

# STAR FREE PRESS

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## Beach residents bristle at talk of annexation

By John Grennan

S-FP staff writer

Word that Oxnard City Council members are interested in annexing unincorporated beach areas to increase city revenue has touched a nerve in those communities.

"Dang blast them," said Wanda Pirkle, a Silver Strand resident for about 40 years. "I know they need the money, but they don't need to pick on us."

Thursday night, Councilman

### Oxnard

Mike Plisky suggested talking to residents in Silver Strand, Hollywood Beach and Hollywood-by-the-Sea about annexation.

Those areas, near Channel Islands Harbor and surrounded by Port Hueneme and Oxnard, include about 1,650 homes.

Oxnard is looking for ways to increase revenue and cut costs to alleviate an anticipated \$5 million budget shortage, making the tax

(Please turn to A-6, Col. 5)



Michael Owen Baker / Star-Free Press

Many residents of Silver Strand, Hollywood Beach and Hollywood-by-the-Sea, including a group headed by Richard Roberts, left, are against annexation to the city of Oxnard.

## Oxnard annexation

Continued from A-1

base in the unincorporated areas quite attractive.

"Maybe this can be a net gain for the city and the people in that area," Plisky said. "We first have to decide if they're even interested. People there used to be opposed, but I've heard they may be more receptive now."

That didn't seem to be the case Friday morning.

Gerard Kapuscik, general manager of the Channel Islands Community Services District, said he received about two dozen calls from agitated residents, all against joining forces with Oxnard.

"The community values its independence and doesn't want to be swallowed up by a larger entity," Kapuscik said. "Choosing your form of government is a basic right in America. The decision should not be made to balance the Oxnard budget."

If the areas are annexed, residents will enjoy Oxnard's municipal services, such as public works and maintenance, as well as the city's stable water supply. But Kapuscik has never heard widespread complaints about the current level of services, he said.

County Supervisor John Flynn said the communities have thrived under the Community Services District, pointing to major projects for drainage, street improvement and underground utilities in the past 10 years.

"It's always been my contention that if the residents don't want to be annexed, they shouldn't be annexed," Flynn said.

A 1979 attempt by Oxnard and Port Hueneme to add the three beachside communities was challenged — and defeated — by resi-

dents. Pirkle was also part of that battle.

"We've got people out here who will fight," said Pirkle, who recently retired from a Community Services District position. "We fought them before and we'll fight them again."

Carmela Sunder, a Hollywood Beach resident, was also against annexation. "I don't see where we get any (benefits)," she said. "I'm happy the way things are."

However, Tom Hudson, a 15-year Hollywood-by-the-Sea resident, said he would be willing to listen to the pros and cons of annexation.

Hudson thinks it's silly that a street sweeper cleans one side of Sunset Lane but ignores his — unincorporated — side.

"It's probably a good idea for Hollywood Beach (to be annexed)," he said. "Half of it's city anyway."

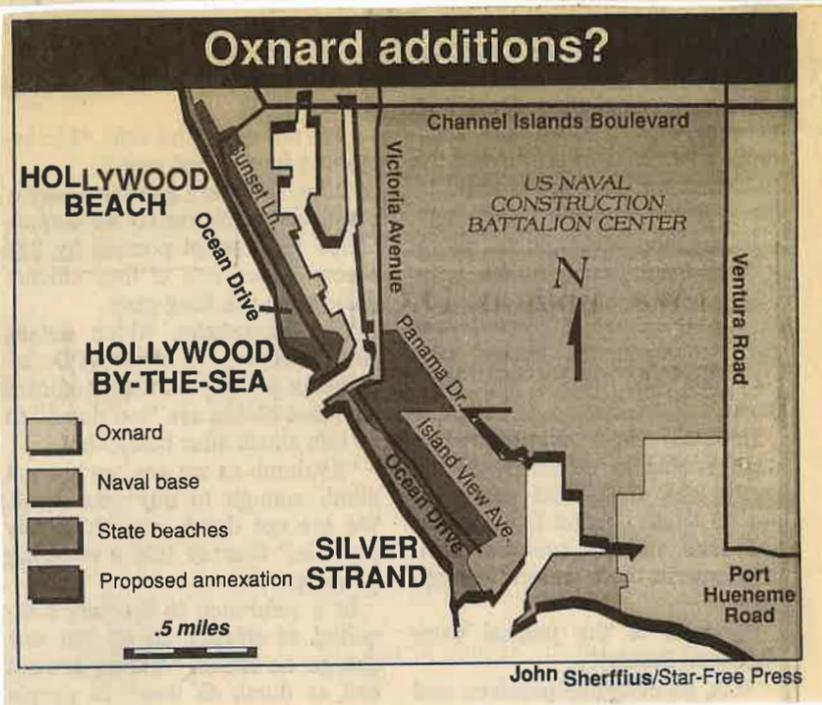
Both Kapuscik and Flynn doubted residents would be in favor of annexation. In fact, Flynn estimated 95 percent would vote against it.

