



MY BEST SHOT

by Lisa Ross

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A CARMEL VALLEY TALE: MAILHOT, MOORES AND KMART

Jerry Mailhot is a Carmel Valley original—the Paul Bunyon of community activism. Legend has it that Jerry is responsible for changing the nondescript North City West name to Carmel Valley by using his guerilla tactical skills on the Carmel Valley Planning Board. We could have been living in Del Mar Uplands.

Jerry also holds several arguable records, including for time served on the Carmel Valley Planning Board, miles walked door-to-door for political candidates and issues, and number of lawsuits filed against the city of San Diego, including one to stop a K-Mart big box shopping center and another to reroute SR56.

His latest series of lawsuits against the City of San Diego and the Padres stopped the \$300 million downtown ballpark project dead in its tracks, toppled at least one City Council Member this week, Valerie Stallings, and turned San Diego Mayor heir apparent Supervisor Ron Roberts into a loser with disclosures about cozy connections to Padres owner John Moores.

And so, with the kind of geopolitical irony befitting a suburban legend, Jerry Mailhot's Carmel Valley home recently became surrounded by the House that John Moores built—actually, several houses, including the Padres ballpark headquarters that moved to Carmel Valley a few months ago, reportedly because of Jerry's lawsuits.

Adding schizophrenia to politics, the location of Mr. Moores' new buildings makes Jerry his representative on the Carmel Valley Planning Board. And, there is likely no one who did more to pave the way for Mr. Moores to become a neighbor than Jerry Mailhot. Fortunately, or unfortunately for Jerry, Mr. Moores learned his lesson over the Stallings affair—no IPO offerings, flowers or plane rides for this Planning Board member.

To the south of Jerry's home, blocking views of his beloved SR56, sits the new offices of Moores' high tech company, Peregrine Systems. Peregrine lived quietly for years in a mud brick office complex on

High Bluff before moving to the high profile green-glass fishbowl over SR56—an office complex that would have been a K-Mart had it not been for Jerry's highly publicized lawsuit and petition drive against a city rezone of the property.

On the west, Jerry's home looks out on the future eleven-story brown stone Marriott Hotel which upon completion will obliterate his view of some delicious Del Mar sandstone bluffs. But, today's view from the Mailhot Terrace is of a large JMI Realty sign, another John Moores company.

Jerry and his attorney Bruce Henderson threw a legal mud pie at another JMI hotel project last month, the Ballpark Westin Hotel now under construction, by noticing 24 ballpark property owners, including John Moores, regarding the corruption lawsuits against the city and the Padres which could stop the transfer of property from the city's redevelopment agency to JMI. No connection to his view problems, says Jerry.

And, finishing the Ring of Moores, another large lot to the northwest of the Mailhot manse on the former Safeskin Corporation site will become an office park developed by—yep, JMI Realty.

The \$55 million three-building business campus proposal adheres closely to the guidelines the Planning Board exacted from Safeskin and so far there is nary a negative word about the project from the ever vigilant Planning Board members.

There were more than a few grumpy downtown observers whining to the press when Mr. Moores decided to invest \$150 million in the burbs, mostly in Carmel Valley, instead of staying the course in the ballpark district.

Some turned purple when a 400-employee company presently leasing 80,000 square feet downtown decided to relocate to JMI's Carmel Valley campus site rather than wait indefinitely for a proposed ballpark building because of the delays caused by Mailhot lawsuits.

And so, we can add another paradoxical episode to the saga of Jerry Mailhot—how one Carmel Valley man's lawsuit against the downtown ballpark ended up bringing a rash of office and hotel construction to Carmel Valley courtesy of the guy he sued—all to his own backyard.