

THE SANTA YNEZ Valley JOURNAL

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Santa Ynez Valley Journal invites criticism, suggestions, recommendations, observations, and opinions, particularly if they have something to do with an item or items you read in this paper, or about the Valley. Please send all such correspondence to: Letters To The Editor, Santa Ynez Valley Journal, P.O. Box 524, Santa Ynez, CA 93460. You can also FAX your letters to: 805-969-6654 or e-mail: valleyjournal@hotmail.com or journaljim@aol.com.

Get the Facts!

The "Purely Political" (VJ #4/6) article regarding "Taking on the Chumash," quoted **Kathryn Bowen** saying that the Supervisors "voted 5 - 0 not to appeal the annexation." This is unfair, inaccurate, and completely misstates the facts.

As Supervisor, I have consistently opposed the 6.9-acre annexation and made the original motion to formally oppose the annexation that, at the time, did not receive a second. I do not know why this would be left out of the article when, in fact, I have always maintained that annexation is not in the best interests of the County.

Jim, I am trying to research what the POLO people are talking about. There may be some procedural vote that I missed, but neither County Counsel nor I can figure out what it might be. My position has been clear and consistent in opposing the 6.9-acre annexation and I am doing everything possible to convince my colleagues to agree. I have taken some heat for this. I was concerned and disappointed when the POLO article, from the people who above all should know what I have done for our mutual cause, chose to fashion their statements otherwise.

Brooks Firestone

Santa Ynez

(Publisher's Note: There will be more on this issue next month, but our understanding is that while Mr. Firestone did indeed attempt to formally oppose the annexation of the Chumash tribe's 6.9-acre parcel, but when nobody seconded his motion to oppose, he voted with the rest of the Supervisors. Brooks has indeed "taken heat" for his opposition and we will clarify and elaborate on the subject in the next issue of the Valley Journal. – J.B.)

Both Sides of the Coin

I wanted you to know that there are many Valley residents who acknowledge the fact that *Santa Ynez Valley Journal* is the only remaining paper in Santa Barbara County reporting *all* sides of very important issues facing us these days. The relationship between the Chumash tribe and the rest of Santa Ynez Valley and the upcoming hearings on the Santa Ynez Valley General Plan are two critical concerns to all of us

that will determine the course of events for a long time to come. The perspective of people who actually live in the Valley some for generations, is often ignored.

It is so important to have an unbiased forum in which to explore visions and examine agendas without fear of either being misrepresented or not heard at all which has become commonplace for other local publications.

We thank you for your persistence in bringing these topics in all their versions for the public to hear and understand. Keep up the great work!

Nancy Crawford-Hall
San Lucas Ranch
Santa Ynez

Thanks To POLO and POSY

All citizens of Santa Ynez Valley should be grateful groups like POLO and POSY exist to fight the large money machine in our backyard called the Chumash Casino. These dedicated people sacrifice not only their time, but also plenty of their own money for the benefit of all Valley citizens. We should also thank all the people who have donated their time and money for these two citizen groups. The Chumash bankroll was the main reason our supervisors voting against fighting the annexation of the 6.9 acres. The chance of losing any money from allocated Chumash funds was apparently too large a risk to take.

The supervisors' collective decision reinforced why I didn't vote for Mr. Firestone, and reinforced his lack of leadership for the citizens of Santa Ynez Valley. To be swayed by the illusion of an agreement from "government to government" that was never truly defined or enforceable is hard to accept, and these people are the ones who have been elected to represent whom? Not us?

I've written a few letters in the past to local papers, and have always commended the Chumash for their newfound success, but as the article clearly stated, their success has come at what cost to the rest of us? Traffic and crime to name two issues that have dramatically increased over the last few years, which statistics from the article shows. It's also funny how these statistics never seem to be obtainable from local law enforcement. I wonder if Chumash money plays into that equation? I'm sure the Chumash will write a rebuttal article soon about all the great attributes and contributions they have provided to mitigate their casino's impact on the community. Yes, they have given plenty to schools, local agencies, law enforcement, fire, etc, but is that *truly* mitigating the impact? No, the Valley has been changed forever.

There is not enough law enforcement in and around the casino to protect the citizens, and it will take only one violent crime to you or someone you know for you to understand the "true" impact of the casino. As I stated, I'm glad the Chumash are doing well, but I do feel their claim of mitigation to the Valley is lacking and needs to be seriously addressed by our local and national government. I also believe the Chumash should be allowed, like anyone else, to buy and expand their holdings, but on the same basis and under the same rules as every other citizen of the Valley or state of California. Any additional tax-free annexation or potential additional gaming in Santa Ynez Valley needs to be fought, and thank you POLO and POSY for leading the way!

Craig Metheany
Santa Ynez