Even Oxnard Councilwoman Dorothy Maron said she was skeptical of the plan, pointing to the decision to form the Community Services District 10 years ago.

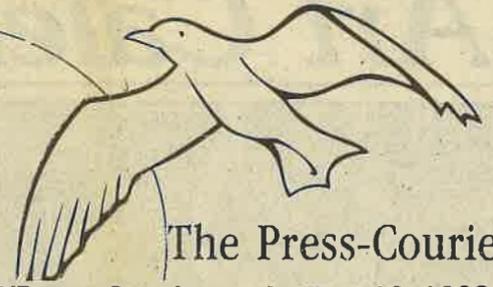
"They may not change their minds that easily," she said.

Kapuscik, in addition to having questions about Oxnard officials' fiscal management, said he was disturbed by the way Plisky brought the subject of annexation up without first approaching the residents or the Community Services District.

"I think that would be a common courtesy from one local government to another," he said. "It certainly doesn't engender good will and trust."



John Sherffius/Star-Free Press



# Resident celebrates 50 years at beach

Lucille Murphy has seen a lot of changes at the local beach areas now commonly known as the Gold Coast.

Several weeks back, Lucille celebrated 50 years of living at Silver Strand Beach, which she loves so dearly.

"I had thought I'd have a party," she said, "and get a lot of people together who I had known over the years." But instead she celebrated with five longtime friends at the Whale's Tail Restaurant at Channel Islands Harbor. The group included Florence Haney, Grace Kuhn, Wanda Pirkle, Virginia Ross and Jane Wescher.

Lucille first came to live at the Oxnard beach in 1942. She was then Lucille Ziegler, married to Art Ziegler, and they came to the area from Santa Monica when Ziegler went to work at the Naval Construction Battalion Center in Port Hueneme.

In 1945 they bought what was then called Hambly's Coffee Shop (now the Beachcomber on Ocean Drive), and it became Zeigler's bar and grill. Then the couple divorced, and Ziegler's became Lucille's Cafe and remained so from 1945 to 1968. In between time, Lucille became Mrs. Lucille Murphy, having tied the knot with Tommy Murphy in 1957. After being in the restaurant business for almost 25 years, Lucille went to work for then Falcon Plastics in Oxnard for almost 12 years, retiring in 1981.

Tommy Murphy, an Oxnard native born on F Street, had worked at the NCBC since 1950. He died in 1988. He and Lucille had been together — always on the beach — for more than 30 years.

Back in its early days, the Murphys had joined Pacific Corinthian Yacht Club and Lucille had served as historian for several years. She has also held offices in the Channel Islands Gulls where she has been an active member since 1981.



## HARBOR LINES

by Cathy Scott

Lucille has always been a dedicated fan of the pristine unincorporated areas of Silver Strand, Hollywood Beach and Hollywood by the Sea. "And we want to keep it that way as long as we can," she said, "unspoiled and clean," continuing to keep in fact their reputation as gems of Ventura County's Gold Coast.

Lucille, who has one daughter, four grandchildren and eight great-grandchildren, has lived in her home on Silver Strand Beach since 1964.

Another longtime beach resident, Wanda Pirkle, also had a celebration in her honor, but this one was Saturday.

The beach activist was honored Saturday during a ceremony held at a park area located at Lakeshore Drive and Victoria Avenue. The park was dedicated in her name — and is now the Wanda M. Pirkle Community Park. Ventura County Supervisor John Flynn presented her with a proclamation from the Board of Supervisors for her efforts on behalf of the Channel Islands neighborhoods, which she has served so well over the years.

Wanda first came to Silver Strand Beach in 1946. The Arkansas native married a Navy man, Charles Pirkle, and they raised five children.

Since then, Wanda has worked to make her beach area a better place for all to live. She worked for the beach water district for a



Lucille Murphy relaxes in front of her home on Santa Monica Avenue on Silver Strand Beach in the

Oxnard area. She recently celebrated her 50 years on the beach with friends.

