



The
Ruralist

Check us out at www.cherryvalleyca.org

Dedicated to Keeping Cherry Valley Rural – May 2008 issue

From Your President

I want to thank each and every one of you for the support shown CVAN this past year. Without **you** we are nothing.

It is once again time for you to select the people you want to represent you on the CVAN Board. We have enclosed a ballot. Please mark your choices and return it no later than June 15th.

Feel free to write in a name if you wish. These people work hard to keep up with local issues, attend meetings and speak on your behalf, so it is important that you express your choices.

BCVWD (Beaumont/Cherry Valley Water District)

A lot has been happening at BCVWD. They have completed the late audits, but the 2007 audit is still upcoming, and should show the actual financial status of the District.

Even though no gross errors were revealed in the late audits, it is clear that changes need to be made. Hopefully, they will be forthcoming, however, with the current make-up of the Board, there is a real concern as to whether the suggested changes will be made.

That being said, this is an election year, and there are two seats on the BCVWD Board coming up -- Mr. Lash's and Mr. Chatigny's!

If we want a change, now is the time to say so, the American way – VOTE THEM OUT!

It is my hope that there will be two individuals who will step up and challenge these 'good old boys.'

Beaumont Council

Although we cannot vote for Beaumont Council, it is important to let your friends, who live in Beaumont, know that there are two Council seats open -- Jeff Fox and Marty Killough.

Let No Political Seat Go Unopposed!!!!

That's how things go wrong. When people sit on elected boards year after year, exchanging positions, corruption, apathy, and nepotism take hold – 'the good old boy' syndrome.

If you study the people in the BCVWD, the city of Beaumont, the Watermaster, and STWMA – they are all 'joined' like a dirty family tree.

We Don't Understand?

BCVWD has hired Tim Smith as "Information Officer" at \$29,000 per year, as well as a public relations firm for six months at \$75,000, to make sure we "understand."

Do they really want us to "understand" something, or do they just want to improve their public image?

They have also hired some facilitators, for a substantial amount of money, to assist the Board. This seems to have been totally ignored. If you attend the meetings or read the newspaper, I'm sure you understand very well!

Litigation

We have completed our arbitration meeting with SunnyCal, and Legacy Highlands. These are formalities -- no agreements were made. Court dates will be determined for hearings on both cases later this year.

We Must Be Active

The nation's economy is in a slump (dare we say recession?) and I am sure we are all feeling it -- \$4.00 gas... \$2.50 bread... \$3.50 milk... foreclosures... loss of jobs... an increase in crime and political corruption...

There are some things we can do something about, and some things that are out of our control. The things we can do something about are close to home...

- ◆ Pay attention to local politics, and elect those that will represent what you want for your community – not just big money projects.
- ◆ Communicate with our Supervisor's office and other County agencies – let them know what you expect from them and their office.

- ◆ Attend (and speak up) at the local level whenever you feel things are not right or fair or good for our community. Be an activist – it’s really not a bad thing.

And please keep me updated, so I can get the word out to others who share our cause.

Email Problems

As you all know, I have been having some serious problems with my computer regarding emails. It is so easy to keep you informed by ‘batch’ email when it works properly. That’s where the problem comes in.

If you don’t keep me up to date when you change your email, all sorts of bad things happen. For instance, lantis.surveying@verizon.net (or lantix) address has blocked all my bcc emails.

Hopefully, I have it corrected.

Please, if there are any changes to your email address, notify me at patsydol@verizon.net.

Speaking Of Email...

I would also like to know how you feel about getting your agendas, newsletters and updates all by email. This would save us a considerable amount of time and money.

You may not be aware that the cost of printing and postage, just to mail to our members, is around \$1,000.00. When we send a mass mailer to all of the Cherry Valley residents, it’s almost twice that.

Plus the time to type and format, and the trips to and from the printer, is very consuming.

All of this time and energy could be put to other uses in the pursuit of our stated mission... to keep Cherry Valley Rural.

Of course, those members who do not have access to email will still receive hard copies of our newsletter in the regular mail. We do not want to exclude anyone, we just want to be as efficient as possible.

