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Contaminated soil removal underway at Venoco site

BY PETER DUGRÉ
 peter@coastalview.com

A long-awaited project to remove DDT-contaminated soil from portions of the Venoco, Inc., property at Carpinteria Avenue and Dump Road got underway on Aug. 8. Many eyes will be on the project to make sure the soil is properly removed, stormwater runoff adequately channeled and all rules and regulations to protect sensitive habitat and potential Native American artifacts followed.

In all, 12,670 cubic yards of soil are to be removed and trucked away to Santa Maria from 8.8 acres of contaminated land, mainly from an area known in city planning circles as the Buffer Parcel, which serves as a buffer between the Carpinteria Oil and Gas Processing Facility and the Arbol Verde neighborhood. According to Jackie Campbell, the Community Development Director with the City of Carpinteria, the excavation phase of the project is scheduled to be completed within eight weeks.

See SOIL continued on page 6

Since the remediation project was to be conducted on sensitive coastal property... planners scrutinized the plans before approving them last fall.

Fish lips



SHAUN KELLY

It's not your traditional yacht club, but the fun-loving Carpinteria Yacht Club keeps to its time-honored traditions with an annual regatta and the ceremonial kissing of the fish. At this year's event, third-place fishing derby finisher Steve Rice laid a wet one on first-place fisherwoman Hannah Gonchoroff's winning fish. The Aug. 13 regatta at Linden Beach came at the culmination of the "70 Days of Summer Fishing Tournament" and was a celebration of the club's 20th birthday. For more photos and inflatables only shenanigans, see page 22.

Griggs makes Carpinteria history

BY LEA BOYD
 lea@coastalview.com

David Griggs celebrated 25 years as director/curator of the Carpinteria Valley Museum of History on Aug. 16—a milestone worthy of its own chapter in local history. Griggs surmises that after all these years, he has become virtually inseparable from the museum and its mission. "It's not a job. It's not a career. It's my life and I couldn't imagine a better place to devote my life," he said.

In 1986, 29-year-old Griggs was handed the keys to his new kingdom after beating out 43 candidates—some with doctoral degrees—for the job. He had applied for the position on a whim with a bachelors degree in environmental studies and a resume highlighting the experience he had gained in education and anthropology as a naturalist at Channel Islands National Park.

"A desk job was the last thing I was looking for," Griggs remembered with a laugh. But time would prove how critical

Griggs ecology background was to running the local museum. "Because I'm an ecologist, I believe in every piece of the puzzle," he said. Upon his hiring, Griggs gained control of a small-but-complex puzzle.

The Board of Directors had just completed a major building fund campaign and the construction of a new museum wing when it handed Griggs a beautiful new facility with the tattered remnants of a docent program that had dissolved during construction, a mere \$2,000 in the bank and no financial reserves. "This place needed direction," he recalled. "It needed a strong director."

So Griggs immediately set to work. He built a thriving volunteer corps, added detail and depth to sparse museum exhibits and helped to pull the little museum out of financial straits. In the

HISTORY continued on page 24



BOYD • CVN

Hired 25 years ago at age 29, David Griggs has put his stamp on just about every inch of Carpinteria's successful little museum.

HISTORY:

Continued from page 1

two and a half decades since, Griggs has gracefully juggled several hats, those of fundraiser, volunteer coordinator, grant writer, newsletter author, artifact collector, history book contributor, exhibit curator, museum grounds landscaper and school program instructor. In the process, he has acquired a wealth of local knowledge to rival any of the native Carpinterians who lived through the making of the valley's rich history.

"I think it's important to have someone in the museum who's that knowledgeable about the area. He would be

very hard to replace, that's for sure," said Dorothy Thielges, president of the board for the Carpinteria Valley Historical Society.

Roxie Lapidus, longtime museum volunteer and newsletter writer and editor, concurs. "It was a lucky day for Carpinteria back in 1986 when David Griggs accepted the position as director," she stated. His commitment to the museum community extends far beyond the building walls, Lapidus reported. When a docent recently phoned him at work about a swarm of bees in her attic, "He dropped everything and went over there," she said.

From the start, Carpinteria and its museum represented a special haven for

Griggs. He had grown up in the City of Orange before strip malls and apartment complexes replaced its namesake citrus groves. "When I came into Carp, it was like coming home again," he said.

Under Griggs' watch, the museum runs like a well-oiled machine. A sizable endowment fund provides the backbone of the museum's operating budget. This, plumped with grants, Carpinteria Valley Historical Society membership and museum marketplace fundraisers, allows the facility complete independence from fickle public funding.

A crew of 63 volunteers keeps the museum archives up to date, facilitates the museum's monthly marketplace and interacts with the public during normal

museum hours. During the museum's open hours, approximately 10,000 visitors view the exhibits annually. Griggs understands the importance of creating and maintaining a vibrant volunteer program. "I'm just a captain," he said, "without a crew this ship would be floundering on the rocks."

Prior to Griggs, museum directors turned over quickly. The longest tenure for any predecessor was five or six years. And though 25 years is quite a long time to stay in a job, Griggs has no plans to retire any time soon. "I don't like this job. I love this job. I get choked up talking about it. I couldn't imagine doing anything else."

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