—Press-Courier photo by Tom Gaper

number of years, later becoming one of the five elected directors of the Channel Islands Beach Community Services District. The district was founded in 1982 to govern the unincorporated beach neighborhoods.

She announced her retirement May 1 after a decade of serving on the district board.

Wanda started the first curbside recycling program, as she said, "before it became the thing to do," in the Channel Islands Harbor neighborhood and worked tirelessly for harbor beautification, including street improvements and sidewalks, which she said she had been trying to get for 30 years.

In her "spare time" and between projects, she started the Sand Dabbers, a group who

worked to beautify the neighborhood. The area named in her honor was a result of the Sand Dabbers' (and especially Wanda's) efforts at beautification.

Her reason for retiring as a district board director? "I promised myself for years that when I turned 70 that would be it." She had her 70th birthday in May and "that was that." Although, she admits more things that need doing around the beach will probably still command her attention, Wanda will continue her work on beautification. She still goes down to "my triangle," now the Wanda M. Pirkle Community Park, and pulls weeds, and she currently serves on the district's Water Study Feasibility committee.

Whatever, it's a safe bet, and the odds are good, that Wanda M. Pirkle will continue to help keep her beach area a better place to live.

The Pirkles (Charles died in January) have eight grandchildren and one great-grandchild.

IF YOU want to make the black-and-white party scene Saturday at Channel Islands Yacht Club, wear black and white.

Members' and guests' favorite black-and-white attire is being requested, said Ellie Babbe, press chairman for CIYC's Channel Islanders, who are putting together Saturday's Black and White Dinner-Dance. But, she stressed, it's not a dressy soiree.

What it is, she added, is a gourmet night with gourmet chef Donald Gunderson and his wife Ruth, club members, planning a five-course meal all in black and white, with black tablecloths and white napkins.

The club's member muralist, April Howard, is doing black-and-white scenes on the yacht club's giant picture windows overlooking Channel Islands Harbor.

Banjo music to dine by is being provided by the Ventura County Banjo Band, all 12 of them. Dancing is to the music of Buster, the harbor's longtime favorite one-man band.

# Ventura

Los Angeles Times **COUNTY**

THURSDAY, JUNE 8, 1995  
VC WEST/CC+ SECTION B



ALAN HAGMAN / Los Angeles Times

Wanda Pirkle, a Silver Strand resident, opposes any plans to annex her neighborhood to either Port Hueneme or Oxnard.

## Future Hazy for Beach Communities

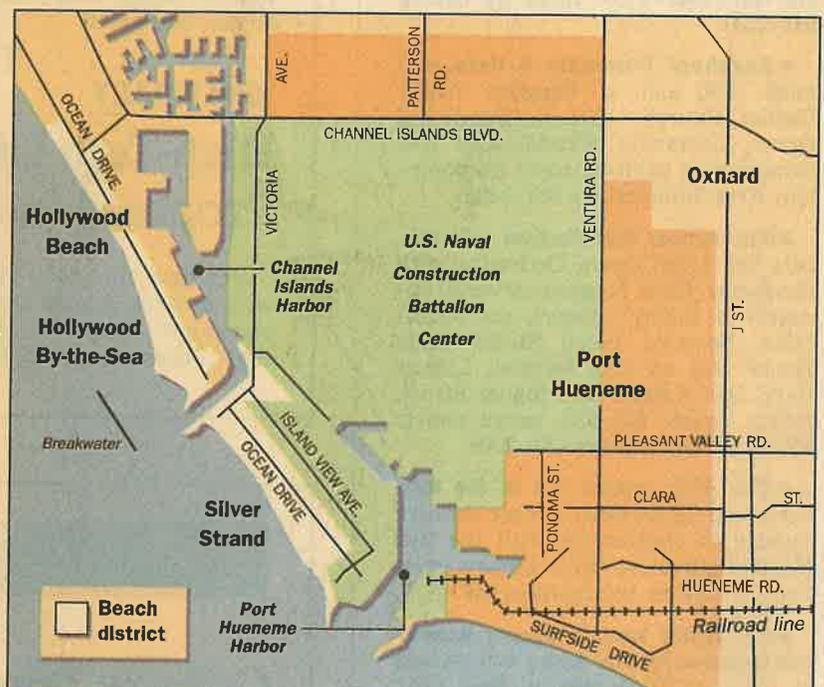
By MIGUEL BUSTILLO  
TIMES STAFF WRITER

For more than 80 years, residents of the maverick seaside communities known as Silver Strand, Hollywood Beach and Hollywood-by-the-Sea have identified themselves by their independence from Oxnard and Port Hueneme.

