you've passed Stokes Canyon Road, in about 3/4 mile, you will see a sign on your right with "Diamond X" and the National Park Service logo on it. A short distance past the sign a narrow road goes south at a right angle. This is Wickland Road, and, at this point you are entering the Soka property. Follow Wickland about 300 yards until the road forks; take the left-hand fork; keep bearing left to lighted house. Park; get out of your car; go into the lighted part of the house.

Call to Order

Officers' Reports

Roll Call

Mountain Racing Discussion

Agenda Changes/ Approval

Correspondence/ Announcements

Approval of February Meeting Minutes

Delegates Reports

**Special Guest(s): Barry Groveman, Calabasas City Mayor Pro Tem
Sheriff Sergeant Phil Brooks
Traffic Deputy John Coffrey.**

Old Business/ Reports

Malibu Valley Inn - update

Soka/King Gillette Ranch Committee – Update

Spotlight the Arts - update

New Business

The Calabasas Election - update

MARCH, 2005, NEWSLETTER

Back in olden tymes – about twelve years ago to be exact – there were still great dragons stalking the land of **Las Virgenes**, threatening to destroy our beautiful hills, slay thousands of our venerated oak trees, and clog our narrow streets and roads with a great host of vehicles.

The **Great Dragon of the North** was called “**Ahmanson**”. It was a mighty monster indeed, able to rearrange the very earth itself and convert great hills into golf courses and shopping malls, to the detriment of the beauty of our land, our ancient oak trees, and the wild beasts of the field, and to send forth a vast army of mechanical creatures to poison the air we breathe and prevent us from reaching our homes and workplaces in a timely manner.



Then there was also the **Great Dragon of the South**, known as “**Soka**”. It was also a great fire-breathing monster that stalked the entire earth, spewing out an inexhaustible supply of gold, with which it bought the favors of princes, kings, and lesser knaves. “Soka” was determined to make its lair in the beautiful **Las Virgenes Valley**, whatever the cost, so that it could build a great, palatial “university” there that would be larger than most shopping malls and would house a great host of students and also send forth many vehicles to poison our air and clog our narrow streets to overflowing.



The poor peasants of **Las Virgenes** feared mightily as great shadows seemed to cover the land, but they did not despair, as they looked far and wide for a brave champion who would sally forth and do battle with “**Soka**” and slay the “Great Dragon of the South”.

One day their champion appeared, a great knight named “**Edmiston**”, mounted on a white stallion named “**Conservancy**”. First “Edmiston” tried to lure the “**Great Dragon of the South**” from his lair with promises of gold, but the Dragon only snorted loudly, roared frightfully, and sent great fires out of his mouth and nostrils forcing “Edmiston” to back off.

“Edmiston” then lowered his lance and rode “Conservancy” to the courthouse where he filed with the magistrates a great writ of “**eminent domain**” to force “**Soka**” to sell his lair to the people and forsake his plans for a “university”.

With this “**Soka**” came roaring out of his lair, breathing fire and brimstone, and sent forth knaves to hire a host of politicians to torment “**Edmiston**” and take away his revenues so that he could not purchase Soka’s lair. Soon these knaves had arrayed a host of politicians against “Edmiston” and he was fighting for his political life, as dark shadows came to cover the land.

On one of the darkest of those days when dragons still lived and stalked the land, I found myself in a hearing room in the **State Capitol** in **Sacramento**. A delegation of residents of **Monte Nido** and **Calabasas Highlands** had made a quick trip to Sacramento to try to head off **Soka's** latest attempt to crush the Conservancy. We faced a committee of hostile or indifferent legislators in a hearing room dominated by a huge painting of Yosemite Valley.

I remember pointing to the painting behind the Committee and trying to use it as a "prop" to explain the importance of **Soka** in relation to the peaks and buttes of the **Santa Monica Mountains** around it.

