

Chapter 11

MORE ISSUES TO HANDLE

On December 22, 1988, Jan Heidt was sworn in as Mayor in the first meeting held in our council chambers at City Hall.

We knew that we had done pretty well the first year. We had come a long way in organizing our city government, and the general planning work had begun. However, there were many more issues before us. Annexations, a real budget, the placement of landfill dumps, flooding, retail development, mining, mobile home parks, road routes, the Santa Clarita Woodlands Park, signs and billboards, and a skateboard park were some of them. Occasionally we caught some flack for not working on them and spending time on “trivial” matters, such as the eight-month quest for a city seal, but the fact was that we made the necessary decisions promptly. We had to depend on staff, outside consultants and other governments, including the legislature, to help with the resolution of some of the issues.

I did take umbrage when a man who identified himself as a political science graduate of California State University Northridge used his three minutes during the public input period to rake us over the coals for not doing anything. He had not bothered to check on who ran the schools, or the water companies, before he berated us for not solving those problems. I could accept the dissatisfaction of average citizens, but not that of one with a political science degree who ought to know how government is run.¹

The ambulance service issue had me fuming at the County. I found out from the *Antelope Valley Press* that the County had arbitrarily zoned us with the Antelope Valley when they had decided to revamp ambulance service all over. We had had no warning, no notice of any kind. I was quite sure what had happened. Some idiot bureaucrat had looked at the northern part of Los Angeles County, which occupies 60% of the area, or 2,500 square miles, but appears as an inset on the typical county map, and had decided that Santa Clarita and Palmdale appeared to be about ten miles apart. Therefore we could all be in the same service zone.

Both Newhall Ambulance, which served the Santa Clarita Valley, and Wilson Ambulance, which served the Antelope Valley unincorporated area as well as Palmdale and Lancaster, were subject to possible destruction. While these were private companies providing a county service by contract, and I had no acquaintance with their people, I was concerned.

The problem was that the City of Lomita had refused to repay the County for dry runs, and then the County had lost in court. To protect itself against these losses the County went out to bid arbitrarily. Newhall Ambulance lost in the process, and Wilson was destroyed a few years later. Two homegrown businesses were shattered, and many employees were left out in the cold.²

Sally Chase Clark, who had run against Mike Antonovich in the primary the previous year and done her bit to force him into a runoff, complained about our

council not having Saturday hours. I understood what she was getting at, but most of us had both home and business numbers in the phone book and could be reached easily. Our old Supervisor, Warren Dorn, had had his home number in the Pasadena phone book all the years he was in office, but we were a lot easier to reach than officials in either the City or the County of Los Angeles.

Buck McKeon and I attended the annual January legislative conference of the Contract Cities Association in Sacramento, and talked to a number of legislators about our problems with space in the schools. The general reaction was that it was a local problem and the state should not get involved, or that the other party would block any problem-solving attempts.

Only Ed Davis was interested in approaches which might be bipartisan, or involved raising taxes. Meanwhile, Tamsie Irvan had put \$80 of her funds into bumper stickers that read, "Warning to Homebuyers. Santa Clarita Valley schools are overcrowded." She handed them out to all takers. The developers did not like that.³

I was beginning to get involved in the associations of cities. Dennis Koontz had invited me to go to a meeting of the Los Angeles Division of the League of California Cities. Not only were the contacts stimulating and educational, but the more I attended the more I saw the opportunity to set policy. I began to attend meetings of the League of California Cities, the California Contract Cities Association, and the Local Government Commission. Jo Anne Darcy handled the Independent Cities Association for us. We were the largest city to be a member of the California Contract Cities, and joined the Independent Cities because of our size, in spite of the fact that we contracted for most services.

Frustrated with the slow pace of city problem solving, I suggested that we adopt a sister city. I thought that would be an easy thing to accomplish, and that some privately funded exchanges between Santa Clarita and some place else on the planet, particularly involving students, would do some good. I did not get a second to my motion, and went on organizing my seventh student tour, which was to travel from Moscow to London in the summer.

