



The Riviera Association

October 2023 www.rivieraassociation.org P.O. Box 4235 • Santa Barbara, CA 93140-4235

President's Letter

Dear Neighbors,

As of this month, it has been 45 years since I arrived in Santa Barbara. Where does the time go? I was then a callow graduate student from UPenn, looking both to partake of UCSB's highly reputed Department of History and, not incidentally, to escape rusty old Philadelphia. I had traveled across country during winter break to meet some of the professors and fellow students, to see the campus, and to explore the town a bit. It was mild December weather here, and it amused me to see that common campus attire was a winter parka over shorts! (If you ask me now what's funny about that...well, I don't remember!)

I was to be in Santa Barbara for a couple of nights, and someone knowledgeable suggested I stay at El Encanto Hotel. My guess is that not too many students inspecting graduate programs stay there now, but El Encanto did not have a five-star rating in its funky days, luckily for me. It only took a brief walk around the area for me to sense that if I ever were actually to settle in Santa Barbara, this neighborhood of views,

stone walls, stalwart homes, winding streets, and winter blossoming shrubs was the one I would choose.

Well, I did stay, and here I am, not far from El Encanto Hotel at all. Our Riviera neighborhood has certainly experienced some changes in these decades, but very few in comparison to those in the city at large.

Back in the day, the weather, the ease of getting from one end of town to the other, and the city's setting between the sea and the mountains were the reasons to be here. But you can't eat weather, and, hard as it is now to imagine, there was nowhere in town to get a bagel, nowhere to get a croissant, nowhere to get a fresh baked bread. (There's a theme here.) There were so few restaurants that word traveled like lightning when a new one opened. My friends and I would rush over to get in line, for any place new would inevitably be mobbed, it was so exciting to have a new place to eat. As for entertainment, the Lobero Theatre and the Arlington Theatre would host the occasional in-person concerts; the Granada theater was strictly for movies, the Santa Barbara Bowl was decrepit, and

the Music Academy of the West offered a venue of folding chairs.

Of course, not only has all of that changed, but the city has undergone several evolutionary stages in these 45 years. Through major redevelopment, the city revitalized its downtown through the creation of Paseo Nuevo at the same time that the Presidio reconstruction was completed. But that was so 1990s, a time when industry and fishermen dominated what is now the "funk zone." Now we are on the cusp of another new era when cities everywhere, not just Santa Barbara, are in transition. Remote shopping, remote work, remote communications, and climate anxiety have changed the purpose of cities. Communities and their planners throughout the country are working to reconcile these changes to ensure that cities have a sustainable future.

It is important for the future of our Santa Barbara that we get our plans right, or at least not irreversibly wrong. That is why our Autumn 2023 meeting will be "city-centric." We have invited Brandon Beaudette, the Senior Assistant to the City Administrator, and his team to present to us their *Continued on page 5*

Riviera Association Fall General Meeting

Sunday, October 22 • 4-6 p.m. • Riviera Ridge Campus, 2130 Mission Ridge Road

Shuttle service to/from Mission Ridge & Tremonto parking lots

- Keynote Speakers: Brandon Beaudette, Senior Assistant to the Santa Barbara City Administrator; Kristen Sneddon, District 4 City Councilmember; Jill Zachary, Director, Santa Barbara Parks & Recreation Dept.
- Enjoy local wines, gourmet appetizers catered by chef Sally Ruhl, and an art display by local artist Priscilla Fossek. A chance to win one of the artist's paintings, a fall bouquet, or a Botanica Afternoon Tea for two at El Encanto.

How Does Desalination Work?

By John Mosby

Seawater is collected through a subsurface intake, designed to protect marine life. It is then pumped through a 36" pipeline located 2,500 feet from the shoreline to the Charles Meyer Desalination facility on Yanonali Street just West of Calle Caesar Chavez, where it goes through a series of treatments (including reverse osmosis) before entering the city's distribution system. Desal water treatment includes a conditioning program to make the water noncorrosive (softer) while providing for no negative impacts to the city's water pipes and supporting infrastructure. Due to the quality of the desal water from the treatment process, additional treatment of water (e.g. water softening) is not necessary when desal water is being used. But don't throw out your soft water system yet as much of the Riviera has yet to be serviced by desal water, and with Cachuma being close to full, it is anticipated that the desal plant will represent a smaller share of the water needed to meet Santa Barbara's needs, at least in the short term.

