



From the Bridge: A Message from the VKA President – Clif Simonson

I was asked to post a message of introduction on our new website. My plan will be to post comments regularly. For this first go around, I have paraphrased my introductory comments delivered at our annual board meeting on 28 January 2006.

A brief introduction for those that don't know me: As you heard, my name is Clif Simonson. I just turned 47, I am a ten year Keys resident, formerly on Seafarer St. (which we still own and now rent to my brother-in-law, David Soter), and now with my wife, Andrea, our 9 year old daughter Olivia and 3 year old son Christian, we live on Seahorse, which we just purchased from the Kall's. This house has a bit of controversy surrounding it, as many know, and has earned several disparaging nicknames, including "The Motel 6". We DO plan to remodel the house, after going thru the various required permitting processes, to make it more appealing and livable, and just in case you don't think I feel some pressure to do this, my numerous neighbors and friends have told me that if we don't do it right, they know where we live. And speaking of controversy, and in the interests of full disclosure, many of you know long time Keys resident and activist, Andy Soter who lives on Beachmont. Andy is my father-in-law.

I am currently semi-retired, and my professional background is as an oil and gas executive and later founder, President, and COO of one of California's largest independent oil and gas producers. I have a business degree and several other credentials that are probably not relevant to this job, including a general engineering contracting license, licensed sail boat captain, and registered environmental assessor. I also hold a Commercial pilot's license with an instrument rating, a scuba certification, and unlike our State's governor I have a valid motorcycle license. Most importantly I consider myself a professional business manager, and that experience will be the most helpful, I believe, in advancing the business of the Ventura Keys Association.

In 1969 the Ventura Keys Association was founded with the following objectives with respect to the Ventura Keys: *To encourage the most appropriate use of land for civil and community purposes, with particular emphasis on the development, promotion and protection of the interests and welfare of the residential property owners and residents of the Ventura Keys and adjacent or nearby areas in the City of Ventura, County of Ventura, including those in other independent municipalities located in Ventura County.*

Since this time other responsibilities have accrued to the Association, including the ownership and custody of the Big and Little Beaches and common areas, and the management and enforcement of the CC&R's. While the Association has advanced the membership's position and been an excellent custodian of Keys assets, this latter responsibility has been set aside for many years.

Coming into this position I first want to say that I greatly respect and admire those that have lived here for many years, who have served on this Board, and who have fought, won and lost battles with the City, the Port District, and others who would have attempted to take away our property rights and degrade the small bit of paradise we know as the Ventura Keys. I see the Association's role not as a caretaker, but as a strong advocate for the homeowners and property rights of the Ventura Keys Association members and residents.



Those that know me know that I do not take any responsibility lightly. And make no mistake, the legacy of almost forty years of hard work and good deeds of the Keys residents and the Association is an important responsibility to carry forward. I intend to work very hard to continue this legacy.

To do this there are several initiatives that I wish to advance. The first is already begun, and that is the establishment of venturakeys.org as the official website of the Ventura Keys Association. The vision of the website is two fold – both relate to communication. The first is to communicate the Keys story to the outside world and municipalities, and secondarily, but more importantly to facilitate communication internally - amongst neighbors and friends. The website will have notices of regular meetings and events, a market place section for neighbor to neighbor sales, a discussion board to air opinions and share comments, background and history of the keys, latest meeting minutes, and it will eventually have an archive of everything related to the Keys: past newsletters, maps, oral histories, legal documents and the like. The site will not replace flyers, mailings and paper, but it will greatly facilitate the Association and its member's ability to immediately communicate goings on around the neighborhood, and leave a lasting library of Keys information for future generations.

I come into this role with more questions than answers. I have talked to numerous long time residents, I have read every Keys newsletter going back to the 1970's Keeper of The Keys that predated today's Key's Breeze, I have met with City representatives, but there is still much to learn. The Key's Association and its Board members and officers need to know what its members want. I will propose a survey of the Association's members to find their top ten priorities for the Key's association. This will give the Board its guidance for developing a strategy for the next two years, and beyond.

In talking with neighbors and by virtue of living here for a decade, I am passingly familiar with numerous issues that have stalked our neighborhood:

- The Harbor Development
- The Arundell Barranca
- The closing of Beachmont and other streets
- CC&R enforcement and validity
- Dredging and waterway maintenance
- Palm tree trimming
- Environmental issues such as odors, noise and water quality
- Infrastructure issues such as street maintenance and drainage
- And the tug of war between where we are and where we are headed

These to name a few as there are other matters of equal or greater importance, of which I am sure I am not even aware! I cannot honestly say we can solve all or any of these problems, or others, but we will not ignore them. To the extent we can move forward with solutions, we will.

To manage the initiatives I have and will propose, I have gone back to the historic board structure and formed several committees with Board members as chairs of these various committees. These committees and chairs are as follows:



1) Information and Communications

- a) Newsletter, Emails and Mailing list
- b) Website content management
- c) Media communication
- d) Manage Communications w/ Association Members and Residents

Committee Chair – Dan Graham

2) Ways and Means (Social)

- a) Annual BBQ, Parade of Lights, etc.

Committee Chair - Doris Collin

3) Ventura Keys Association Properties

- a) Matters relating to the management of VKA beaches & entrances

Committee Chair – Stan and Sharon Friedman?

4) Environmental

- a) Water Quality, Trash and Debris, Odors, Arundel Barranca

Committee Chair – Dan Burke

5) Streets and Waterways

- a) Traffic, Boating, Street Repairs, Palm Trees, etc.

Committee Chair – Mike Colletto

6) Governmental Affairs and Communications

- a) City of Ventura, Port District, Harbor Patrol, County, Cal Trans, et. al. interface and liaison.

Committee Chair – Marc Angell

7) Community Relations

- a) Develop strategies to retain and grow membership and improve neighborhood cohesiveness.
- b) Manage neighborhood programs e.g. Neighborhood Watch
- c) Handle neighbor-to-neighbor and CC&R complaints.
- d) Historical Society Interface

Committee Chair – Buki Burke

8) Ad Hoc – Dredging

- a) Work with City to develop the dredging plan and cost allocation

Committee Chair – Gail Lansbury and Clif Simonson

9) Ad Hoc - VKA Board Internal Affairs

- a) Board Mission Statement Development
- b) Official VK Logo Development and Copywriting

Committee Chair – Keith Roberts

I am excited about this opportunity and look forward to serving the next two years as your Association President and to serving the Keys residents at large.