As a result of publishing Gary Boyd Roberts' book, *Ancestors of American Presidents*, I was invited to the bicentennial celebration of the inauguration of President Washington in New York City. I had said that one ancestor I had in common with President George Bush was a well known tax protestor, Lady Godiva. Of course, when a person traces his ancestry it is wise to have a sense of humor. I had found also that I was descended from Count Boso V of Arles, and admitted to be from a long line of Bosos one evening when I was subjected to harsh criticism during the public comment period.⁴

George Carvalho asked the council to support his idea for a bid for international attention, the organization of an international symposium on "Creating the 21st Century City," which would include a visit from Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev or his representative. We were overwhelmed. The idea did not get off the ground, in part because of the lack of response from Moscow. I knew they needed to be involved, having been to Russia twice, but the

timing was a little premature. That was too bad, because it would have made the County and LAFCO take notice.⁵

Meanwhile there were protests about the Sheriff's Department. Contracting with the Sheriff allowed us to get quick action on personnel matters. Deputies knew that if they did not toe the line they could be transferred very quickly, and few wanted that to happen. In response to a 911 call reporting a murder, however, one responded with "Have a nice day," thinking the call was a hoax. In another incident the department used considerable force to break up a birthday party. Captain Spierer was able to get the deputies to change direction quickly. I wrote a long letter to *The Citizen*, outlining how people could file complaints and get action. Briefly, the pitch included writing the Mayor, calling the city at 259-CITY or calling the councilmembers. With their permission, I listed the home numbers of four councilmembers. While we did get input about issues, there were no more complaints about Sheriff's deputies.

It only took one anonymous person distributing some flyers to get a hostile crowd to attend a study session that normally would have an audience of ten. A retail project proposed by Newhall Land and Farming in county territory on the northwest corner of Bouquet Canyon and Newhall Ranch Roads was the subject of a possible appeal of County approvals by the city council. The crowd showed up, convinced the council was responsible. There was a lot of yelling and some jeering. The council and staff kept cool. George Carvalho outlined the problem, and said that he would propose withdrawing our objection because of the results of meetings between Gloria Glenn and Gary Cusumano, senior vice presidents of Newhall Land's subsidiary, Valencia Corporation, and John Medina, our Public Works Director, Ed Cline, our traffic engineer, and Carvalho.

Gloria Glenn outlined the deal. We would get the first two lanes of Decoro Drive, a fourth southbound lane added to Bouquet Canyon south of Newhall Ranch, and a traffic signal at Newhall Ranch and McBean Parkway in the County. In addition, we had bargained for four lanes for McBean from Newhall Ranch to Magic Mountain Parkway, and four lanes on Newhall Ranch Road from McBean west to Rye Canyon in the industrial center. The council withdrew the city's objection. The crowd left quietly. We hoped that at least those who had showed up had learned the city government was looking for solutions to the traffic mess.⁶

We also had to deal with the Gann limit. A limitation put on the ballot by Paul Gann and passed by the voters was supposed to curtail spending, and thus drive down taxes. Ruth Benell had put a \$20 million Gann limit into LAFCO's report, and this became our initial limit. Whatever number we got was subtracted from the County's limit, so we knew the figure was not a liberal one. We could not obtain the data on how it was computed.

"They won't give a Supervisor any information, they won't give a cityhood committee any information, they won't give The Signal any information and they won't give a senator any information," said Hunt Braly of Ed Davis' office.

