

## Chapter 7

### THE HOME STRETCH

On August 22, 1987, the *Daily News* published a lengthy write up on the candidates for the Santa Clarita City Council. Pat Aidem emphasized that most of the candidates were new to an election campaign.

Donald M. Benton, 30, was serving his second term on the community college district board, and before that had served as a student trustee. He was a district manager for Farmers Insurance, having started with his sister a successful temporary agency. He saw annexation of the undeveloped areas as the first order of business. "I know that's difficult, but we have to try."

Louis E. Brathwaite, 54, had served on the Hart high school board, including a term as president. He worked as an administrator for the Federal government. He never could say too much about his position, in which he worked for the Secretary of the Air Force. A black man, he had been elected in his white neighborhood as the president of the Monteverde Homeowners Association. He had been asked to run for the school board because of his experience in support groups, and had been elected in part because *The Signal* had never described him as a black candidate.

William J. Broyles, 48, had run unopposed for Canyon County supervisor in 1978 in the fifth district of Canyon Country. In 1978 we had repeated our effort to form a county out of pique with the legislature, and knew we were going to fail. Few ran in any district election. He parleyed that win into a successful run for a seat on the college district board in 1979. A custodian at the college, he was the subject of "only in America" comments when he became President of the Board. However, he lost a bid for reelection in 1983 by four votes. He was a maintenance worker for the Glendale Unified School District, and wanted "fair representation for all Santa Clarita Valley communities."

H. Gil Callowhill, 73, a retired industrial engineer born in Canada, had won his seat on the Castaic Lake Water Agency's board of directors by walking door-to-door. He hoped to win a seat on the city council the same way. The difference, however, was that he had run for the CLWA seat by district, while candidates to the council would be elected at large, over a much larger area. He was particularly interested in monitoring growth "to ensure adequate public services." He had also been elected a Canyon County Supervisor by district in 1976.

Jeffrey D. Christensen, 29, was self-employed as a general contractor, and placed new roads at the top of his priority list. "What if we had a disaster? Some of the communities do not have the access roads they need in an emergency."

Dennis Conn, 40, who called himself a recreational consultant, often carried a portfolio of testimonial letters and drawings of his dreams for various camping parks and other facilities. He talked of a big water slide party for his fellow candidates and the media.

Jo Anne Darcy, 56, had been Supervisor Antonovich's field deputy for seven years. She campaigned on upgrading public services and drafting an oak tree preservation ordinance. She knew tremendous numbers of people, but suffered from the disadvantage of being employed by the county.

Kenneth Dean, 48, an interior designer, called the road system "horrendous." He said, "we have to act right away to fix it, or the population will outgrow the access system." Ken was serious about running for office. This was his third try.

Monty L. Harrell, 40, had a master's degree in economics and experience as a City of Ventura budget director. He had just been laid off as a vice president of Security Pacific National Bank, and wanted to establish a conservative fiscal policy.

Jan Heidt, 48, was well known as an activist in Sand Canyon. She had done a great deal to fight dump projects and to organize and fund the Canyon County campaigns. Siding with Bob Silverstein, she said a moratorium would not be necessary if the city followed the court-ordered county Development Monitoring System, which was "tailor made for this area."

Bill Hilton, 37, was the minister of the Newhall Christian Church, and argued that organizing the city government was the first issue, and that this would take at least two years. "I don't want to come in with the promises. The first City Council has a lot to do just hiring a staff and setting precedents in policy. We've got our work cut out for us, and it's no simple task."

Gail Klein, 43, had been appointed by Mike Antonovich to the local Planning Advisory Committee, and was in real estate. Once an ally of Howard Jarvis, she said she would quit the council if it voted to impose business license fees, entertainment taxes and bed taxes on hotels.

Dennis M. Koontz, 47, was quoted as saying no one had a track record. "No precedents have been set. No battle lines can be drawn." He wanted to formulate a viable city. He was on a disability retirement from the Los Angeles City Fire Department, and active in the union.

Michael D. Lyons, 40, wanted to limit growth of multi-family residential, and complained about building forty units per acre. He wanted to maintain our rural atmosphere.

Andy Martin, 63, wanted a tough stand on new development, which was turning the area into an "urban pigpen." The owner of Martin Insurance in Newhall, he said he wanted to build new roads and monitor industry linked to pollution.

Howard P. "Buck" McKeon, 45, a BYU graduate, had gone into the family business, Howard and Phil's Western Wear in Canyon Country. Thinking that if he was going to work there he ought to account for himself, he built a one-store business into a chain that expanded throughout the West. He was in his third term on the Hart high school district board. Saying that growth was inevitable, he said that the "important thing is that you hire the very best planning staff and appoint the most competent planning body to weigh the advantages of growth against impacts."

Roger Meurer, 42, backed a brief moratorium on building, but was himself building a small industrial park in Saugus. He said he understood the problems of growth, which he favored. Like Buck McKeon, he wanted to develop a growth management plan.

Ronald J. Nolan, 28, described himself as a law clerk and a grocery store clerk, wanted to limit building of apartments and condominiums to ease traffic congestion.

Frank A. Parkhurst, 65, backed a building moratorium. An advertising consultant, he wanted to build recreation facilities for youth.

Vernon H. Pera, 45, stated that the only qualification any of us brought to the race was our desire to serve the community. "I want to see an everyday working stiff who drinks beer and bowls on the council. None of the 26 people know what it's like to run a city, but we'll have an opportunity to learn together." He was a sales representative for an auto parts firm.