But complaints over rising utility costs have led the unincorporated area's elected leaders and top bureaucrat to question how much residents are willing to pay for their independence.

Gerard Kapuscik, the district's general manager, is recommending that beach residents place an initiative on the March, 1996, ballot to consider options for the future—including joining Port Hueneme or Oxnard.

On Saturday, leaders of the Channel Islands Beach  
**Please see BEACH, B8**



REBECCA PERRY / Los Angeles Times

# BEACH: Price for 3 Communities' Independence

## Could Be Too High

Continued from B1

Community Services District, home to 6,000 people, will hold a town meeting to discuss the district's future. The district now has 11 employees and an annual budget of \$2 million.

Kapuscik outlines an array of choices: enlarging district staff to provide more services and become more politically active; scaling back the district operations to save money; contracting with nearby cities for trash and other services, and merging with Port Hueneme or Oxnard.

Wanda Pirkle, regarded by many residents as the matriarch of the eclectic beach neighborhoods, said the community would never support annexation.

"We've been independent all this time," said Pirkle, who first moved to Silver Strand in 1946. "Why not stay independent? We have everything we want out here."

James J. Bennett, another longtime resident and activist, said the area had fought to stave off annexation from Oxnard and Port Hueneme dozens of times over the years. He predicted that residents would not change their minds now.

"I don't think it will happen in my lifetime," said Bennett, a 77-year-old retired Navy officer. "I can't see one advantage to being annexed to Oxnard, period. All you have to do is go to the A Street mall in Oxnard to see how they manage their affairs."

Kapuscik said that he knows most residents in the area are opposed to annexation, but that the community needs to set priorities.

He and the district's board of directors say the beaches are at a crossroads. Residents, they said, will face a number of decisions in the next six months that will affect



Photos by ALAN HAGMAN / Los Angeles Times

James Bennett, a longtime Silver Strand resident, says he sees no benefit to being annexed to Oxnard.

their pocketbooks.

The beachfront neighborhoods formed a community services district in 1982 to provide such basic services as water, and to make annexation by Oxnard and Port Hueneme more difficult. Both cities attempted to annex the beaches around 1980.

Now one of the principal reasons for the district's existence may be ending with a new \$13-million joint-powers agreement on water supplies for the communities, the Navy Seabee base and the city of Port Hueneme.

The beaches now get their water from wells that tap into the aquifer

below the Oxnard Plain. But the wells have exceeded their useful life.

The agreement would create a water supply network for the three areas at a cost of \$3.23 million to the beaches.

The district already contracts with Port Hueneme for sewer services, and with a private Ventura company for trash removal and hauling.

Whether they keep the status quo or opt for the new water system, residents will soon have to pay more for water, according to a district report.

The current \$23 monthly rate for

residents is scheduled to go up to \$29 under a plan that would charge residents as much as commercial customers.

Joining the water network would cost residents an average of \$41 a month because of expensive start-up costs. The communities could also opt for a contract with the Calleguas Municipal Water District at an average cost of \$39 a month.

In contrast, the beach communities could have lower water bills if they joined Oxnard, where residents on average pay \$20 a month for water from Calleguas.



A man fishes from Hollywood Beach, across from Silver Strand.

Start-up costs for setting up a new water network or hooking into Calleguas are high because the 1,600 residences would have to bear the entire burden of paying for new pipes and other equipment.

But Kapuscik said the start-up costs could be spread out over a longer period, making the payments less burdensome.

He said the water network, which he and the board support, would give the beach communities the independence residents say they want, albeit at a price.

Annexation would be the least costly way to obtain water, trash and other basic services, Kapuscik said.

And, he said, joining Oxnard or Port Hueneme would give the area potentially more political clout, something many residents realized they wanted recently when the Navy proposed flying fighter jets near Silver Strand, and the county unveiled plans to redevelop adjacent Channel Islands Harbor.

Therefore, residents need to decide whether the area's independence is more important to them than lower trash rates or additional

political muscle, Kapuscik said.

Director Marcia Marcus said she wants residents to have a hand in choosing the future of their neighborhoods. But, she said, town meetings, not a ballot measure, are probably the best way to gauge community support. The board would have to approve Kapuscik's recommendation for it to be placed on the ballot.

"I don't think [a ballot measure] is the best way to do it," Marcus said. "If it is still unclear after meeting with residents, then I would be for it. But I don't think it will be necessary."