George Carvalho was told the figures had been lost. I knew this was a lie, because the \$20 million amount was far too round. I said the data was not avail-

able because “it never existed. To the best of my knowledge there was no research put into it.” Ruth Benell had practically admitted this to Connie Worden. We hired a consultant to deal with the issue.⁷

The report from the consultant was prompt. The figure should have been \$42,498,812. It was important to allow us to spend all we could. Raising the limit did not mean a tax increase, but when the mall was built we would capture more sales tax for our city. We needed to be able to spend our money to deal with the infrastructure deficit.⁸

In April we passed the oak tree ordinance. Mark Subbotin of Newhall Land complained that the fee charged when an oak tree was removed was too high. The point was to make the developers think twice about removing a tree. If an otherwise viable project could not be built because grading would require the removal of a mature oak, we wanted to make it cheaper to transplant the tree than to kill it. It made no sense to simply remove the trees with no penalty when the developers were going to profit sometimes in the millions.⁹

It was not all politics. We had offered our services at the Boys and Girls Club auction in June 1988 as an item for bid. Dick Keysor, chairman of the Henry Mayo Newhall Hospital Foundation, called to ask if we would be the serving staff for a fundraising party at Scott and Ruth Newhall’s mansion in Piru. It turned out to be a party for movers and shakers which adjourned to Le Provençal in Santa Paula afterwards for dinner. We were invited to join them. It seemed the developers were particularly interested in sitting down with us socially. No deals were made, but the hospital got \$600,000.¹⁰

On May 3 *The Santa Clarita Valley Citizen* published for the last time. It had been a truly great paper, but the Newhalls had lost a million dollars competing with *The Signal*.

A week later I got a call about vandalism at the Pioneer Oil Refinery in Newhall. I met Laurene Weste and Jim McCarthy at the site, to find local street gang graffiti all over the facility. Located on Chevron property, this was the first oil refinery built west of the Mississippi, a major part of the valley’s heritage. Fortunately the community pitched in to clean up the mess, and Chevron eventually donated the property to the city.

On the day the city was eighteen months old, we had \$22 million in the bank.¹¹

The Wiley Canyon bridge issue came to a vote in May. Shortly before our March 14 council study session on traffic, Rhonda Ruggieri circulated flyers in her neighborhood. The result was that a large crowd from the Circle J Ranch development showed up demanding that Wiley Canyon be extended across the South Fork by a bridge. The residents explained they were trapped in their community any time a train was passing, and they were paying a special Mello-Roos tax for a bridge which had not been built. Buck McKeon explained that the bridge and another road were on a proposed road tax to be voted up or down soon. The big argument seemed to be that they could not get to the hospital in an emergency. I protested that their anger was misdirected, that the council had to

consider the problems of the entire city. I never mentioned that a helicopter could be used in an emergency. We did promise to work on the problem.

John Medina earned his pay on March 22, meeting with the Circle J folks and a representative from their developer, Watt-America, all too eager to back them. This was not a simple problem. Newhall Land had built Valencia on the west side of the South Fork. Wiley Canyon Road came to a dead end at the river. At that point it was obvious that it was to be extended. However, normal traffic never went to the dead end, and the Valencia maps, which also showed a planned continuation, had never enjoyed close inspection by the public. Valencia residents whose homes backed up to Wiley Canyon hated the traffic noise, and could see little but more noise and traffic coming their way if the bridge was built.

This was one of those issues over which I agonized. There were strong feelings on both sides. There was a possibility that I would be the swing vote. I announced my position a week before the council meeting. Some of the money available to solve the problem should be put into providing emergency access to Arch Street, and the construction of Rio Vista should get a priority. This would give the residents better access to the north and south. Then we had to solve other problems before building the bridge.

On May 23 I moved that a sequence of projects be built, which included the widening of Wiley Canyon all the way south to Calgrove near the freeway, and the widening of the Lyons Avenue bridge over Interstate 5. Keith McNally and Dave Butler had done their job for their neighborhood. The people along the existing Wiley Canyon, including my own neighbors, for I lived one house away from it, were upset. However, the decision had to be good for the whole city, and many Valencia residents were to find that once the bridge was built that the traffic on streets like Old Orchard and McBean decreased, at least for a while. Smog was lessened because going from the intersection of Wiley Canyon and Old Orchard to Bouquet Junction was now one-half mile and six traffic lights shorter. Best of all, the decision was made at home, in the evening, when hundreds of people could be involved. The vote was unanimous. The bridge got built years later, after other improvements had gone in to blunt the impact.¹²