Please let me know if you would be willing to receive your newsletters and agendas by email. Thank you.

MAC -- Municipal Advisory Committee

Supervisor Marion Ashely has established a Municipal Advisory Committee, known as a MAC, for the San Gorgonio Pass area. This MAC includes all unincorporated areas around the cities of Beaumont & Banning.

The members chosen to be on the committee are: Ray Morris (SGPWA) Chairman; Stella Parks; John Benfield (Banning Bench UC/water district); Tina Kummerly (Highland Springs Resort); Bruce Cash (lives in San Tim Canyon, address San Bernardino); Bruce Braswell (Banning), and Jim Anderson (as alternate).

Brenda Salas was in charge of organizing the committee, but has taken a position with the Redevelopment Agency and will not be a committee member. However, she will attend meetings until things are running smoothly.

The MAC meetings will be held at the San Gorgonio Pass Water Agency Office, every other month, at 12:00 noon. The first official meeting was held on April 16, and the next meeting will be on June 11, 2008.

The county representatives were very surprised at the large number in attendance, stating it was very unusual and showed how strong our community is.

The fact is, we were the only ones there! No one from any other unincorporated area showed up! I

want to thank everyone from Cherry Valley who attended.

I will continue to notify you of these meetings and we MUST CONTINUE to make our presence known... otherwise we will lose control of our goals... and our community. We must NOT let that happen!

Guess that’s all from me. I will turn the rest of this newsletter over to someone else. Patsy.

Beware Redevelopment!

There is talk about bringing “Redevelopment” to Cherry Valley. Some are for it and some are against it. Now, I’m not going to try to tell you how to think about it, and I’m not going to say that redevelopment projects have never done any good.

However, there are some things about redevelopment agencies that you should know about before you make up your mind. For instance:

- ◆ Redevelopment agencies are created without a vote of the people who may be most affected by it.
- ◆ They can take your tax dollars away from teachers, schools, police, fire-fighters, hospitals, and libraries, and give it to big “box stores,” hotels and auto dealerships for their private use.
- ◆ There is no public oversight, no public vote, and no public say in what they do... the redevelopment agency does what it pleases and answers to no one.

Once a redevelopment “project area” is created, all property tax growth in that area is then diverted directly to the redevelopment agency, and away from schools and other public services where it’s needed. This means that cities must raise other taxes in order to make up for the shortfall. Guess who pays these new taxes?

But What About the Good They Bring?

But, you may ask, what about all the good they do? Let's look at some recent examples of the good of "redevelopment"

- ◆ In Lancaster, a city park was declared "blighted" to pave over 19 acres of parkland and cut down over 100 trees to make room for a Costco.
- ◆ Pristine, raw desert acreage in California City was declared "blighted" to justify its seizure for a Hyundai test track.
- ◆ An Orange County public health facility was declared "blighted" by the Santa Ana Redevelopment Agency so they could turn the property over to a BMW dealer.
- ◆ LA County has lost over \$2 Billion (yes, that's Billion with a "B") in general fund revenues since 1990 to redevelopment diversion. Instead of using tax money to keep open public hospitals, staff emergency rooms, libraries, and help law enforcement, it has been diverted to create auto malls, shopping centers and hotels.

That's not all. These agencies create huge debt by selling bonds, without voter approval... bonds that you and your children will pay for. So far, this redevelopment debt has mortgaged California residents to the tune of \$81 Billion!

They then use this bond money, along with the diverted tax money, to subsidize private commercial development through cash grants, tax rebates... even free land! You don't get cash grants, tax rebates, or free land, but Costco and Wal-Mart does... and it's your money they're getting!

And, to add insult to injury, once the redevelopment agency brings in these big businesses, the local small businesses must now go up against huge competition for their very survival... competition that was funded by their own taxes!

Now, I have nothing against Wal-Mart; they're just taking money that's being offered to them. I'd do the same if it were me. The problem is not with the businesses... the problem is with the agencies that give them our money.

Eminent Domain Is A Nasty Thing!

Eminent domain refers to the power of the state to appropriate any property within it's borders for "public use." Even your and mine.