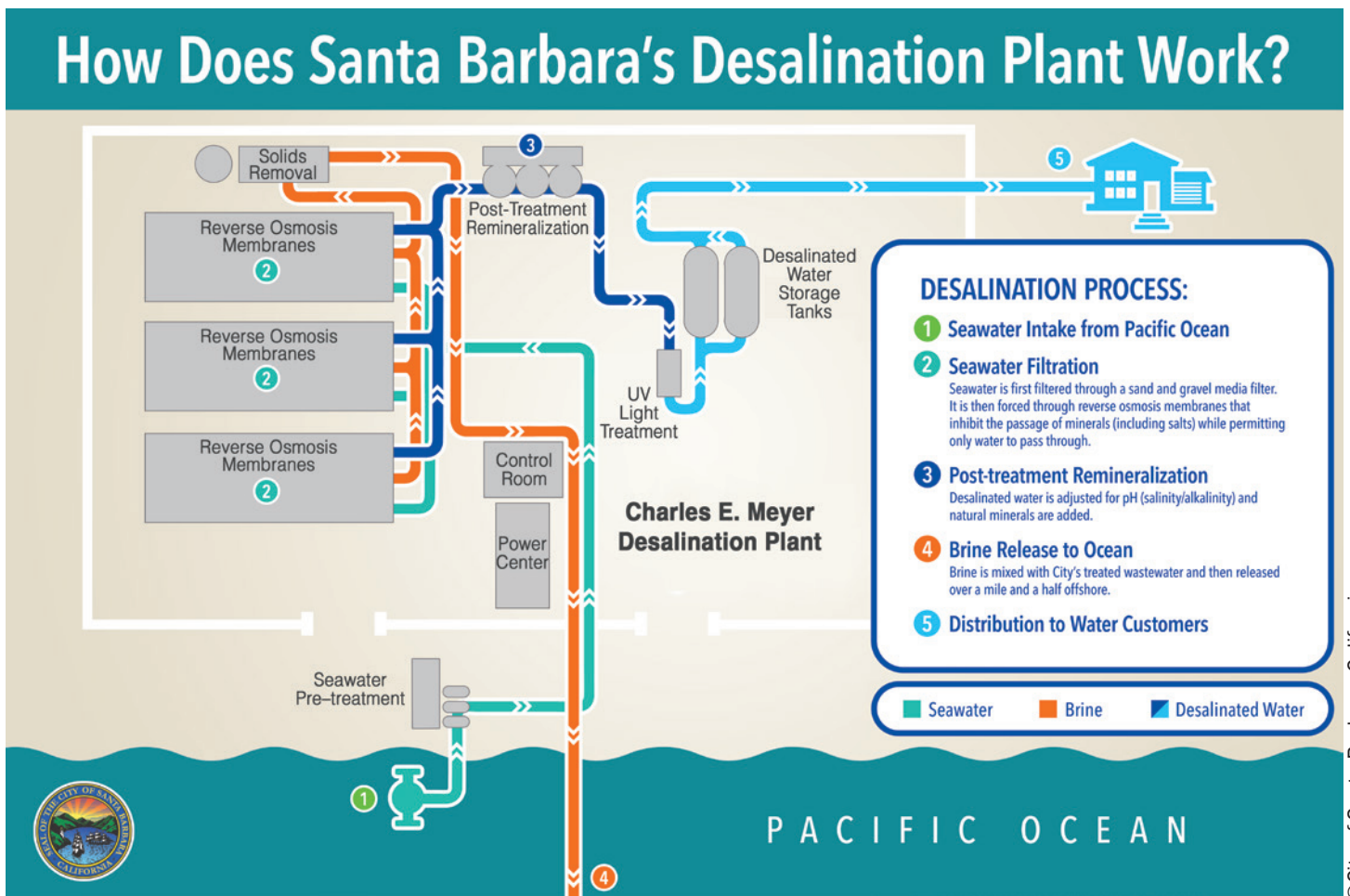
The excess waste created from the desal process (brine—about twice as salty as normal seawater) is blended with secondary treated wastewater at the El Estero Wastewater Treatment Plant and is discharged through a 48" pipeline, ending approximately a mile-and-a-half (8,750 feet) offshore at a depth of 70 feet. Concerns of environmentalists and the general public have been raised