Robert Silverstein, 71, had served as president of the Santa Clarita Valley Chamber of Commerce and was retired aerospace manufacturing engineer. He wanted to monitor growth to ensure adequate public services.

Edmund G. Stevens, 61, wanted to see less concentrated growth, spreading it around to limit the traffic impacts. He wanted to develop an environmentally conservative growth management plan. He was sales manager at Caston's Appliances in Newhall.

Linda Hovis Storli, 38, a government teacher at Canyon High School, said, "I would try to limit growth, to guide it in line with what we can handle." She wanted to emphasize youth recreation.

Maurice D. Ungar, 51, owner of Ungar Realty in Canyon Country, also said growth was inevitable, that we tended to adopt a "close-the-back-door policy" after we moved into the valley. He wanted a growth management plan that included upgrades to the system of roads.

Richard M. Vacar, 41, was the general manager of the Burbank-Glendale-Pasadena Airport. He also wanted a growth management plan linked to improve public services.

I was 49, and had taught social studies at San Fernando High School since 1963. I said, "I think we have to use the surplus – and I want to emphasize the city will have a good surplus with no increase in revenue – to build the roads, the parks, all the things that have been virtually ignored." I had just a little more experience in public office than Buck McKeon, and had won a supervisor's seat in the 1976 Canyon County effort.

None of us had anticipated the tremendous amount of help which was offered. Karen Cameron turned out to be a mine of contacts. The California Contract Cities Association, the League of California Cities and people from neighboring cities were soon in touch, if they had not been before the election was scheduled. The California Contract Cities Association held a workshop for candidates during the first week in September. Mayerene Barker caught the flavor of the session in the *Los Angeles Times* for Sept. 7. I was quoted as saying,

“This is really our one chance to achieve a decent, viable local government,” speculating that cityhood would receive overwhelming voter approval as a backlash against recent development. Jan Heidt pumped for “community-directed planning,” while Linda Storli talked about “local control over local money.”

The county had not found it possible, short of federal funding, to develop a plan for the 2,500 square miles of the northern territory. As a result, our valley was being trashed. Newhall Land was the most visible culprit, but they had planned well, had built attractive tracts, and had put in expensive infrastructure years ahead of time. Traffic flowed smoothly in their Valencia development. However, Canyon Country’s needs had been ignored by the county, and Jack Shine’s American Beauty developments had not had the benefit of a master plan. Jack was a very decent person who had a vision of quality housing, but he did not control the acreage that Newhall Land did, and therefore could not build a complete community.

Jack Shine was building more houses than Newhall Land, but was not able to do industrial development. The Valencia Industrial Center was providing thousands of good jobs, more than needed for Valencia, but outside of Newhall Land territory the pressure of traffic trying to get to jobs outside the local community was significant. The public was disgusted.

However, Jeff Christensen, the general contractor, reflected the opinion of most of the candidates in saying, “I’m for growth, but for controlled growth.... It’s almost as though people have become an afterthought in planning.”

Connie Worden was busy leading a drive to register more voters. The rolls had been purged during the LAFCO process, and with city revenues heavily dependent on population figures, it was important to build the numbers. Our population would be computed at three times the number of registered voters for the first eight years. Connie was concerned about a light turnout and a split vote that might allow someone to win a seat on the council with two or three thousand votes. A large turnout was important for the city’s sake, and a strong lead by the top candidates would give the council more credibility during the formative years. I suspected that Connie did not run for the original council because she was concerned we might have a difficult time with government formation, and she wanted to wait in the wings. In a number of incorporations, the initial council failed, and others elected two to four years later did very well.

Twenty-five of us were campaigning. Barry Golob, a studio driver, had not made it to the ballot for want of valid signatures from registered voters on his petition. Don Benton announced his withdrawal because he wanted to keep his college board seat.

Early in September the billboards were going up, showing that some of the candidates were raising significant funds. I did not know anything about raising money. I had raised \$357 in my successful bid for a college board seat in 1973, and spent within a few dollars of that amount in my bid for a seat on the Canyon County Board of Supervisors. I had not campaigned at all in 1977, and had done very little in 1981. I had been appointed to the water board, and had not beat the

to get reelected. I sent out 110 letters to people I knew on a personal level, and raised \$1100. I had no billboards. However, I would not have used them, and would not have staked out the signs that littered the roadsides. Unfortunately it is probably necessary to do that in twenty-first century Santa Clarita, but it was not then. Even with more than 48,000 voters we still had a small town feel.

I had some flyers about my record printed, and handed them out while walking door to door talking with people about the merit of incorporation. I do not recall anyone saying, "Why should I vote for you?" Most of the candidates were running low key campaigns as well. McKeon, Heidt, Darcy and Vacar were the candidates reporting big successes in raising money, with the maximum eventually totaling at about \$15,000.

Vern Pera was one of the most likeable candidates, and had a real sense of humor. He said he was getting some literature printed. "I've also started getting some placards with my picture so they can see how pretty I am."

