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# COASTAL VIEW NEWS

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## Local crime drop reported for '09

City Council considers  
Lavender Court fees, alcohol  
codes, pavement program

BY SARA MONGE  
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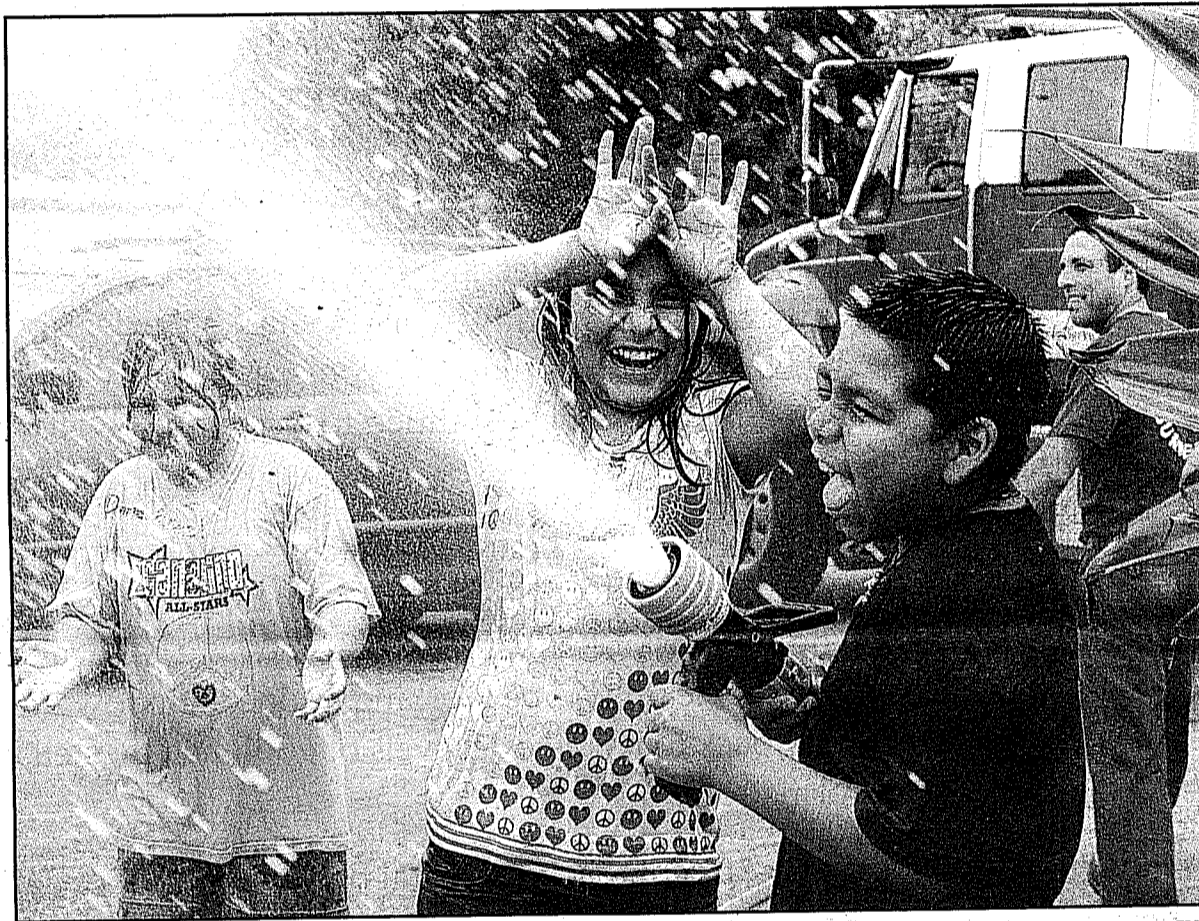
Good news came to the Carpinteria City Council at its July 26 meeting in the form of the annual report from the Santa Barbara County Sheriff's Department indicating a significant drop in Carpinteria crime from 2008 to 2009. In 2008, local crimes reached a 10-year peak of 322; but that number fell dramatically to only 233 crimes reported in 2009.