The battle to save "**Soka's**" valley ebbed and flowed for twelve more years. The princes of the land finally worked out a compromise that would allow "Soka" to keep most of his beautiful valley and build a smaller "University", but the peasants hired an "Angel" learned in the law and, against all odds, blocked that plan before the magistrates. Still "Soka" stayed in his lair and refused to sell.

The years went by and it came to pass last Friday, that **Jim Wrigley** and I once again found ourselves in a hearing room in the **Old Capitol** in **Sacramento**. There, dominating the backdrop of the dais, was the same huge painting of Yosemite Valley.

At 10:00 A.M. promptly, three **Schwarzenegger Administration** officials, representing **Caltrans**, the **General Services Administration**, and the **Department of Finance** came into the room and took their seats as the **State Public Works Board**. The last item on their agenda was to sign off on the expenditure of **\$7.15 million** in park bond funds by the **California Department of Parks and Recreation** to purchase **102 acres** of "**Soka University**".

Going into the meeting, somewhere between \$28 and \$29 million had been assembled toward the **\$35 million** required to consummate the purchase of Soka. Approval of the \$7.15 million would put the figure over \$35 million and the "**Great Dragon of the South**" would have to sell his entire beautiful valley.

By about 10:35 the **Public Works Board** had disposed of the rest of its agenda and took up Item 17, the Soka purchase. State parks made a short presentation, **Fran Pavley's** representative, **Jim Wrigley**, and I spoke briefly. Once again I used the painting of Yosemite Valley to show the similar relationship of **Soka** to the mountains and canyons surrounding it.

The **Public Works Board** had no questions and, without further discussion, at 10:47 A.M. moved, seconded, and voted unanimously to approve the purchase of the 102 acres.

At that moment, “**Soka**”, aka “**The Great Dragon of the South**” began to fade into the mists of the land of “Neverbe”, soon to join the late “**Ahmanson**”, the “**Great Dragon of the North**” as a home for oak trees, wild creatures, and happy children to the seventh generation.

After a few pleasantries, “**Edmiston**” mounted “**Conservancy**” and rode off to look for other dragons.

According to papers that flew out of “**Edmiston’s**” saddlebags as he reared up one last time before dashing off on “**Conservancy**”, he will exercise his **option** to acquire **Soka** for **\$35 million** on **Monday**, the 14th - one day before the deadline. **Escrow** will close on **April 14th**, again one day before the deadline.

Under the purchase agreement, **Soka** will remain in possession of the buildings in the central part of the property until December, 2007, when its current class graduates. **State Parks** will take possession of the 102 acres – which includes a spectacular viewsite – immediately. The **National Park Service** will take possession of about 76 acres south and east of Diamond X, bringing their total ownership in the valley up to about 115 acres. The **Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy** will own about 410 acres of Soka, including the entire frontage on Mulholland. About ¾ of this land will have limitations on recreational development to meet the requirements of the \$5 million grant from the Wildlife Conservation Board. As it stands now, **Soka** will remain in possession of all Conservancy land east of Wickland Road until December, 2007.

The consortium of park agencies that is buying **Soka** will have to wait almost three years before there can be full public use of the property, due to an agreement with Soka that knocked \$2 million off the purchase price in return for continued use of the buildings.

During that intervening three-year transition period, (to quote a Conservancy memo) “A **joint agency planning process** will take place involving **National Park Service, State Parks, and the Conservancy/MRCA**. We expect that emerging from that public participation process will be a joint park administration between NPS and State Parks, visitor-serving information opportunities, as well as appropriate public access and utilization of the historic King Gillette Mansion.”

The Federation may want to schedule a presentation on the Soka planning process at a future meeting. Affected associations and interested individuals should make sure they are on the mailing lists for participation in that planning process.

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Malibu Valley Inn EIR is out for Public Comment

The **Environmental Impact Report** for the **Malibu Valley Inn** is out for public review and comment. Public comments on the adequacy of the **EIR** must be received within **45 days**, ending on **April 25th**. (**CPO, The Federation** and others have already asked that the comment period be extended due to the large size of the document, but as of now it stands at 45 days).