In mid September the opposition surfaced with a lawsuit. Wendy Morey was the spokesperson for Citizens Against Cityhood. I had never heard of her, and did not know who she was. I never did learn, but she did get some ink. She was miffed because the opposition had not been able to get a statement printed in the sample ballot, and called that a violation of the state Elections Code. She complained that "Santa Clarita cannot progress as a city without a tax increase somewhere. There has to be a tax increase for the city to survive. It might be hidden, but there will be one."<sup>1</sup>

I knew a lot of people did not care about the facts, and Lou Garasi acknowledged publicly that we knew the threat of a tax increase was a major concern. We had history on our side. LAFCO had said we were financially viable, and we could list a bunch of recent incorporations where no tax increases had resulted. At candidates' forums we all stuck together. "I don't see any tax increases at all," said Dennis Koontz.

Vern Pera talked about how the county spent our money elsewhere, and now we would have a \$3.5 million surplus to spend at home.

I said, "Year after year, the county has been robbing us blind."

Mike Schuman, the popular principal of Placerita Junior High School, moderated a candidates' night at the Senior Citizens Center on Market Street. There were two hundred in the audience, a tremendous number for such an event. We knew that public awareness was high, and our polls showed us way ahead of the opposition, even though there were about 33% calling themselves undecided. With a big grin Schuman asked, "Does anyone here favor chopping down oak trees?"

Those of us who had been involved the longest could demonstrate our expertise early in the race, but the others were quick learners. We established a pretty solid front. As Sharon Hormell put it, "They all want to save the oaks.

"They will not raise taxes. They think local government is terrific. Bureaucracy is bad."

The county was in bad shape financially.

I hammered at the county, “The county has already run out of money and you know your vote isn’t going to count a whit to kick out some Supervisor who wants to [increase your taxes].”

Jo Anne Darcy, the lone county employee, remarked on the county maze through which one must fight to get things done. Dennis Koontz pushed for lower water bills, knowing the city could use a surplus to reduce costs in other areas. Gail Klein wanted the city to buy the Saugus Rehabilitation Center from the City of Los Angeles, and turn it into a recreation area. As it turned out, the Castaic Lake Water Agency beat the city to the property, but cooperated in the building of Central Park on some of that land.

Bill Hilton said, having elicited applause before he spoke, “I feel like a cow on a cold day. Thank you for the warm hand.”<sup>2</sup>

A couple of days later public opinion polling started coming in from the outside. No one was going to put anything over Greg Warnagieris of *The Signal*. He heard from Chuck Willett, who had chaired the Jaycees forum in 1973, and had gotten three calls from AMS Response. For that matter so had most of us who were running for the council. Warnagieris traced AMS Response to Harvey Englander, who admitted to doing some “attitude research.”

“We don’t know if there’s going to be a campaign. We’re not planning a campaign in your area,” he said. Warnagieris identified Englander with former councilman Art Snyder of Los Angeles, as well as current councilman Mike Woo. He went on to identify Snyder as having ties, as an attorney, with G.H. Palmer & Associates, who had been unsuccessful in having a 900-unit apartment project removed from the city boundaries.<sup>3</sup>

Years later, after the statute of limitations had passed, Dan Palmer confided in me that he had spent serious money trying to defeat cityhood. Shortly after the election he had told me that it was his ambition to build \$500 million worth of apartments and condos in the Santa Clarita Valley. He wanted to rent them all out, retaining ownership. It was a chilling prospect to have a billionaire in control of so much property locally.

More shenanigans were surfacing. Fred Huebsher of West Hollywood called a number of the candidates and offered to put us on a mailing for \$1,500. Those who paid got recommended. Fortunately he had to drop the idea for lack of interest. The first statements of financial contributions showed Darcy leading in fund raising with a figure of \$9,726, followed by Vacar, Storli and Ungar (who was spending his own money). I ranked fifth, having raised \$658 by the middle of September.<sup>4</sup>

The formation of councilmanic districts was on the ballot with the question of incorporation and the council election. Under California law the first election was to be held at large, but the decision of the voters on districts would be adhered to in following contests. Louis Brathwaite was the first candidate to address the question, urging a “no” vote on districting. Roger Meurer and Gail Klein came out against him on this point, saying that everyone needed to be able to approach a council member who could provide personal attention to a crack in

the sidewalk. Robert Silverstein supported districts later, when polled. The rest of us had little to say at that time.<sup>5</sup>

The Canyon Country Chamber of Commerce sponsored the big Frontier Days parade on October 3. A bunch of us rode in the parade, with Gil Callowhill, Louis Brathwaite and I riding together in Louis' prized old Chrysler convertible. The candidates' cars revealed our names, and the words "City Council." Nothing else was allowed because the Marines would not march in a political parade. We did not care. We only wanted to be seen.<sup>6</sup>

Zonta International and Soroptomist International sponsored the third public forum for the candidates on October 15. Oak trees became a major issue at the behest of Frank Parkhurst. At the time most of us agreed with Ken Dean, who said, "I find it inconceivable that developers cannot design and build around oak trees." Later we were to learn a great deal more about grading issues, and adopt the attitude of Linda Storli, who said, "I truly do understand the value of compromise. If you vote for me you vote for reasonable government."