from time to time on the possible adverse effects of discharging the desal brine into the ocean. What many people don't know is that the wastewater and brine discharge quality and its effects are governed under Order R3-2019-0046 issued by the California Regional Water Quality Board. This comprehensive, 100+ page order provides for a very strict and compliant monitoring and reporting program that governs the discharge of a permitted 11 million gallons per day (MGD) of wastewater and 12.5 MGD of desal brine.

Currently, the availability of desal water in Santa Barbara is mostly limited to areas south of Mission Street toward the ocean, including parts of the Mesa and Eastside neighborhoods south of APS. However, you may have noticed the work on our city streets to install a new 24" PVC pipeline from the desal plant located adjacent to the city's El Estero Wastewater Treatment Plant, which will take treated desal water up to the Cater Treatment Plant (towards the north end of San Roque Road). This will allow the city to enlarge the desal water service area during the next drought. Montecito has also agreed to participate in funding the \$20 million Desal Conveyance Pipeline Project, covering 64.6% of the project cost.

Customers' Water Conservation Efforts Pay Off

The city has been a strong proponent of conservation and has a well-documented history of educating its customers on water conservation practices. Based on water use demand data, conservation efforts by customers have in baseball terminology enabled the city to hit a home run with the bases loaded. *Continued on page 5*



Riviera Association Spring General Meeting

Riviera Association members enjoyed an afternoon of local wines, gourmet appetizers, and spirited conversation when we met for our spring meeting at Riviera Ridge, along with an art display by our board member Laurie MacMillan. Guest speaker Ray Ford discussed the challenges facing our local trail system due to

weather damage and inadequate maintenance, and District 4 City Councilmember Kristen Sneddon updated us on the latest happenings at City Hall. The fall meeting on Sunday, October 22nd promises to be another fun afternoon of mingling, learning, and great food and wine. We hope to see you there!



All photos this page, Chuck Croninger



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Join Us for a Geology Walk, Saturday, October 28th

Join Professor of Environmental Geology (and our City Council member) Kristen Sneddon for another fascinating walk through our area's geology. Walking along the cliffs of Hendry's Beach, she'll discuss the formation of Santa Barbara's

terrain, from the beach on up to the Riviera and beyond. This free event for members only takes place on Saturday, October 28th at 10 a.m., and will last approximately two hours. Sign-ups will be at the fall general meeting.



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President's Letter, cont.

thoughts about what our city's future is to be, and to engage us in a discussion about the city's budget priorities. This is our opportunity to learn what options our civic personnel are considering for the short- and long-term future of Santa Barbara, and to participate in the planning process.

Even closer to home, we are going to hear from Jill Zachary, Director of Parks and Recreation, who is going to give us a brief update on the status of the Franceschi House and the envisioned new pavilion. The City is planning to kick off the conceptual planning work for Franceschi Park in October, and we will

learn about the process and how it will involve public input.

Finally, once again we will welcome our District 4 city council representative, Kristen Sneddon, who will fill us in on City Hall happenings.

So, please come join us on Sunday, October 22. After enjoying a lively and delicious reception, let us brainstorm our city's future with our city's leaders. I will look forward to seeing you there, on the lovely campus of our generous host, the Riviera Ridge School.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Shelley Bookspan".

Shelley Bookspan
President, Riviera Association

New Online Information Tools Coming this Fall to the Riviera Association

By Michael Erickson

We're excited to unveil a newly revamped website for our neighborhood organization. With a fresh design and enhanced features, navigating through the site will be much easier than before. Explore our updated events calendar to stay informed about local happenings, browse through our resources section for valuable information, renew your annual membership and connect with fellow community members through our interactive forums.