Two copies of the **EIR** are available for public viewing at the **Calabasas City Hall 26135 Mureau Road** and another two copies are available at the **Calabasas Public Library, 23975 Park Sorrento**. Copies of the EIR on **CD-Rom** have been made available to every known **HOA** in Calabasas. A pair of **CDs** covering the entire EIR may be obtained at \$12.00 per CD or \$24.00 for the pair at **Kinko's** in the **El Camino Center at 23305 Mulholland, Woodland Hills**. For more information about the **Malibu Valley Inn**, call **Tom Bartlett** at **878-4225 x234** or log on to the **Calabasas website** www.cityofcalabasa.com.

A **Notice of Availability for Public Review** has been sent out to “interested individuals” by the City. It lists the “project title” as “**Malibu Valley Spa & Inn**”, described as “a full service, equestrian oriented resort on a **141.76 acre site**.”

“Residential accommodations would consist of **203 guest units** including a variety of hotel guest rooms, cottages, villas, executive suites, and a presidential suite.”

“Guest services and **recreational facilities** would include a **swimming and tennis club, spa and fitness center, signature restaurant, small boutique retail establishments, and a small privately operated wine tasting/dining facility**. The onsite recreational and dining facilities would be available for use by the general public ...” “Two **additional guest service structures**” would include “a **reception building**, (equipped with lobby, casual restaurant, and boutique retail areas) and a **conference center** (with ballroom, small meeting rooms, and housekeeping.)”

“The proposed buildings would be one, two and three level structures ... with surface and subterranean parking areas. Vehicle parking for guests would be primarily concentrated in two underground parking structures. Five custom single-family residences are also proposed ... “

“The resort facilities would constitute **291,489 square feet**, (not including surface and underground parking) and would occupy a development area of

approximately **81.7 acres**. The existing **Malibu Valley Farms Equestrian Facility** ... would cooperatively operate with the **Malibu Valley Inn and Spa.**”

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“Mulholland Raceway” Update

In addition to **Soka** and the **Malibu Valley Spa and Inn**, a significant part of **Thursday night’s meeting** will be devoted to reports and updates on the **“Mulholland raceway”** – the continuing problem of speeding and organized racing on **Mulholland** and other mountain and canyon roads in our community.

Our **special guests** will be **Calabasas Councilmember Barry Groveman** accompanied by **Sheriff Sergeant Phil Brooks** and **Traffic Deputy John Coffrey**. There will be updates and reports on what has been accomplished since our last meeting on this issue a couple of months ago and discussion of what further things we need to do or get our elected officials to do.

If you think this problem is being created by just a few rowdy local teenagers, you can disabuse yourself of that notion by logging on to a **website** run by the “hotrodders” known as www.mulhollandraceway.com. This is a well-planned, well-organized, and well-scouted regional effort, and it can be dealt with only if we are as well organized as the “bad guys”. So let’s get going! Come Thursday night!

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Conservancy comments on Agoura Village Master Plan

The **Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy** has submitted a comment letter critical of the **Agoura Village Master Plan**, a mixed use development proposal including, office commercial, retail, a hotel, and residential townhomes and apartments along **Agoura Road** east and west of **Kanan** and along Kanan from Agoura Road southward.

In a recent comment letter to **Agoura Hills**, the **Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy** called this location “a major **gateway** to the **Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area** ... The subject specific plan must maximize avoidance of biological and aesthetic impacts in the sensitive portion of the Santa Monica Mountains.”

The Conservancy expressed concerns about the impact of the project on the habitat linkage connecting **Ladyface Mountain** with hills to the east across the narrow gap just south of Agoura Road. There was also interest in minimizing

impacts on the riparian habitat of **Lindero** and **Medea** Creeks, which come together in the southern part of the property.

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Calabasas looking into Neighborhood Conservation Overlay Zones

The **Calabasas Community Development Department** has decided to see if any of the many communities in **Calabasas** would be interested the creation of a special **Neighborhood Conservation Overlay Zone** that would provide protection for the special architectural character and “spatial relationships” of that neighborhood, in the face of “creeping mansionization” in many parts of the City.