Even county planners had picked up on the oak tree issue, having forced a Beverly Hills developer to withdraw a proposal that would have sacrificed an ancient oak.<sup>7</sup>

Meanwhile endorsements were coming in. Congressman Carlos J. Moorhead (R-Glendale), who represented some of the southern fringe of the valley, endorsed cityhood. Rep. Moorhead was one of those public servants who never tried to be really exciting, but had carved out an area of expertise, intellectual property, and handled it well. We had been endorsed also by State Senator Ed Davis (R-Northridge), the venerable Los Angeles Chief of Police (retired), who had become famous for his solution to hijackers, "Hang 'em at the airport." Ed had proven to be a real thinker and diplomat, and lived in our town. State Senator Newton Russell (R-Glendale) represented part of our valley and supported us. He was another thoughtful man who had matured in the political spotlight. Assemblywoman Cathie Wright (R-Simi Valley) was very outspoken in favor of cityhood. Cathie was tough, and grated on my nerves, but I was glad she was on our side. We also received letters from the mayors of Moreno Valley, which had incorporated a couple of years before with a population of 80,000, and Big Bear Lake.<sup>8</sup>

The Santa Clarita Valley Board of Realtors endorsed Heidt, McKeon, Brathwaite, Meurer, Ungar and Boyer. The next day the Santa Clarita Civic Association endorsed Boyer, Callowhill, Lyons, Heidt, Darcy, Ungar, McKeon, Brathwaite and Silverstein.

As Connie Worden put it, "We have a variety of candidates who have a variety of experience. Those who have been elected to previous offices tend to be more low-key. The less experienced ones have to be more creative and assertive." Dennis Koontz hustled to introduce himself to everyone he could, and was seen several times riding a red fire truck. Linda Storli announced she would resign from teaching if elected to the \$600 per month position. When asked about how much he would spend, Gil Callowhill said, "I doubt I've spent \$35 altogether

in all of my campaigns.” He had never lost a race for the water agency board or Canyon County Supervisor, and was highly respected. “I’ll knock on some doors,” he added.<sup>9</sup>

Jan Heidt was running for the council at the same time her husband Jerry was running for reelection to the Hart high school board. Lyons and Klein had gotten some ink as members of the Santa Clarita Valley Planning Advisory Committee. Hilton and Vacar were cited as making many public appearances. Others were working hard, while some were not showing up at the forums.

Jo Anne Darcy took a lot of heat for her county employment, some of it from her fellow candidates, some from letters to the editor of *The Signal*, and some from Citizens Against Cityhood, through Anthony J. Skirlick, Jr.

I was beginning to get a personal taste of the number of mistakes in newspapers. They all called me Carl Boyer III, a form I never used. *The Times* listed me with a BS degree from Cal State Northridge, a school where I had taken some graduate courses. My B.A. was from Trinity University in Texas, and I had earned an M.Ed. from the University of Cincinnati.

Andrew Martin maintained his style by saying to *The Times* that he favored election of council members at large. “Antonovich and his mental dwarf associates use districts to placate the people. After the vote, they go out, play tennis, have lunch and laugh at the people.”<sup>10</sup>

On Oct. 21 Hal Rattner, a senior citizen columnist for *The Signal*, made some personal endorsements. Heidt, Boyer, Silverstein, Darcy, Storli, McKeon, Callowhill and Koontz got his support.

On Oct. 22 the debate between the City Formation Committee and Anthony Skirlick’s Citizens Against Cityhood was reported by Pat Aidem in the *Daily News*. Skirlick argued that the city could impose new utility taxes (which the county did impose on the unincorporated areas while the city never has), and impose a street cleaning system that would result in fines on motorists. Parking meters had also been the subject of speculation. By raising these issues, Skirlick did elicit promises from the proponents that these ways of raising revenue would not be used. No one wanted to be faced with, “I told you so.”

On Oct. 23 Louis Garasi, who was then vice chairman of the City Formation Committee, had his comments about the developers’ efforts to derail cityhood published. He complained of a “surreptitious campaign ‘through distortion and innuendo, using as a front any local post office box they can claim as a temporary home.’” Both the Santa Clarita Caution Committee and the Coalition for the Right City were operating out of Dennis Diatorre’s Mail Handler operation on San Fernando Road in Newhall. Garasi gave Anthony Skirlick’s opposition to cityhood credit for being honest, but credited developers with being behind the other groups.<sup>11</sup>

I knew anyone could claim to be a group. I had once put out a press release as chairman of a single-member Committee Resisting Aerial Pollution in a fit of bad humor, which resulted in *The Signal* running the headline, “CRAP Hits DWP.”



Skirlick said he had been approached by Dick Wirth of the BIA about possible support, but had turned it down. Garasi cited the obvious cost, more than \$100,000, of mailings that had already come out. Lou was passing the hat to raise \$10,000 so the cityhood forces could get out one mailing. Many of the candidates had chipped in \$200 each. The press gave me credit for the \$325 I raised in Del Prado for the committee, coming from people who “are mad as hell and aren’t going to take it any more.” The Formation Committee had raised \$20,610 in cash, and spent \$22,256. In kind contributions, including office space and legal advice, totaled \$21,357. Lou said, “Our aboveboard actions and our absolute openness about where we get our support stands in stark contrast to the veil of secrecy cloaking the developers from public scrutiny.”<sup>12</sup>

Muriel Usselman, President of the Santa Clarita Civic Association, wrote to Scott Newhall on October 23, chiding him for not taking a stand in favor of incorporation. On October 25 he piled it on our opposition in his *Signal* editorial.

Excrementum Caballinum

Never judge a person by his friends. It is wiser to measure a man by his enemies. *From a sermon by Archibald Percy, Suffragan Bishop of Sark*

For a month, or more, this newspaper has been lying doggo in the weeds, waiting for the opponents of cityhood to stand up and unmask themselves.