Supervisor John K. Flynn, whose district includes the beaches, said he does not think the added utility costs will lead residents to consider annexation. He believes the beaches are too independent.

"I don't see that changing," said Flynn, who helped residents form a community services district more than a decade ago. "I don't see that happening. The beach community is one of the best-operated communities I have ever seen. They better think hard about that before they jump into annexation."



THE STAR

TUESDAY  
DEC. 21, 1999

SECTION B

Oxnard Bureau Chief:  
Neil Hartstein,  
655-5831

INSIDE: Police officers brighten up holidays for Gladis Soto's children — B2

# OXNARD AND Port Hueneme

## Woman's namesake sparkles with Santa

**SILVER STRAND AREA:** Former director makes sure Pirkle Park is decked out for holidays.

By Zerline A. Hughes  
Staff writer

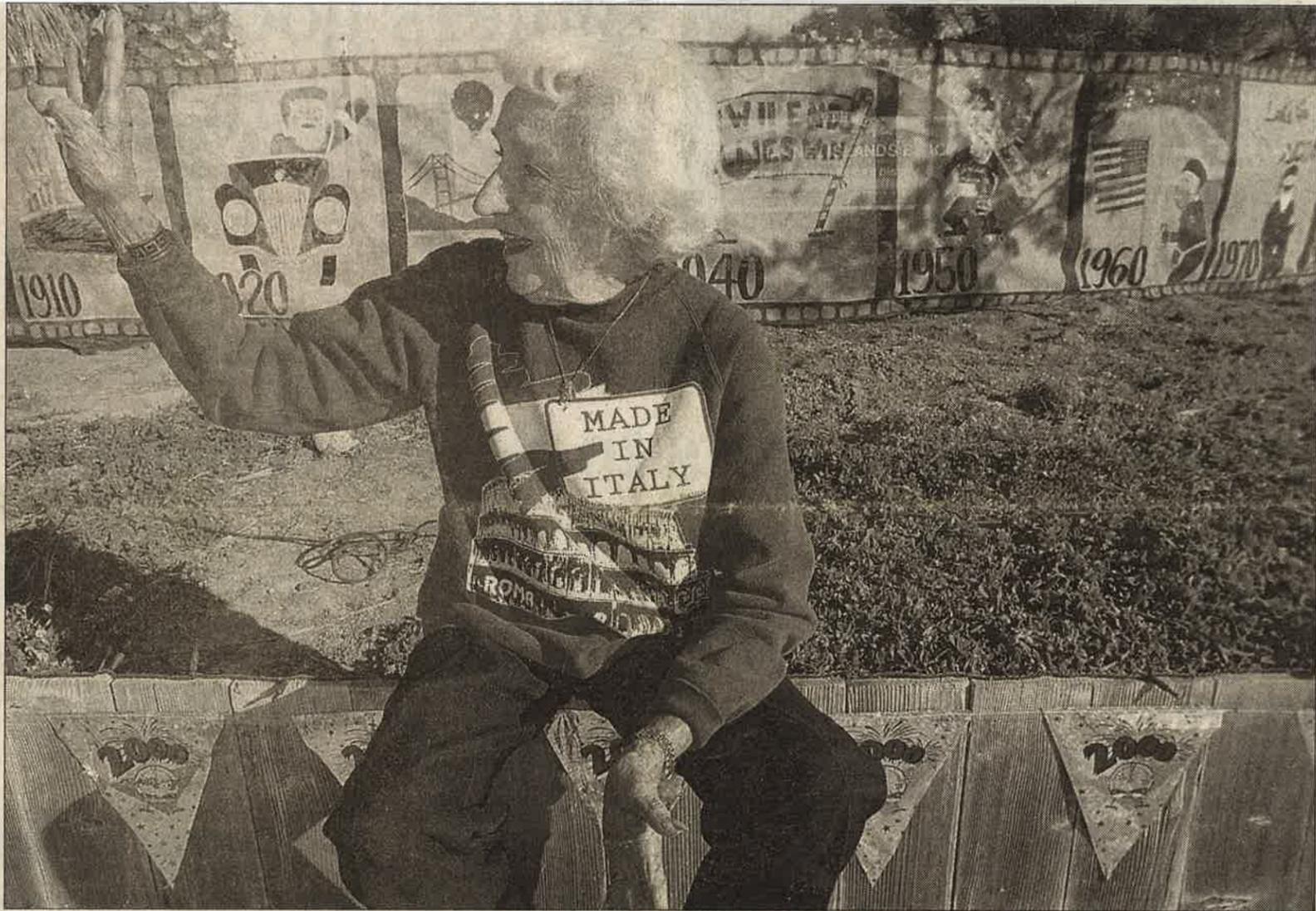
**W**anda Pirkle has lived in Oxnard for more than 50 years, always dreaming of beautifying her Silver Strand community.

