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# 50 years of improving life in Rio del Mar

## Association to celebrate golden anniversary Sunday

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Sentinel staff writer

RIO DEL MAR — Whether it was setting up an assessment district to pave many of Rio del Mar's streets or choosing the blue roof tiles for Deer Park shopping center, the Rio del Mar Improvement Association has worked for their area.

The Rio del Mar Improvement Association, which represents the households in the unincorporated area across the freeway from Aptos, is the oldest and largest improvement association in Santa Cruz County. Its 550-member households are invited to celebrate the Association's 50th anniversary on Sunday.

New officers will be announced at the annual meeting/catered picnic from 1 to 5 p.m. at Aptos Village Park. Many of the group's past presidents, including Raymond Garcia, Grover "Buzz" Haines, John Richards and George Truckell will join 1991 president John Pollard.

Aptos Supervisor Robley Levy will also be in attendance. Levy called the association "a very persistent and effective advocate for the Rio del Mar community."

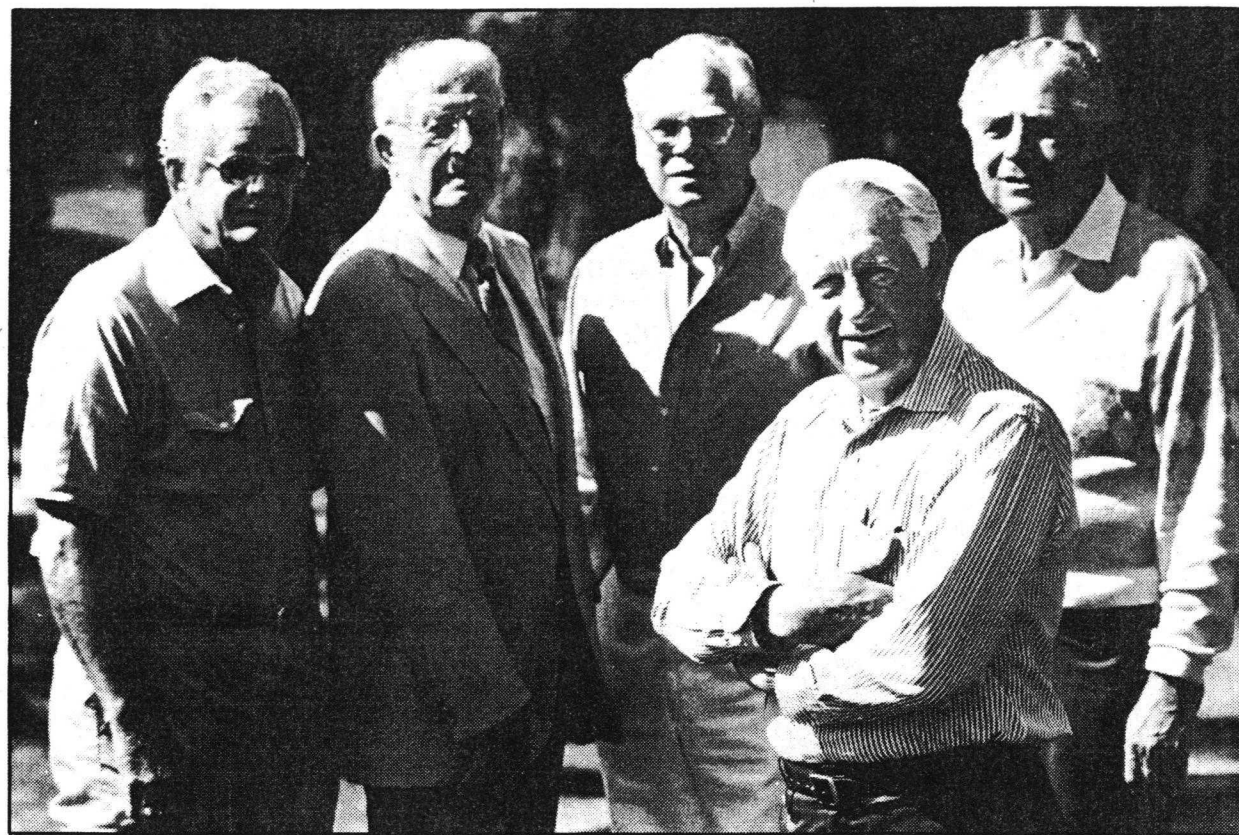
Some 17 years of persistence for the association recently paid off when the Seascope Corp. dropped

its plans to build a hotel at the Aptos Seascapes Golf Course. Garcia, who presided over the association in 1982 and 1983 — and has been chairman of the golf lodge committee — said the association's opposition to the project followed its long-standing policy to fight for "planned growth that is compatible to our neighborhoods."

The Association has been charged with being anti-growth in the past. But Garcia said, "We have taken strong positions on what types of growth we should have. It all goes back to making sure it is compatible with our neighborhoods."

Pollard, who will be stepping down as 1991 president Sunday, agreed. "We've never been one of those groups that are against everything. We know there's going to be growth. We simply want to make sure it is controlled, planned growth."

Pollard has one of the longest-standing affiliations with the association; he also served as president in 1966. His big project then, he said, was helping to form the Rio del Mar Road District, which assessed property owners in order to pave and improve residential streets to county standards. As a result of the improvements, most streets in Rio del Mar were subse-



Bill Lovejoy/Sentinel

Current Rio del Mar Improvement Association president John Pollard, foreground, with past presidents, from left, George Trickell, John Richards, Buzz Haines and Raymond Garcia.

quently turned over to the county for maintenance.

The association even had a say in the blue roof tiles that mark Deer Park shopping center today. Garcia said the association OK'd

the design of the center after providing the developers with input.

Fighting for traffic improvements, landscaping the divider that separates Clubhouse Drive and Rio del Mar Boulevard, and

hosting beautification days are other long-standing association duties. The group has even been asked to mediate neighborhood squabbles, and deal with the preponderance of real estate "open house" signs that

spring up on county property on weekends.

Robert Swenson, former president of Cabrillo College, was association president in 1965. He laughs, remembering that the group fought the real-estate signs even 21 years ago.

Truckell, who was president in 1985, recalls forming clean-up days and directors pulling weeds in the median strips. Just this year, the association paid more than \$3,000 to re-landscape the median at Rio del Mar Boulevard and Clubhouse Drive.

Richards, president in 1989, said the association has attempted to deal with traffic concerns, which are always the chief concern when members are surveyed.

For instance, it was the association that pushed for traffic improvements while trying to reduce the Benchland project from 500 to 298 units. Specific traffic improvements will include the installation of traffic signals at the Highway 1 off-ramp to Rio del Mar.

New directors to be appointed at Sunday's meeting include Don Winton and Robert Galway. They will join existing board members Norm Baldwin, Alta Hartbickson, Harold Sherman, Leonard Witcliffe, Ralph Seabrook, Betty Allen and Richards. Stepping down will be Ralph Astrella and 1991 president Pollard, who is moving to Utah.

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