The hour has finally arrived, and it is now clear that the residents of the Santa Clarita Valley are being played for suckers by a gang of big money, out-of-town bunco kings.

But first a few words on the political realities attending the long crusade for Santa Clarita Valley municipal incorporation.

From the beginning of the cityhood drive, the leaders of this ambitious project have been prominently celebrated by the press and public. These committee volunteers have included – but are not limited to – such civic magnificoes as Carl Boyer III, Glo and Art Donnelly, Connie Worden, Jill Klajic, Gil Callowhill, Louis Brathwaite, Lou Garasi, Allan Cameron, et al. These founding fathers – and mothers – are, to the last person, local residents. They are voters. They [are] all either householders, merchants, professional artisans and taxpayers of the Santa Clarita Valley. They have contributed their own funds for the project and badgered friends and neighbors to support the drive.

Following the County Supervisors’ vote to place the city incorporation question on the November ballot, no tangible organized opposition to SCV cityhood materialized. The veteran and highly visible cityhood committee continued its exhortations for incorporation, but no ‘people’s army’ against incorporation came to public notice.

An eerie silence settled over the SCV, something like the Bermuda Triangle calm that always precedes the hurricane. Well, early this week the calm was finally shattered.

This newspaper's patient wait in the weeds has finally been rewarded. The big-money enemies of cityhood finally broke cover, landed in our gunsights, and this morning it is our determination to shoot down these counterfeit hometown patriots like dogs in the dust.

In the past few days most Santa Clarita Valley voters have received one or more slick mailings from a ghostly brotherhood of fake grass-roots activists who have christened themselves with the pious title, 'COALITION FOR THE RIGHT CITY.'

These fourflushers are trying to pass themselves off as your nice neighbors next door. They are asking you to vote 'No' on the pretense that such a negative vote will promote a better and bigger city. The truth is a far different, and far more sinister matter.

Old-time survivors in the game of life live by a simple triple-deck credo: "When looking for an evening's entertainment, never play poker with a stranger called 'Doc'"; "When eating out at a restaurant, never order the 'Chef's Blue Plate Special'"; and "When making up your mind to vote, never pay attention to any political group that calls itself a 'Coalition'." You may be absolutely sure that this fine advice is particularly well taken in the case of Santa Clarita Valley cityhood.

The scoundrels behind this Coalition for the Right City who would pass themselves off as Mr. and Mrs. SCV are no such thing. This flood of anti-cityhood mailings is being bankrolled by a platoon of building materials tycoons from the Ventura County outback.

Here is an example of the Coalition's hatchet job:

In their mysterious mailings the Coalition hustlers are trying to frighten the unsuspecting voters with a warning that if the cityhood wins the vote "WE WON'T BE PROTECTED FROM OVERDEVELOPMENT THAT WILL CLOG OUR VALLEY'S ROADS AND DRAIN OUR WATER SUPPLY." This kind of tub-thumping and other scare headlines like it are unabridged hokum.

How dare these knaves whine and snivel about OUR roads. To the last man, as far as this newspaper can ascertain, the authors of these sanctimonious warnings seldom if ever set foot on our own sacred soil. The Santa Clarita Valley is no more their hometown than is the Kalahari Desert in southern Africa.

By what God-given right do these distant millionaires babble to us about OUR water supply? The closest any one of these churls has ever come to dosing himself with SCV aqua pura would be one of those glorious occasions when, together with their fellow building promoters, they gather round the stump of a recently amputated oak tree, hoist their highball glasses of cheap whiskey and branch water and toast the dedication of yet another one of those tent cities that are transforming the Santa Clarita Valley into tomorrow's butchertown.

According to the information filed with the Los Angeles County Registrar-Recorder, the Daddies Warbucks of this fraudulent Coalition for the Right City are simply Ventura County door, window, and wallboard subcontractors whose participation in the lamentable boom of southland overbuilding have brought them revenues beyond the dream of J. Paul Getty himself.

Each of them has funnelled \$5000 into the Coalition's anti-cityhood cash register, and this \$50,000 political pot is now paying for an elaborate telephone boiler room here in the valley. Lined up at tables in this San Fernando Road blind pig is a regiment of phone hustlers dialing random registered voters, imploring them to vote against cityhood because "Proposition U will not give us the city we need. Instead we get a city only half the size we wanted."

The bitter tea in this anti-cityhood party is the fact that these same bogus hometown patriots who are now urging you to vote against a city because "it is too small and does not include Magic Mountain," are fronting for exactly the same big-time, wholesale developers who fought against a larger city. These are the same millionaire magnates who handed their downtown lobby gunzels a fat enough purse to bribe, blackmail or otherwise persuade the Los Angeles County planners and Supervisors to cut down the proposed SCV incorporation area to its present size.

In brief, today, only a week before the fateful cityhood election, the opponents of cityhood have finally come out from under the political rock. These "No"-vote hucksters, despite their pious masquerade as local patriots, are playing us for suckers. They are headquartered in far-away Costa Mesa.

They mail out their bunk from post offices in Paramount, California, wherever that may be. They are managed by professional political bagmen. They are the creatures of the bigtime home-building housing merchants who are presently covering the good Southern California earth with coyote bush and swamp grass parks, and a blanket of gutta percha condominiums and papier mache, two-by-four bungalows.