We received some measure of recognition from George Carvalho's election as president of the city managers' department of the League of California Cities. However, after more than a year of being a city, we had to ask the County to include us on their official list of Los Angeles County cities.¹³

Other issues being handled at the time included London Press, a publisher of "adult" material, moving into the then-unincorporated area of the Valencia Industrial Center. We could not stop them, and had to explain the First Amendment to the public. The First Amendment issue surfaced again due to council action in support of an anti-flag burning amendment, and restrictions on adult businesses, which found the climate of the city decidedly uneconomic anyway.

I asked for architectural review, particularly in Newhall, which was developing in a hodge-podge style which Kyle Kollar used the euphemism "eclec-

tic.” We amended an ordinance to save a roadside fruit stand. We considered the need for historic preservation, and later pitched in \$50,000 of the taxpayers’ money to help save two historic buildings, the Newhall Ranch and Pardee houses.

Our planning director was recruited away by Kaufman and Broad. AB 2460, which would require developers to provide more money for infrastructure, was making progress in the Legislature; when I went to lobby for it, it was obvious that George Carvalho’s service with the League was very helpful, as people knew what Santa Clarita was. We had gotten rid of many illegal billboards, had doubled the size of the police force, and were being asked by county residents to intercede with the County on their behalf.

Santa Clarita Civic Association president Vera Johnson, and Robert Silverstein of Friendly Valley, asked for the adoption of term limits, to require council members to quit after two terms. SCOPE also joined in. They also asked for campaign limitations. Jan Heidt supported them (but eventually went on to serve three terms). She also said no contributions to candidates should be allowed, which of course would mean that only the wealthy or notorious could run. I opposed term limits, and did not run for a third full term. I saw term limits as an easy way for the Libertarians to gain some ground. They could cause chaos resulting from too many inexperienced people holding political office. It was easy because, as Hal Bernson put it, “People have lost faith in their government. They don’t feel like politicians are accountable or responsive.” He said nothing about government becoming so big that the voters could not control it.¹⁴

Louis Brathwaite, Carmen Sarro and Jack Shine, as well as a significant group of others, put a lot of time into developing the Arts Council, which had already received support from the city to bring opera to Santa Clarita. Louis had done a thorough job of researching concert halls, and had designed a facility for Santa Clarita that not only had three stages, but enough restrooms for the ladies.

I was in Poland when the story hit the papers that Dennis Koontz and I had filed papers with the state to allow us to run for reelection in April of 1990. SCOPE president Bob Silverstein was not happy. He wanted a limit on when the campaign could start so other people would have a chance. I was not raising money. I had filed early to get it over and done with, and to let people know I would run for reelection. If anything I felt I had done the opposition a favor, letting them know to get busy well ahead of the election if they wanted to make a serious effort. Dennis was raising money. His first \$1,700 included \$500 from Newhall Land.¹⁵

Under Jo Anne Darcy’s leadership we planted more stars in the Western Walk of Fame along San Fernando Road in Newhall. We started a street median improvement program. At one time the County had planted artificial turf in the median of Valencia Boulevard near Kmart. I had responded by tossing a plastic dog dropping on it. This time we would have real grass and shrubs. Jeff Kolin was our new Director of Parks and Recreation.¹⁶

On Saturday, August 19, 1989, a SigAlert closed the City of Santa Clarita. A tanker carrying 8,000 gallons of pressurized gasoline overturned on an on-ramp

from San Fernando Road to the Antelope Valley Freeway just after 7:00 a.m. I learned about it hours later when I tried to leave my neighborhood, found Wiley Canyon Road jammed with traffic, and tuned to 1220, where the word came from Dave Ulmer of KBET. I do not remember any other event of such a magnitude that did not generate a call from city staff to all councilmembers.¹⁷