Our improved website aims to foster stronger neighborhood connections and provide a hub for our Riviera and Cielito residents to stay engaged and make a positive impact. **We welcome any feedback that you may have on what you would like to see on your website.** Discover the vibrant spirit of our community online this fall at the new Riviera Association website and join us in shaping the future of our unique neighborhood together!

www.rivieraassociation.org

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Desalination, cont.

As shown in the city's 10-year Water Facts spreadsheet, customer water usage in the late 1980s (pre 1987–1991 drought) was metered at about 15,000 acre-feet per year (AFY). With the city's strong push for conservation, including public education and the tiered rate structure that rewards conservation efforts, customers responded with a 2018 meter use of about 9,000 AFY. This reduction is significant and has indirectly added 6,000 AFY to the city's water supply portfolio through customer conservation alone.

This is the second in a two-part series of articles on desalinated water in Santa Barbara. The first article was published in our Spring 2023 newsletter, which is available for viewing on the association's website, www.rivieraassociation.org.

Grazers Help to Keep the Riviera & Cielito Areas Fire Safe

By Diana Washburn

Recently my dog Oliver and I set out to take one of our favorite walks on the Riviera, from the top of Franceschi Park down Franceschi Road to Sheffield Reservoir. I parked my car at the top of Franceschi Park as I usually do and got out of my car to enjoy the magnificent views of Santa Barbara and the islands when I noticed an electric fence. Well, that's new, I thought, what is this about? Then Oliver and I noticed the sheep and goats happily grazing with a herder nearby. I figured this must be part of the restoration project, sponsored by the Santa Barbara Parks and Recreation Department and Santa Barbara City Fire, to clear brush in high-fire areas like the Riviera. I chatted with the herder about the electric fence and the "flerd," a term referring to the combination of sheep (flock) and goats (herd). He said they had 150 goats and sheep grazing that day, and use a very low voltage on the fencing to keep predators out and the animals corralled.

For years the question has been how to remove lightweight brush and grasses in hillside communities near homes before fire season. The Eucalyptus Hill

Improvement Association was the first in our area to try grazers, the term for goats and sheep. It was so successful that the Santa Barbara Parks and Recreation Department decided to try using grazers on the Riviera in collaboration with the fire department. For the past four years the Santa Barbara Parks and Recreation Department has contracted with Cuyama Lamb, based in the Gaviota area, which is owned by Jenya Sarah Schneider and Jack T. Anderson. Before grazers arrive at each location, the Santa Barbara Parks and Recreation Department contracts with biologists to survey the park areas for sensitive plants and any nesting birds to identify and mark no-go areas for grazing. The department focuses on a natural restorative process while at the same time reducing fuel loads in areas otherwise difficult to manage for wildfire. By removing non-native plants, biologists can provide native plants with the space to establish themselves and grow.

A variety of landscapes and locations like the Riviera benefit from the positive impact of using grazers. The biggest limiting factor has been the cost. Recently, the Santa Barbara County

Firesafe Council put together a grant that would fund both neighborhood chipping and herbivory programs. There will be funding for the use of grazers throughout the South Coast from Hollister Ranch to the Carpinteria area. The Santa Barbara Parks and Recreation Department is currently receiving funding from the Firesafe Council.

Michael Leicht, the owner of Ventura Brush Goats, commented that goats are like "composts on legs," meaning that they constantly eat and poop. The grazers scatter valuable nutrients that their hooves grind into the soil. They even eat poison oak, and look darn cute doing it.

Steve Biddle, parks supervisor for the Santa Barbara Parks and Recreation Department, said that this program has been used since 2015 and it has been so successful that they plan to continue using grazers. In the past two months, 275 grazers have cleared a total of twenty-five acres of brush at Hale Park, Parma Park, Franceschi Park, and Mission Historical Park. This is a win-win program and people enjoy seeing sheep and goats grazing in their neighborhoods. Watch for the grazers next spring.



Steve Biddle, Santa Barbara Parks and Recreation Department

A flerd of sheep and goats recently helped clear Hale Park, convincing the Santa Barbara Parks and Recreation Department of their continued usefulness in removing lightweight brush and grasses. The flerd has been at work in some of the Riviera's parks as well.