

# SAN JUAN SCOOP

BY THE RESIDENTS FOR THE RESIDENTS

## **A True Historian's Thoughts regarding those preaching history for personal gain**

March 17, 2018

A Letter by Jerry Nieblas



Jerry Nieblas is one of the few historical representatives with the history and generations old credibility and authority to comment on the fabric, culture, and preservation of San Juan Capistrano and its relation to the future.

As a direct descendant of the Juaneño Band of Mission Indians Acjachemem Nation, Jerry and his relatives are considered one of San Juan's founding families with their heritage dating back to before the construction of the Great Stone Church in 1776. Along with being a pre-Mission, Early California/Rancho Family, Jerry is also the President of the Capistrano Historical Alliance Committee.

Following find Jerry Nieblas' letter to the San Juan Capistrano City Council in regards to the Riverstreet Marketplace proposed development and those individuals that are using the project to launch an unwarranted recall effort against two past San Juan Mayors, Council Members, and public servants.

### **Jerry's Letter to the SJC City Council and San Juan Community at Large:**

First, I want to make it perfectly clear....I am NOT pro-progress. For 65 years I haven't wanted things to change in San Juan Capistrano, but it's changing anyway and not all of it is positive.

I'd love to see the land on Los Rios Street stay with the Ito's - they've been good stewards and care-takers since the later 1950's. The fact of the matter is, they have EVERY right to benefit from the sale of their property. And, they have the right to sell to whomever they choose...but they didn't. They were very selective. Part of the sale process included sitting down with Dan Almquist and discussing future use of their land. Along with the Ito's and Dan Almquist, myself and others with historical ties to San Juan Capistrano and who all share the same opinion on progress, were included in those meetings. Dan listened to everyone, the positives and the criticisms. Several times, Dan and his team went back to their office, made revisions and incorporated our ideas and suggestions. Remember, there are bits and pieces to Dan's proposed plan that still need to be polished, Dan is aware of that and communication is on-going.

Whether this community likes it or not, that land will be developed. With Dan's plan, that land will NOT be a mass of housing/apartments. It will NOT be an enormous cluster of medical offices/buildings and it's NOT another strip mall. His plan is an open-air marketplace, much like what

could be found in an Early Californio plaza.

Now, about the main players opposing Dan's proposed project:

Michael Laux - I define him as a "newcomer" with a lack of early Los Rios Street historical experience. In comparison to the historical voices of San Juan Capistrano, his voice is significantly inadequate.

Jeff Vasquez - Here's one to talk as he was part of the early DESECRATION process on Los Rios Street approximately 30 years ago. Also, not born or raised on Los Rios Street, he certainly DIDN'T HOLD BACK developing HIS OWN establishment! He completely destroyed the historical Reyna Lopera Brown board & batten home. He put an entirely new structure in its place, adding a second story, including a 2 level garage with what appears to be an apartment on top! In all of this, WHERE WAS HIS CONCERN regarding HIS NEGATIVE IMPACT on Los Rios Street historic district??? For some reason, the word "HYPOCRISY" comes to my mind.

**ORIGINAL HISTORIC HOME:**



**AFTER VASQUEZ DEMOLITION:**



Mark Nielsen - NOW he's all of a sudden, concerned??? A little late, Mark. If memory serves me right, he was one of those who sold San Juan's "heart and soul" in the past. At times, being in favor of pro-growth and that makes him just as guilty in contributing to over-development in this town.

I'm a proud volunteer at the Apolonia Montano Adobe (Montanez Adobe) and see the amount of foot traffic on Los Rios Street. There isn't enough to direct them to the southern end of the street! This marketplace is a perfect invite for people to enjoy the WHOLE street with an AUTHENTIC San Juan Capistrano WELCOME. A street rich with traditions of gatherings, families and feasts, reminding us of Mi Casa, Su Casa (my home is your home).

For those who question my authority in speaking on this issue, know this...My ties to this land run deep and go back over 200 years. My 2x great-grandfather, Jose Dolores Garcia built and resided in the Garcia/Pryor home (aka the historical society). This home was a gift to his wife, my 2x great grandmother, Maria Refugia Yorba. Several of the historical board & batten homes were built by their sons, also family. Most significant, is my bloodline to the Rios family, through my 3x great grandmother, Maria Juana Rios, wife of my 3x great grandfather, Domingo Yorba.

Again, I don't like progress. However, if progress has to happen on the Ito property, let it be Dan Almquist's vision of an open-air marketplace. I STAND IN TOTAL SUPPORT of his project moving forward. I am confident this community will only BENEFIT from this proposed development coming to Los Rios Street.

Sincerely,  
Jerry Nieblas

Pre-Mission SJC descendant ancient village of Putuidem/Maria Bernardo Chigilia;  
Direct descendant of Early Californio & Rancho Yorba/Rios Families.