The *Daily News* featured a story on staff salaries on October 1. They pointed out that we paid well, the average of ten neighboring cities plus ten per cent for department heads. They failed to note that on a per capita basis we were getting extremely good value. Meanwhile I was pushing at school to convince my students that they had to look to a future that meant more than mere survival. My colleague, Richard Johnson, 67, died of a heart attack on the job. The kids did not know he was dead at the time because the girl who caught him and cradled him while telling the others to call 911 did not want them to know. She knew; Kim Kao had grown up in the killing fields of Cambodia, working all day at the age of five to gather manure. Later, Kim graduated from Loyola Marymount.¹⁸

Almost a year after we had approved negotiating a lease of a part of Newhall Park to the Boys and Girls Club, it came to the council for a final vote. The Santa Clarita Civic Association, SCOPE and the SCV Historical Society argued that building the new facility planned by the club would result in the demolition of a park building in the rare “international style” of architecture found in Los Angeles in the 1940s. I said it was rare because it was ugly. Buck McKeon told the opponents, “If you want to fight it further, take it to the courts.” They did not.¹⁹

The author of the *Los Angeles Times* story about the lease approval was a young Steve Padilla, who covered the Santa Clarita Valley at the time and later became an editor. One day, during the course of a conversation, I asked Steve how much of the information in the *Times* was truly factual, in his opinion. He said about 85% of the news contained varying degrees of misinformation and lies. Someone was always trying to put a spin on things.

The issue of LAFCO surfaced again when Dennis Koontz became the city’s nominee for the LAFCO board, for a seat being vacated by Nell Merils, a Rolling Hills city councilwoman who was not running for reelection. Dennis had tried once before, unsuccessfully, in the contest before the City Selection Committee of the Los Angeles Division of the League of California Cities. He lost this time, too, but it was one of the rare races to be decided by the City Selection Committee to get into the papers.²⁰

I raised the issue of building in the Significant Ecological Areas, or SEAs. Kimberly Heinrichs, a home grown reporter for the *Daily News*, did a good job on a half page story. Sadly, like most stories it was quickly forgotten, and my comment that I would rather see Newhall Land make the decision to protect the bed of San Francisquito Creek on its own fell on blind eyes. That project was in the County, so I did not spend much time worrying about it. Private citizens, and organizations like SCOPE, were much better suited to do that job.²¹

The Saugus Union School District came to the city asking for support of a policy opposing development unless schools were to be paid for. We were push-
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ing on the League of California Cities to support the Mira decision, so for Saugus to get our support was a slam dunk. Newhall Land had already contracted with the district to provide a school.

The times were exciting. The city was making some real progress, but events in Europe were even more momentous. I had begun to feel the freedom in Russia during the summer, when local students had told Chris and me there was going to be a revolution. I could see on people's faces that they believed they were free. Not everyone looked that way, but enough that I knew that freedom was unstoppable.

Then in the fall people began to leave East Germany in large numbers, and they tore down the Berlin Wall. When I saw that happening, it was all I could do to stay home. I wanted to catch the 4:00 p.m. flight to Germany, and dance on the wall, but I had a job to do at home. On November 11 I was able to say to the veterans assembled at the VFW post in Sand Canyon, "It is you veterans that have allowed us this moment of the tearing down of the Berlin wall."²²

On November 14 we dealt with our first zone change, which was adopted on a yes vote by Jo Anne Darcy, Dennis Koontz and Buck McKeon. Jan Heidt argued against the little project, a church facility and preschool requiring "isolated" commercial zoning on San Fernando Road near Sierra Highway, by Richard Howe. I abstained. The project did not bother me, but I was shocked at the lack of public input. Only one person had spoken.²³

Then, when our city was almost two years old, LAFCO rubbed our noses in the dirt. We had never kept it a secret that our highest priorities included gaining a sphere of influence and pursuing annexations. When City Formation Committee members had asked Ruth Benell when we could start the process, she said, "Come see me in six months." We made an appointment for the first business day six months after our incorporation on December 15, 1987.²⁴

We did not have universal support. Scott Newhall asked editorially, "How in the name of God can our Santa Clarita Big Five dare to annex the land next door in such a hurry, before they have made even the slightest dent in cleaning up their own rubbish heap of a community?" His commentary, however, was aimed at the fact that he saw us as the dumping grounds for the "ecological, cultural, political, architectural, and automotive garbage that spews forth 24 hours a day, 365 days a year from the bowels of Greater Los Angeles." We believed a sphere of influence would help us deal with Scott's objections to our lack of progress.²⁵

At the meeting on August 16 we were all professional. We presented our views. Ruth Benell heard them. We could not read her body language.

