

# SANTA BARBARA NEWS-PRESS



## Chumash critics grasping at straws

VOICE FROM SANTA YNEZ VALLEY: Robert "Ted" Ortega

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I am writing in response to Nancy Eklund's Tuesday letter to the editor, "Solvang a tribute to Danish culture."

As usual, she has her facts wrong. It's easy for members of the Santa Ynez Valley Concerned Citizens to pontificate on the perceived evils of the tribe. If only they told the truth.

First of all, who suggested that we were renovating the Royal Scandinavian Inn in the style of a "big-box, strip-mall architecture?" Our renovation team hasn't even been assembled yet and Ms. Eklund already is spreading misinformation about our renovation plans.

For someone who values Danish culture, it's ironic that Ms. Eklund and her group have opposed our plans for a tribal museum -- every single step of the way. She obviously places more value on Danish culture than she does on Native American culture.

And she is in denial if she thinks her group hasn't opposed tribal business and charitable efforts within the community. They have fought us on every project we have undertaken and have been critical of our charitable efforts.

Ms. Eklund and her extreme group love to say that all they ask is that everyone play by the same rules of development. For the millionth time, the tribe does play by the same rules. If you were to compare tribal land development vs. nontribal land development, you'd see we follow the same rules as everyone else -- the only difference is the governing bodies that administer those rules.

Ms. Eklund accuses Travis Armstrong of grasping at straws, but the only one grasping at straws here is Ms. Eklund. Just look at the response we have received from individuals other than members of her extreme group. Most are pleased that we plan to renovate a jewel in the community to the AAA four diamond standards of our existing hotel.

It's too bad that Ms. Eklund can't acknowledge that our purchase of the Royal Scandinavian Inn will help the community of Solvang by bringing in more guests to a tourist destination.

*Robert "Ted" Ortega is a tribal member of the Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians.*