

SANTA BARBARA NEWS-PRESS



Solvang, a tribute to Danish culture

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This is in response to Travis Armstrong's Wednesday column, "Chumash deserve a hearty thank you."

Solvang was founded many years ago by a group of Danish immigrants, who made a deliberate choice to preserve and honor their cultural heritage, the result of which is the charming European-style village so many tourists and locals enjoy today. To suggest that renovating the Scandinavian Inn in the style of big-box, strip-mall architecture, with a few Indian symbols pasted on the exterior, which the Chumash have employed in their local casino, is absurd.

In addition, Solvang has Danish-style architectural guidelines to which the tribe, as any other developer, will presumably be required to adhere. Valley residents and tourists alike treasure the unique character of each of our townships.

Further, valley residents have never opposed tribal business and charitable efforts within the community; they will continue to vehemently oppose tribal annexation, which is clearly detrimental to the surrounding community and county at large. All we ask is that everyone play by the same rules of development and that mitigation be handled appropriately and fairly.

To compare the community impact of UCSB, an internationally respected institution of higher learning, to the well-documented negative impacts of a casino upon local society is another example of Mr. Armstrong's effort to continue stirring the pot by grasping at straws.