Eminent domain is a powerful tool that redevelopment agencies wield in order to get the land for their projects.

For instance, if an agency decides that your land is the perfect place for a "project," they can take it through "eminent domain," and the Supreme Court, in its infinite wisdom, has decided that there's not a thing you can do to stop it. It's the law.

I hope I've given you something to think about.

Another Money-Sucking Layer of Government

If you like the idea of another powerful, out-of-control, money-sucking layer of government coming into *your* area and using *your* tax dollars to build auto malls and shopping centers instead of educating *your* children or protecting *your* home and loved-ones, then redevelopment is music to your ears.

If, however, the independent, freedom-loving blood of our nation's founders flows red in your veins, then I urge you to find out more. Get the facts, and make up your own mind.

Don't take my word for it, and for heaven's sake don't take the politicians' word for it... find out for yourself whether redevelopment is a something you want in your area.

For more information on these Redevelopment Agencies, and on Eminent Domain, here are some places you can go:

Go to the official CVAN Website www.cherryvalleyca.org to read and/or download a copy of the publication, "Redevelopment: The Unknown Government." It's in PDF form, and it's free. There will be a link at the bottom of the home page.

Another good website to try is <http://redevelopment.com/> This site has some good links you may want to check out.

Plus be sure to check out this site, and read about a very important California Proposition: <http://www.yesprop98.com/>

Don't be hoodwinked... get the facts. Informed people are powerful people.

Marc Sanders

Be Sure To Vote – and Know For What and For Whom Who You Vote

A citizen's vote in an election is the only meaningful voice that most people have regarding the job that incumbent candidates have performed during their tenure in office.

This is particularly true in small areas, such as Beaumont and Cherry Valley, when elections are held for membership on the Water District Board of Directors, Pass Water Agency and similar local offices.

We all know from articles in the local press -- the Press Enterprise, the San Bernardino Sun, and the Record Gazette -- that our Water purveyor,

the Beaumont/Cherry Valley Water District (BCVWD) has been beset with numerous problems during recent months.

These problems were serious enough to have resulted in investigations by the Riverside County Grand Jury and the Auditor Controllers Office.

These investigations are ongoing, and inconclusive at present, but the implications point to serious mismanagement within the District, and perhaps something more serious than just plain mismanagement.

Cassie MacDuff, writing an editorial in the Press Enterprise a few weeks ago, covered this subject very well. In that editorial, Ms Macduff summarized a series of mismanagement goofs that reflect badly on Chuck Butcher, the General Manager who has been in control of the District and the Board of Directors since 1999.

Mr Butcher had been the District's General Manager for many years, up until 1997, when he was fired by the previous Board of Directors for mismanagement. He was subsequently rehired by a new board, and has remained, as General Manager, Secretary and Treasurer of the district, up to the present time.

To cover all aspects of this subject in any meaningful manner would require a very lengthy article that is beyond the scope of this newsletter. However it must be noted that the responsibility for the management of the District *ultimately lies with the Board of Directors... not with Mr. Butcher.*

If Mr. Butcher has violated the rules and policies established by the Board, the Board should take immediate action to remove him. To not do so means that the Board, by a majority vote, condones his actions. This would be an abdication of their sworn duties.

Cassie published another article, on April 11, 2008, summarizing more recent actions and/or lapses by the Board. This reveals that no lessons have been learned since her previous article... the same old mismanagement continues.

We commend her for her reporting, and feel indebted to her.

Most people (but not all) know that the General Manager is hired by the Board of Directors and serves at the pleasure of the Board. He is subject to an annual review of his performance, and can be removed by a majority vote of the five-member Board at any time.

Residents who live within the boundaries of the Water District, and obtain water from the District, elect the Board of Directors. The election of new members is staggered so that two or three members are elected every two years.

Two members, Will Lash and Board President Albert Chatigney, will face re-election in November of this year.

This election is the only meaningful way for residents to express their approval or disapproval of the way that the District is currently being managed. If you approve, you should vote for both incumbents. Otherwise you should vote for the opposition candidates.