These foreigners are fighting the city boosters with big-money weapons like high-priced telephone boiler rooms, their expensive, slick paper mail brochures conceived and executed in the plush-carpeted, plate glass, mahogany-lined offices of Orange County. These noble protagonists of the "Right City" reek with sincerity. They ooze sanctimonious claptrap, and they are trying to bushwhack the Santa Clarita Valley with a smelly pile of excrementum caballinum.

Well, what does this all add up to as far as this newspaper is concerned? As mentioned at the start of this jeremiad, thoughtful editors should judge men, and causes, not by their friends, but by their enemies.

For many long months The Signal has declined to assume an editorial position either for or against cityhood. Today, however, because of the naked fraud being perpetrated against the Santa Clarita Valley by this scrofulous, Coalition for the Right City – because of this nonsense and deceitful innuendo being spread by the Coalition’s big money absentee angels – this newspaper finds it impossible to urge a “No” vote on Proposition U.

We shall address the arguments for a “Yes” vote in an early issue.

Even more devastating to the cause of Dan Palmer’s subcontractors were the ten photographs of the subcontractors’ homes published in the news section, making it clear that none of them could have really afforded to contribute \$5000 to the Coalition for the Right City. Collectively they were easily worth ten thousand words.

On October 25 the *Daily News* endorsed Proposition U. “There are unforeseen obstacles facing any new venture, and a new city with 110,000 residents is no exception. But Santa Clarita Valley residents should have the confidence to meet the challenge of cityhood head on. The area’s future as an incorporated city is indeed uncertain, but the benefits and possibilities are unlimited.” They endorsed no one for the council.

Senator Ed Davis endorsed McKeon, Heidt, Boyer, Darcy and Silverstein.

Bob Silverstein was among those of us who was putting more effort into getting cityhood approved by the voters than getting himself elected. He put out a fact sheet on October 29 about the financial feasibility of the city, a “memo from Bob Silverstein, council candidate,” which contained nothing more about his own candidacy.

On November 1 *The Signal* made their endorsements, backing any five of seven candidates: Vacar, Heidt, Darcy, Storli, McKeon, Lyons and Boyer.

Scott Newhall published his last pre-election editorial that day. *The Signal* had followed the money trail and discovered that at least \$30,000 of Newhall Land money had been spent by a political committee controlled by Supervisor Schabarum. Newhall Land was sorely embarrassed, and said it had had no idea how the money was going to be spent.

#### VOTE AGAINST THE JOCKSTRAP

Ideally, the give and take, the hurrah and hokum of American grass roots political campaigning should be a stimulating, exuberant exercise in self-government.

Unfortunately, however, all too often in these United States, as election day approaches reality takes over, ideals go flushing down the drain, exuberance evaporates in the smoke-filled atmosphere, and the filthy business of power politics turns popular government into a joke.

In the 50-plus years this particular journalist has been freeloaded at the campaign banquet tables of America, our hometown contest for Santa Clarita Valley cityhood has turned into the dirtiest, most vicious, and unfair democratic fight of them all...

Schabarum entertains a hearty dislike for this valley. In his search for monetary reward, he is not content to flesh out his campaign chest simply by pillaging his own scrofulous First District. It is reported that Big Pete is currently planning to push aside Mike Antonovich, and take control of the river of boodle that flows so generously from our Fifth District.

Our own State Senator Ed Davis has publicly charged Schabarum with misbehavior and the abuse of his Supervisorial responsibilities. Senator Davis – whose hands are as clean as Schabarum’s are greasy – is perfectly correct. The Supervisor should be kicked down the front steps of the Administration building, or, better yet, led away to jail in thumbscrews.

With an oaf like Schabarum able to survive in high political office in these parts, it is no wonder that, generically, Southern California is celebrated worldwide as the rectum of Western civilization.

Those readers who do not wish to be bullied by Pete Schabarum are urged to vote “Yes” on Proposition U.

November 1 was the last day of intensive politicking. Ed Guyot had avoided jail in spite of being caught taking down opposition posters. The late exposure of Pete Schabarum’s involvement in the “No” campaign helped us a little. I was encouraged when Wendy Morey revealed that the local people against cityhood had only raised \$1,000. A bunch of candidates, committee members and Assemblywoman Cathie Wright, headed out into a light drizzle on Sunday to make short speeches at ten stops around the valley, and blitz the people in the shopping centers with handouts. We received a warm welcome. J.J. Marik and Gail Isaacs expressed the view that they were glad we were getting the word out. They had been bombarded with mailers from Dan Palmer’s friends. Nobody could ignore our caravan, which included Dennis Koontz’ fire truck.<sup>13</sup>

The campaign was over. *The Signal* and the *Daily News* had given us intensive coverage, and the *Los Angeles Times* had done well, too. I woke up, found a last dirty campaign flyer on my doorknob, and went to work. The last flyer said correctly that two candidates had criminal records, and asked if the voters knew who they were. No one had made an issue of it because the two were also-rans. *The Signal* had investigated all of us carefully. One day Sharon Hormell had called asking if I was the Carl Boyer who was involved in a suit for divorce in Paramount. I told her that Chris and I had been married for twenty-five years, that I had never been married to anyone else, and volunteered my social security number in case that would help to differentiate me from someone else. I never heard anything more about it, but was glad that someone was checking.