We had hopes that the election campaign of 1988 might gain us some support for a sphere of influence from both Mike Antonovich and Baxter Ward. That was not to happen.²⁶

Then I received a sad lesson in the importance of having a skilled editor proofread your outgoing mail. Randall D. Pfiester, a Canyon Country Libertarian

who was later elected to public office, had written to *The Signal* with a question about taxes relating to annexation of his neighborhood. Pinetree, Timberlane and Le House were the area being processed for annexation. I promptly fired off an answer, which I hoped would give him peace of mind. Unfortunately, my letter began, "I was sorry to see the bitter tone of Randall D. Pfiester's letter concerning taxation and annexation. Perhaps I can help Mr. Pfiester find some *piece* of mind if I set some facts straight."²⁷

He responded hotly, complaining about city taxes and the quality of education. Only later was I to realize from where he was coming.²⁸

Meanwhile, staff was working with Phillips Brandt Reddick, our planning consultants, to put together a sphere of influence proposal. Karen Jenkins Holt, the *Signal* reporter, called around for comment. Part of the story on February 3, 1989, read, "'The quicker we get a sphere of influence, the closer we are to entire annexation (of the valley),' said Council member Carl Boyer, who has remarked [publicly] that he wants the county 'out of the valley.'" I would have done well to keep my mouth closed. Lobbying for Senator Davis' LAFCO bill in Sacramento and the remarks about the County were not sitting well with influential people.

In April 1989 we began to make some decisions. The committee we had appointed to work on the sphere of influence voted 4-3 to omit Elsmere Canyon, the planned dumpsite. Buck McKeon, Lou Garasi, Jeff Brown and I had voted to keep Elsmere outside the sphere, while Jill Klajic, Allan Cameron and Ralph Killmeyer had pushed to include the canyon. Allan was not concerned about PR when he said that we should lobby aggressively to have Elsmere included. "We should hire some of the same slimeballs the county used against us."

Of course we wanted some measure of control over Elsmere, but it was obvious we were not going to get it. Phillip Schwartz, our consultant, recommended that we drop Val Verde as well, considering it to be an isolated valley. It was isolated, and an outsider could not be expected to understand the significance of leaving out the only historically black area in the Santa Clarita Valley. Schwartz was afraid they did not want to be involved with the city, and might spoil our efforts for a sphere.²⁹

The press kept playing up the problems between the city and LAFCO. Lou Garasi was quoted as saying LAFCO could be arbitrary, and Connie Worden spoke of the agency's inordinate power. Karen Jenkins Holt quoted me as saying, "There are basically three feelings toward LAFCO: anger, bitterness and dread." We were asking for a huge area. I told Patricia Farrell Aidem, "Our history with LAFCO is that you go in and you get cut down, so why don't we ask for it all?"³⁰ It seemed that Ruth Benell's recommendations were always adopted.