Lieutenant Eric Koopmans, Chief of Police for Carpinteria, said the drop in juvenile crime—down 69 percent during school hours—was "incredibly significant" and attributed much of the reduction to the implementation of Carpinteria High School's closed campus and Tell-A-Parent truancy automatic calling system as well as the Safe Schools & Healthy Students program. While truancy rates for Carpinteria and Rincon high schools were each measured at 42 percent in 2007-2008, during 2008-2009 Carpinteria High School's rates dropped to 36 percent and Rincon's rose to a staggering 75 percent. Truancy rate is based on the percentage of students with unexcused absences in 18 or more periods (three days). No data was presented for truancy during the 2009-2010 school year.

Vehicle theft dropped from 11 incidents in 2008 to four in 2009, and burglary dropped from 64 incidents to 44. Aggravated assault saw the only rise of 2009, increasing to 21 incidents from 15 in 2008. Unsurprisingly,

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## Wet, wetter, wettest



BOYD • CVN

A completely drenched Armando Guerrero arcs the spray of a fire hose over the lawn of the Carpinteria Fire Station lawn on July 26 to send water raining down on his friends across the way. Andrea Saldaña gets soaked in the crossfire. Firefighters invited Carpinteria participants of Fun in the Sun—a United Way program—to a first-rate water fight as a reward for their good behavior during a safety demonstration earlier this summer.

## Stingrays strike at Carpinteria beaches

Learn how to avoid an unpleasant encounter

BY PETER DUGRÉ  
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Five swimmers at local beaches learned the hard way—with an excruciating sting—that stingrays lie in the sand close to shore, even at busy Carpinteria beaches. Over the week from July 16 to 22, four swimmers were stung near Carpinteria Point and one was stung at Carpinteria City Beach, near Linden Avenue, according to Carpinteria City Beach lifeguard supervisor Chuck Graham.

Stings are common every year, but the cluster of five for a single week was high for Carpinteria, providing a good opportunity to educate the public on ways to avoid a painful encounter with a stingray, said Graham.

Though rarely causing serious injury, stings pack a great deal of pain. "I've seen people I know who have a decent pain tolerance reduced to tears by stingrays," said Lifeguard Supervisor Griff Hutton, of California State Parks Ventura sector, which includes Carpinteria. Stingrays only strike in self-defense.

The stingray's tail whips forward when the animal is stepped on, and a barb in the tail can become lodged under the person's skin, injecting an irritating venom that increases the stinging sensation at the wound.

To avoid a sting, swimmers should enter the water doing the "stingray shuffle," keeping their feet close together and dragging them through the sand to avoid stepping on a sand-covered stingray. Shuffling feet through the sand will more likely result in kicking a stingray or dislodging it from the sea floor, prompting it to swim away, rather than stepping on one, which usually leads to a sting.

Stings are most likely to occur near Carpinteria Point, which is also the outlet of the Carpinteria Salt Marsh, where abundant food supplies can attract multiple stingrays. Also, with less foot traffic near the point, the stingrays can congregate to feed without as many disturbances from swimmers as at the

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main beaches. Hutton stressed that the stingray shuffle is most critical when entering the water early in the day before many swimmers have splashed around and spooked stingrays away.

State Beach lifeguards reported zero stings so far this summer, which they found unusual considering the sting-filled week at the city and county portions of Carpinteria beach. "Usually if they (Carpinteria City Beach guards) start having them, we start having them," said Hutton.

At the city and state beaches, lifeguards are equipped with the essentials for treating stings—a bucket and hot

water. Though it sounds rudimentary, the only treatment for a typical sting is filling a bucket with the hottest possible water the person can tolerate and submerging the stung area—usually the foot or ankle—for up to 90 minutes. Of the five recent incidents, three of the swimmers went to the hospital (not by ambulance) for precautionary reasons to ensure the wounds were clear of infection and possibly to get stitches, according to Carpinteria-Summerland Fire Department.

**STINGRAYS continued**  
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