At this time we do not know who those opposition candidates will be. Hopefully some outstanding citizens, with no prior or current financial involvement or family ties with the District, will step forward.

If the articles in the Press and San Bernardino Sun were correct, it would be difficult to envision that the existing management is satisfactory.

We believe that the articles are correct but not all inclusive. There are many areas that should be covered in more detail by the public press. We

are confident that additional news articles will be published.

Investigations by the Grand Jury and the Auditor Controller have yet to be completed, and will surely reveal additional information that will be publicized. Stay tuned.

We do not presume to tell anyone how to vote. We do, however, recommend that everyone become informed before they vote, and then vote as they see fit. BY ALL MEANS – VOTE!

Stan Riddell

Bad Rap

I want to say a few words about Cherry Valley, and the "bad rap" they are constantly receiving.

As someone stated at the recent Redevelopment meeting, "We are always being picked on." This is true.

The majority of Cherry Valley residents want only to try and maintain the rural lifestyle that they moved here to enjoy. Yet there are a lot of people, who do not live here, who seem to feel that this is asking for the ridiculous...

- ◆ Developers are trying to change the large lots that we love, and turn horse property into blocks of concrete;
- ◆ The City of Beaumont wants all of the Cherry Valley property from Brookside to Cherry Valley Blvd;
- ◆ Calimesa wants the property north of Cherry Valley Blvd;
- ◆ The BCVWD says residents are a 'radical group,' and blasts us for causing what they feel are unnecessary and costly lawsuits.

Those trying to change the lifestyles of Cherry Valley residents appear to be either jealous of what we have, or want to exploit the area for financial gains at our expense. They

are upset that the Judges in nearly all of the lawsuits agree with the petitioners.

Why else would they be adding more insults to people who win?

Integrity does exist at the BCVWD, but it is only with Board members Dr. Ball and Stella Parks. The rest of the organization doesn't have a clue as to what the word means.

If some future day comes where there are a growing number of BCVWD members who show the same integrity, then I'm sure the good folks of Cherry Valley and the BCVWD will start having a better relationship.

I am pleased that the editor of the Record Gazette continues to post comments from Cherry Valley citizens, and I want to thank him for not being biased when it comes to the opinion section.

However, it is my belief that most of us who live here will *not* miss Mr. Smith's opinionated comments about how the BCVWD is always right, and we, being on the opposite side, are always wrong.

If I remember journalism 101 correctly, editorializing in a news story is a big 'no-no,' yet he seems to have used his position with the paper as a way to further his friendship with certain members of the BCVWD.

Perhaps now the Record Gazette can get a reporter to attend a board meeting, and report back with the same correct style of reporting as the Press Enterprise and the San Bernardino Sun.

A reporter should not side with an organization that seems to be in total disarray, and who has a growing list of rate payers from outside the Cherry Valley area that have become aware of the turmoil that runs rampant at the BCVWD.

Pat Doherty



CVAN
2007-2008
CANDIDATES FOR BOARD OF
DIRECTORS

PLEASE VOTE FOR SEVEN (7)
(You may write in)

Lance
Adams _____

Betty
Beckman _____

Minnie
Birchard _____

Patrick
Doherty _____

Glen
Dye _____

Fran
Flanders _____

Patsy
Reeley _____

Luwana
Ryan _____

Marc
Sanders _____

Writein _____

Mail Ballot to P. O. Box 3257 Cherry
Valley, CA 92223 no later than May
30, 2007.

The first 7 persons with the most
votes will be your Board and the
remaining will be Alternates.

THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING
CHERRY VALLEY ACRES &
NEIGHBORS

CHERRY VALLEY ACRES &
NEIGHBORS (A non-profit
organization)

Application for membership

Dues: \$10.00 per Family per Year
July 1 to June 30

Mail to: CVAN
P. O. Box 3257
Beaumont, Ca 92223

Dues \$ _____

Donations \$ _____

Total \$ _____

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

Phone _____

E-Mail _____

We like to have active members, but
if you can't participate actively,
your membership still strengthens our
organization.

THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING
CHERRY VALLEY ACRES &
NEIGHBORS