On April 19 the Santa Clarita City Council met outside of the city, at Live Oak Canyon School in Castaic, to discuss the sphere of influence with the citizens of Castaic and Val Verde, mostly from the latter. Kaine Thompson, *Citizen* staff writer, suggested that the people from Val Verde were somewhat overwhelmed by meeting with the entire council, consultant Phillip Schwartz, City Manager

George Carvalho, Assistant City Manager Ken Pulskamp and other planning staff. It was hard to read the input we got, and at the end of the meeting we said we would keep Val Verde and Castaic within the proposed sphere, but they should let us know if they wanted to get out.³¹

Steve Padilla interviewed Michi Takahashi about the sphere, and she said we would probably be denied. If we were to annex the entire sphere we would swell to 199 square miles, the area of Lancaster, Palmdale, Long Beach and Glendale put together. What no one was saying was that no one was trying to help us negotiate a reasonable sphere. Had Michi Takahashi had the authority, I think she would have done the job.³²

Late in August the Castaic Chamber of Commerce board voted unanimously to oppose the inclusion of their town in the sphere. The Chamber, formed in January 1989, had not been around during the incorporation drive, when an absolute majority of Castaic's registered voters signed the petition for incorporation. Jo Anne Darcy, George Carvalho and I met with the residents and chamber members in mid-September. Their vote was 42-5 against inclusion. Two weeks later we made the bad mistake, in which I joined, of failing to represent their wishes. Jan Heidt was upset that they did not trust us, and I suggested that they did not realize they had had shabby treatment from the County. "I must confess, I just don't understand why anyone wants to stay part of the colonial territory of Los Angeles County. That's what you are, a bunch of people out in the territories." They did not need to hear that, and the County had a carrot, a park they wanted.³³

I felt the LAFCO staff recommendation, which became public on October 25, was fair. It cut the sphere to a recommendation of ninety-five square miles. However, Ken Pulskamp pointed out that LAFCO staff did not communicate with city staff before cutting the sphere.³⁴

A week later developer Dale Poe's plan to resist our sphere surfaced. Poe was beginning to build the community of Stevenson Ranch, and figured he might try to incorporate a city there. Poe's problem might have been that he did not understand the process of incorporation, that by incorporating he would be giving control of his development to the few residents in it. More likely, he knew his application for incorporation would be turned down, but would play havoc with our application for a sphere.

Poe certainly had no financial base for a city. City finance was based on population and sales tax, and with only two blocks of "shell-pink stucco" homes built out of a planned total of 4,378 approved he had neither. Kimberly Heinrichs of *The Daily News* interviewed two residents about Poe's proposal. Souren Jamgochian stressed that he did not want to pay more taxes, while Mojgan Azamian was more receptive. Poe did have a 169-acre commercial area coming up for approval, and while that center has been successful, it would not have generated any revenues for a couple of years.³⁵

In spite of Poe's efforts we had no reason to suspect that our sphere of influence would suffer anything more than shrinkage west of I-5. Nonetheless,

LAFCO voted 6-0 on November 15 to override the staff recommendation and give the city no sphere at all. Our civil rights were violated. We had the right to a sphere, a right that LAFCO alleged was met by voting to give us a sphere coterminous with our existing boundaries. Only Chairman Thomas E. Jackson and Paula Boland, later a member of the Assembly, gave us any support.³⁶

Tom Jackson pointed out, "We have set a precedent maybe 20 or 30 times that we did not have the requirement that they had some type of general plan before we granted them a sphere." Karen Jenkins Holt wrote that state law required LAFCO to judge requests for spheres of influence "on present and planned land uses in the area; present and probable need for public services and facilities; present adequacy of public services; and any social or economic communities of interest in the area."³⁷

Meanwhile, Brian Catalde of Paragon Homes was playing games with the annexation process, protesting to LAFCO rather than communicating his concerns to the city. The County politicians were saying that a sphere of influence really did not matter, that it really did not mean anything. We could still work with each other. Indeed, our communication with the County was going better than expected at the staff level. However, if a sphere of influence did not mean anything, why were the developers fighting it?

The issue of electing the mayor by direct election was beginning to surface. In August of 1988 Buck McKeon raised the question. At the time he was the only mayor in the city's history, and the rest of us had no idea why he wanted to change the procedure. In a general law city, the council elects the mayor annually on the day it chooses to reorganize. I thought that was a good idea until I took my first turn as mayor, and found out that the job really did involve a great deal more than chairing the council meetings, getting quoted in the papers more often, being listed in the *World Almanac*, and cutting ribbons. The critical problem was that the mayor was the voice of the city to other governments, county, state and federal.