These overlay zones would provide special design, setback, size, and height restrictions tailored to the character of that specific community, as opposed to the “boiler plate”, standardized provisions of the Development Code.

These overlay zones would be independent of any **CC&Rs** in that community, which would still exist as private agreements. (However, CC&Rs were usually the creation of the original builder and designed to address his concerns, often without input from home buyers. They are often incomplete, and many have already expired, whereas, the overlay zones would be drafted to meet the wishes and needs of the current residents of that community, could be amended by the City Council to meet new concerns, and would be enforceable by the City.

With the next few weeks, the City plans to send out **surveys** to property owners in each community to determine if that community is interested in developing neighborhood conservation standards and guidelines. If the majority of residents do not want to develop such standards, that neighborhood will not be included in the program.

This makes it important that each member association in **Calabasas** notify its members that these surveys are coming, why they are being sent out, and what the proposed “neighborhood preservation overlay zones” are (and what they are not). Interested associations may want to have a presentation by a member of the Community Development Department to explain the program to interested homeowners and answer questions.

If the survey results in a community show that there is sufficient interest in looking into a **neighborhood conservation overlay zone**, city staff and consultants will work with that community to define the unique character of that

community and create design standards and guidelines that will “ allow remodels and additions while respecting the integrity of the neighborhood”.

Associations that want more information or a presentation from city staff should contact **Maureen Tamuri, Director of Community Development** at **878-4225 x227** or mtamuri@cityofcalabasas.com.

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Annual Fuel Load Reduction Demonstrations to be offered

On **Saturday, April 16th**, the **Mountains Restoration Trust** and the **Los Angeles County Fire Department** will conduct two demonstrations on how to reduce your fuel load while balancing fire safety with beautification of your yard and protection of habitat for wildlife.

The first demonstration will be from **10:00 to 12:00 April 16th** at the home of Niall Bourk and Linda Yannetty at **2188 Cold Canyon Road**. The second demonstration will be from **1:00 to 3:00** at the home of **Paul and Leah Culberg** at **32063 Lobo Canyon Road**.

For more information, call MRT at **591-1701 x187**.

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Composting Workshops planned

If you're heavily into worms and the smell of decomposing vegetation, you'll just love the **workshops** being planned over the next few months by the **Los Angeles County Department of Public Works**. The **workshops** will include information about **worm composting, grass recycling, water-wise gardening, and fire-wise gardening**. **Bins** will be available for purchase at the workshops for cash only.

Workshops are scheduled for three **Saturday** mornings this year from **9:00 to 11:00 A.M.** at **Gates Canyon Park, 25801 Thousand Oaks Blvd., Calabasas**.

For more information, call **888-CLEANLA** or visit www.smartgardening.com.

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SOKA/King Gillette RANCH Video to Air on Adelphia

The Cornell Preservation Organization and has completed production of a wonderful short television program about the Soka/King Gillette Ranch property. The show features **Dave Brown & Jim Wrigley** and is hosted by Colleen Holmes. The show will air on several cable systems as follows:

Title: SOKA / King Gillette Ranch: A Dream Realized
(Taped Saturday, March 5th at Adelphia)

WILL AIR ON ADELPHIA:

Ch. 25 Agoura, Agoura Hills, Calabasas, Camarillo, Fillmore,
Moorpark, Newbury Park, Oak Park, Piru, Santa Paula,
Thousand Oaks, Westlake Village

WILL AIR ON OTHER CABLE SYSTEMS:

Ch. 8 Charter Communications in Thousand Oaks
Ch. 3 Charter Communications in Morrison Ranch

AIR DATE / TIME:

Wednesday, March 16 at 3:30 PM and each subsequent Wednesday at that same time through May 25th

2005 Federation Meeting Dates

Jan 20, Feb 17, Mar 17, Apr 21, May 19, Jun 16, Jul 21, Aug 18, Sep 15, Oct 20,
Nov 17, Dec 8