I came home that afternoon and knocked on doors in the neighborhood to remind people to vote. Then I went to the polls. I stood 150 away, handing out flyers favoring cityhood in front of Wiley Canyon School, and talking with voters until the polls closed. It was apparent that many of the voters were confused. Several said they voted against cityhood because they did not want our valley to

grow. Others said they had not made any choices on who they would vote for for council because they were voting “No” and therefore could not vote on the candidates. I did what I could to inform them, hoping that they would eventually be more effective citizens.

The results hit the front page of every paper, even the *Herald-Examiner*. On Tuesday evening, Nov. 3, we met at the Newhall-Saugus Elks Lodge on Sierra Highway in Canyon Country. The numbers did not come in as quickly as they had in the days of paper ballots, when people would call or drive in from each precinct with the results of the hand count at the precinct. With machine ballots we had to wait until they were gathered from the precincts and driven to the other side of Los Angeles to be fed into the machine for counting. Instead of knowing the results by 9:00 or 10:00 p.m., we had to wait, but we were so excited, if so glad it was over, that we could not have slept anyway. The party went late, and I missed work the next day, although I did make it to the Regional Planning Commission’s meeting. Ruth Ashton Taylor of KNXT, channel 2 in Los Angeles, interviewed me for a long time. I got a taste of how they did television news. I was on the tube for two seconds, saying, “There will be no new taxes.”

When called up to the stage by the Formation Committee leaders, I was ebullient. “I feel like I’ve carried this baby for eighteen years and I’m sure glad to give it birth.”

Ruth Benell was there to join our celebration. The newly elected council joined arms together around her.<sup>14</sup>

Dennis Koontz exclaimed, “It’s the right city – at the right time!”

Buck McKeon, who led handsomely in the returns, came up to me and asked, “Well, Carl, are you ready to be the first mayor?”

“You came in first, Buck, and I think it is important that we establish the precedent of rotation.” I had the treatment of Kenny Hahn by his fellow supervisors in mind. I did not want to see politics take over that way in Santa Clarita. The winners agreed to meet the next day in Buck’s office in Canyon Country. I had wanted to be the first mayor because I had given a lot of thought to precedents, but with the people we elected, all of whom I had learned to respect during the campaign, I was comfortable.

*The Signal* went to press with thirty of thirty-eight precincts counted, but the results had been conclusive. The headline was in red ink, above the masthead. SANTA CLARITA WINS BIG! The early results showed cityhood winning with 67.15% of the vote, future elections to be held at large ahead by a margin of 8,110 to 5,874, and McKeon, Heidt, Darcy and Boyer elected, with Dennis Koontz running well for the fifth seat, 200 votes ahead of Richard Vacar.<sup>15</sup>

Ted Vollmer of the *Los Angeles Times* made the front page with his story about the “hottest race in county elections.” Countywide the turnout was predicted to be about ten to twenty per cent, but in Santa Clarita it was almost half of the registered voters. On Thursday the *Daily News* gave the results of all thirty-eight precincts. Incorporation of Santa Clarita had won by a margin of 14,416 to 6,474, with 69% of the voters supporting us. Proposition V, concerning

how elections would be held in the future, resulted in the at large system being continued by a vote of 10,919 to 7,732, with 58.5% being in favor of at large elections.

The initial complete results showed Buck McKeon with 9,657 votes, Jan Heidt with 8,198, and Jo Anne Darcy with 7,441. The *Daily News* reported that they had won four-year terms. I came in fourth with 6,430 votes, and Dennis Koontz won the fifth seat with 6,052. I was happy. My campaign had cost two cents per registered voter, a nickel for each one who did go to the polls, and only sixteen cents for each vote I got. I felt that was pretty good.

Richard Vacar came in sixth with 5,817 votes, Linda Storli had 5,425, and Louis Brathwaite ran strong on a low budget campaign with 3,345. Mike Lyons had worked hard and got 3,043. Bill Hilton earned 2,323, while Andy Martin got 2,161 and Bob Silverstein totaled 2,083. The rest of the vote was: Maurice Unger, 1,965; Roger Meurer, 1,928; Gil Callowhill, 1,775; Gail Klein, 1,732; Don Benton, 1,654; William Broyles, 1,322; Monty Harrell (whom I never met), 1,279; Ken Dean, 1,276; Vern Pera, 1,111; Jeff Christensen, 957; Ed Stevens, 919; Ron Nolan, 831, Dennis Conn, 771, and Frank Parkhurst, 710. The last two had the criminal records.

I was concerned about the way the newspapers were listing the results. Each voter had five votes for the council. Buck McKeon, the leader, was listed as having received 12% of the vote, when in reality his achievement was much greater, and was closer to 60% of those voting. The percentage was hard to compute, because we saw no figures for the number of voters who did not vote in the council race, or the number who voted for less than five. In any event, I wanted the voters to know that the winners had enjoyed a lot of support.

Dick Wirth conceded that the council was “very balanced.” He said, “Buck McKeon is a businessman, very effective in his quiet way and very good on the school board. Jan brings her point of view as a community activist. Jo Anne has been in government a long time and brings experience that adds a quality to the council.

“Carl is more the philosophical deep-thinking type with a great deal of knowledge on what it took to get the city together. Koontz has a variety of government background from the Fire Department. All of them complement each other.”<sup>16</sup>

Four of us attended the Regional Planning Commission’s meeting in Los Angeles the next day to ask a delay in approval of a 5,400 unit project on 988 acres in county territory requested by Jack Shine, who had persuaded LAFCO to keep his land in the unincorporated area. We had no jurisdiction, but it felt good to speak as elected representatives rather than as homeowners. Buck, Jan, Dennis and I also met with Ruth Benell to set up a date, tentatively Dec. 9, for the first council meeting. However, Benell pointed towards mid-December, a later date than had been enjoyed by any other city. This was not helpful as it allowed the county to make some final planning decisions to which we felt we had a moral right.