All council members had the opportunity to become known to many Los Angeles County elected officials by attending the monthly meetings of the Los Angeles Division of the League of California Cities, the California Contract Cities Association, and the Independent Cities Association. Only the mayors generally dealt with LAFCO and SCAG staff, county staff, state and federal staff, and League staff. Tom Jackson could work effectively for Huntington Park, when he was mayor, because he had served twenty years on the council, and, as the long time chairman of LAFCO, knew many people. However, his fellow council members did not have this advantage when they took their turns. Just about the time a one-year term was up we would be out of office.

By the time we were finished our term we were glad. The mayor received no extra pay, and the job took a lot more time. Our personal lives suffered as well as our outside income. Directly electing the mayor could solve two problems. It would allow a mayor to have a two or four-year term, and would allow the people to stipulate a salary commensurate with the demands of the position.

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- ¹*The Signal*, Jan. 14, 1989.
- ²*Antelope Valley Press*, Jan. 8, 1989.
- ³*The Santa Clarita Valley Citizen*, Jan. 22, 1989, and *The Signal*, Jan. 22, 1989.
- ⁴*The Santa Clarita Valley Citizen*, Feb. 1, 1989.
- ⁵*The Santa Clarita Valley Citizen*, March 5, 1989.
- ⁶*The Santa Clarita Valley Citizen*, March 19 and 22, 1989.
- ⁷*The Signal*, March 25, 1989.
- ⁸*The Santa Clarita Valley Citizen*, March 26, 1989, and April 2, 1989.
- ⁹*The Signal*, April 12, 1989.
- ¹⁰*The Signal*, April 27, 1989.
- ¹¹*Daily News*, May 15, 1989.
- ¹²*The Signal*, March 15 and 26, 1989, and May 24, 1989, and *Daily News*, May 28, 1989.
- ¹³*Daily News*, June 1, 1989, and *The Signal*, June 3, 1989.
- ¹⁴*The Signal*, July 9, 1989; *Daily News*, July 8, 1989, and *Los Angeles Times*, Nov. 21, 2001.
- ¹⁵*The Signal*, July 18, 1989; *Daily News*, July 19, 1989 and Aug. 2, 1989.
- ¹⁶*Daily News*, Aug. 11 and 20, 1989.
- ¹⁷*Los Angeles Times*, Aug. 20, 1989.
- ¹⁸*Daily News*, Oct. 1, 1989.
- ¹⁹*Los Angeles Times*, Oct. 12, 1989.²⁰*Daily News*, Oct. 14, 1989.
- ²¹*Daily News*, Oct. 15, 1989.
- ²²*Daily News*, Nov. 12, 1989.
- ²³*The Signal*, Nov. 15, 1989.
- ²⁴*The Signal*, May 8, 1988.
- ²⁵*The Signal*, May 11, 1988.
- ²⁶*The Signal*, Aug. 5, 1988.
- ²⁷*The Signal*, Sept. 23, 1988.
- ²⁸*The Signal*, Sept. 30, 1988.
- ²⁹*Daily News*, April 11 and 13, 1989; *Santa Clarita Valley Citizen*, April 12, 1989, and *The Signal*, April 13, 1989.
- ³⁰*The Signal*, April 16, 1989, and *Daily News*, April 17, 1989.
- ³¹*Daily News*, April 20, 1989; *The Signal*, April 20, 1989, and *The Santa Clarita Valley Citizen*, April 23, 1989.
- ³²*Los Angeles Times*, June 14, 1989.
- ³³*Daily News*, Aug. 26 and Sept. 15 and 28, 1989; *The Signal*, Sept. 14 and 28, 1989.
- ³⁴*The Signal*, Oct. 25, 1989.
- ³⁵*The Daily News*, Nov. 3, 1989.
- ³⁶*The Daily News*, Nov. 16, 1989.
- ³⁷*The Signal*, Nov. 16, 1989.