As a former director of the Channel Islands Beach Community Service District and a beautification volunteer, Pirkle planted flowers and palm trees along streets and helped out with recycling programs. But until seven years ago, that wasn't enough.

"After I retired and got (back problems), everything went to pot, so I decided to do something every holiday season," said Pirkle, 77.

Every year, she decorates the corner of public land at Victoria Avenue and Lakeshore Drive — Wanda M. Pirkle Community Park — with all the Christmas trimmings

The park, a triangle of grass and boulders at the entrance to the Channel Islands Harbor beach area, was named after Pirkle when she retired from the service district in 1992.



Staff photo by James Glover II

**SITTIN' IN HER PARK:** Wanda Pirkle, 77, waves to passersby as she sits at Victoria Avenue and Lakeshore Drive. Behind Pirkle are the panels she help create to decorate the area.

She jokes that the dedication was made so she would continue to maintain the area. In reality, it has helped her achieve her dream of making her neighborhood more attractive.

The small park stands out as passersby slow down to catch a glimpse of "Memories of the Millennium," a century's worth of Santa Claus vignettes painted by Pirkle and others on a 40-foot-long screen.

Ten decades of history are

artistically recorded as Santa is pictured flying the Wright Brothers' wood plane in 1900, celebrating the end of World War II in the 1940s, disco dancing in the 1970s and checking e-mail in the 1990s.

"I wanted this lady's dream to come true," said neighbor June Rawson, who came up with this year's theme. "She said, 'I'd like to see this park lit up,' so all we did the first year is put up old strings of lights from our

garages. The next year, we decided on themes."

Themes in the past have been "Christmas Around the World" and "Hollywood Memories."

Despite Pirkle's arthritis and osteoporosis, she helped paint and apply heaps of glitter on the screen two days in a row.

"It's fun," she said. "I don't get out much, and when I'm out there, people are waving and saying hello. Everybody knows me."

Pirkle and Rawson rally the community every December to help decorate the park with tinsel, garland and holiday-inspired artwork. At night, Christmas lights glow and floodlights illuminate the screen canvas courtesy of park neighbor Bradley Witt.

"I used to know everybody on this beach, but I don't anymore," he said. "Maybe something like this will help more people meet more people."





EMAIL

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Channel Islets Gulls

Sept. 2, 2005

To my dear "Gull" friends,

I want to really, really, thank you for the beautiful bench & plaque which was placed at my "little" park at Channel Islets, Wed, Aug. 31. Lucille would really love it & be so proud of the memorial. I did a great job planning & putting the ceremony together. I was really surprised but so happy to see so many of you, and other dignitaries of the County at the dedication. I was so sorry Florence & Mary Beth couldn't be there. They were missed but not forgotten in the speeches.

I really enjoyed it so much & would love to have stayed & visited longer, but the heat & humidity was bothering me & I had to come back to Cayman to "cool off" - It's cooler here than at Channel Islets. But I do miss living there, but I'm getting used to it here and if I would just fall in & hitting myself so I could walk it I would be really nice then. It's lovely here & I like it & the people. ~~over~~

Letter written by Wanda Perkle

Channel Islands Gulls

September 2, 2005

To my dear "Gull" friends,

I want to really, really thank you for the beautiful bench and plaque which was placed at my "little" park at Channel Islands, Wed. Aug. 31. Lucille would really love it and be so proud of the memorial. President June and Vice President Sally did a great job planning and putting the ceremony together. I was really surprised but so happy to see so many of you, and other dignitaries of the County at the Dedication. I was so sorry Florence and Mary Beth couldn't be there. They were missed but not forgotten in the speeches.

I really enjoyed it so much and would love to have stayed and visited longer, but the heat and humidity was bothering me and I had to come back to Cayucos to "cool off" - It's cooler here than at Channel Islands but I do miss living there, but I'm getting used to it here and if I would quit falling and hurting myself so I could walk it will be really nice then. It's lovely here and I like it and the people can walk to beach from where I live with my daughter, Judy, so I'm still at the beach.

Again, thanks for everything. Keep up the good work. I see you have a number of new members which is really great.

So long for this time.