Our victory was beginning to sink in. “We whooped ’em, boy did we ever,” said Jill Klajic. “This morning, I looked down at our valley and it was beautiful. It’s finally ours.”

Dennis Koontz explained, “I’m still numb. I called the registrar at 2 in the morning and I knew I won, but it’s going to be a while before it sinks in.”

The *Daily News* editorial called our attention to the nature of real life in the big city. We were big, with a statutorily computed population of 147,228, among the top five per cent of cities in California, and bigger than the biggest city in a number of states. But we would have to be concerned about potholes, untrimmed trees and abandoned cars. I had never thought of these problems.

The editorial mentioned the problem of development outside the city flooding our roads and schools, and recommended we push immediately for a “sphere of influence,” which would give us some small measures of control over our frontier. “The county, for once, should cooperate in this process rather than trying to trim the city’s planning area to the bare legal minimum. It would do well to follow the example of Ventura County’s government, which takes the sphere-of-influence idea seriously and gives city governments real power to decide what happens on adjacent unincorporated land. Now that the residents of the Santa Clarita Valley have made their cityhood official, the best thing Los Angeles County can do for them is to let them design their own future, with as little obstruction as possible.”<sup>17</sup>

Of course there was a huge difference between Los Angeles and Ventura Counties. Our county was beyond the control of the popular will.

The *Times* story on Nov. 5 dealt with the effect of the builders’ campaign on the election. Buck McKeon said, “I think the people were just fed up with outside money being spent against them. It just made them mad.”

I commented that “the developers might have won this for us. They forced the people to think about cityhood.”

Our turnout was fairly strong for a local election year, above 40%. Jill Klajic pointed out that until the opposition mailer began to arrive, “our biggest enemy was voter apathy. Then, people got excited. They even started coming in off the streets to give us money.”

Dennis Koontz was recorded in agreement. “I noticed a change in my precinct after the mailers started coming. People started to realize that they were being railroaded. Before that, there was a lot of apathy. Nobody was really interested in cityhood.”

Art Donnelly, chairman of the Formation Committee in the final months of the campaign, said, “The developers’ overkill alienated our citizens and ensured a victory for us.”

When asked about our personal reactions, whether we would be negative towards them, Jo Anne Darcy said, “I will treat them fairly, as I will treat any individual.”

I said, “Intellectually, I have to say no, but as a practical matter, yes. Now, you’re going to see quality development like you’ve never seen it before.”



Jan Heidt said, “They took some cheap shots and they insulted the intelligence of this community. It’s going to be awhile before I forget. They’re going to have to earn their way back into my good graces.”

Dennis Koontz explained, “I’m not going to paint them all with the same brush like they did the candidates.” Indeed, some of the big builders had stayed out of the campaign altogether. We were to start our municipal life as the fifth largest city in the county, in land area, and the seventh largest in population, although we soon passed Pomona in that category. Looking back on the clippings, I saw a review of one of my new books on genealogy in the *Times* that day. During this whole period of eighteen years I had published well over half a dozen titles.<sup>18</sup>

Those who had stayed out of the campaign, and those who had not, were soon inviting us to lunch. Jack Shine wanted to know, “Can I still do business in the Santa Clarita Valley?” I assured him that he could. I did not say that I knew the Supreme Court decisions about the rights of property owners as well as anyone, and by this time we had lived in a house he had built for over eleven years.

The *Los Angeles Herald-Examiner* had ignored us just as we had ignored them. However, on November 5, one of our golf courses was depicted on page one under a heading, “L.A. County’s newest city.” The news story was on page ten. John Chandler quoted me as saying, “We’re one happy, but very tired bunch of people. The message is we want quality growth, not the unrestrained rape of the valley.”

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<sup>1</sup>*Los Angeles Times*, 16 Sept. 1987.

<sup>2</sup>*The Signal*, 16 Sept. 1987.

<sup>3</sup>*The Signal*, 18 Sept. 1987.

<sup>4</sup>*Daily News*, 25 Sept. 1987.

<sup>5</sup>*Daily News*, 30 Sept. 1987.

<sup>6</sup>*The Signal*, 7 Oct. 1987.

<sup>7</sup>*Daily News*, 15 Oct. 1987.

<sup>8</sup>*Daily News*, 16 Oct. 1987.

<sup>9</sup>*Los Angeles Times*, 19 Oct. 1987.

<sup>10</sup>*Los Angeles Times*, 19 Oct. 1987.

<sup>11</sup>*Los Angeles Times*, 23 Oct. 1987.

<sup>12</sup>*Los Angeles Times*, 23 Oct. 1987.

<sup>13</sup>*Daily News*, 2 Nov. 1987.

<sup>14</sup>*The Signal*, 6 Nov. 1987.

<sup>15</sup>*The Signal*, 4 Nov. 1987.

<sup>16</sup>*Daily News*, 5 Nov. 1987.

<sup>17</sup>*Daily News*, 5 Nov. 1987.

<sup>18</sup>*Los Angeles Times*, 5 Nov. 1987.