

## Chapter 14

### FIRST TERM AS MAYOR

I was sworn in as mayor on December 11, 1990. Four days later we celebrated the third birthday of the city. Growth and the threat of a regional dump in Elsmere Canyon were still big issues. We had completed Canyon Country Park, done much on our first general plan, organized our government, opened Decoro Drive and begun to make our presence felt throughout the county. However, Anthony Skirlick, one of the leaders of Citizens Against Cityhood in 1987, was not satisfied. He said our city was too big, and should be divided into councilmanic districts. My own feeling was that districts would balkanize the city, and that each councilmember should be concerned about the feelings of people throughout the entire city.<sup>1</sup>

A few days later we were invaded by the Soviets.

Barbara Haire had called me some weeks before, asking if the City of Santa Clarita could make a grant to help her bring ten students and two teachers from Leningrad. I said we could not, that such a grant would have to go through the budget process and there was no time. However, Chris and I would be glad to host one of the kids. Jan Heidt joined the ranks of sponsors when I mentioned the students to her.

One day I came home from school to find a very tired “Jane” Lindgardt, 16, talking with Chris. Her group had missed a TWA flight out of New York, and had arrived hours late. Zhenya, as “Jane” really preferred to be called, was determined to fight sleep so she could adjust to the jet lag. Chris and I spent that first evening attending a session at The Master’s College, where the students entertained us.

I was on vacation from teaching most of the time the Soviet group was in town, so I did some driving and took a more active part than I would have otherwise. On their second day in Santa Clarita, I drove Zhenya to the college, but had to stop at Vons Market to pick up something on the way. Zhenya waited in the car. She did not want to see Vons. A few days later she was a little more used to the United States, and went in with me on another stop. She was surprised at the number of people in the lines, going through the registers and actually buying a lot of food. “We have been told that the reason our stores are empty is that we have plenty of money, and the reason your stores are full is that you don’t have enough money to buy anything.” When I took her to Target the goods on the shelves overwhelmed her. “You have so much wealth in this country.” A few days later Zhenya told Kimberly Heinrichs, “Everybody told me when you go to the United States, you will go to a fairy tale, but I think it’s real life.”<sup>2</sup>

The kids got a taste of our life. They went to Beverly Hills and Disneyland, but also went to Main Street in Los Angeles. They hit the television news several times. Natalia Babushkino said that one lesson she was learning in America was to smile more.

The day after Christmas we held a mock city council meeting. Jan Heidt acted as city manager and I played the part of the city attorney. Allan Cameron acted brilliantly as Lottamore Garbage, an official with the dump development firm of Blarney, Smarm and Slime, who was accompanied by his attorney, Jill Klajic. It took our new city council, consisting of Zhenya as Mayor, Katya Levochskaya as Mayor pro-tem, and Irene Martynova, Natalia Babushkino and Tanya Molodyakova as council members, only a few minutes to make a decision. It would have taken less time had the debate started in English rather than Russian, and had the council not tried to have a confidential discussion about the issue. The city attorney asked the council members to speak into the microphones so everyone could hear. This surprised Mayor Lindgardt, who retorted, "We were trying to make a decision what to do with your rubbish!" They made it, quickly. Elsmere dump was not to be built.<sup>3</sup>

I had asked Zhenya what she wanted to study, and where. Business Administration at Leningrad State University was her answer. I introduced Zhenya to the admissions office at USC. They had never had an undergraduate apply for admission from Russia, they said, and after seeing her official transcript offered her a full tuition scholarship. She completed her degree in four years, earned her MBA at Harvard Business School, and went to work as a management consultant in New York City.

Artyom Bakonin, Yana Brilova, and Anton Senkevich were among the students. I saw their teachers, Helena Uspenskaya and Svetlana Yegorova, in Leningrad later in the year. Svetlana is now Svetlana Lynch, and teaches English at College of the Canyons.

Valeria Pogouliaeva was given a scholarship to go to college in Nevada. Katya Levochskaya graduated from College of the Canyons in journalism, and became a successful member of the media in Russia. Irena also earned a degree from COC, and, after marrying an American, graduated from San Francisco State.

Concerning local issues, we began to consider development of a river park, and sued the developers of Stevenson Ranch for solutions to some of the traffic problems that their project would cause. David Breier, attorney for Dale Poe, would not even talk with the city about our concerns. Senior housing began to get serious attention from the council. Our transit system was growing rapidly, with the purchase of over twenty buses in 1990 alone.

In January 1991 we began to discuss taking over the water business, developing a municipal water system, in our effort to gain control over growth. We knew we could not use the water issue to stop growth, but at least the developers would have to sit down with us and talk. I saw this as a long-term project, but was very disappointed when the Castaic Lake Water Agency bought the Santa Clarita Water Company. I agreed with the board members of the CLWA who felt that the job of water agencies is to provide water, but was certain that they had no concept of what it was to make good public policy.

Steve Ryfle of *The Signal* asked me if the Sheriff's Department was taking precautions in light of the war in the Persian Gulf. I hated questions like that. I

was not about to discuss anything of the sort in detail. Lt. Don Rodriguez told him it was “business as usual.”<sup>4</sup>

Jo Anne Darcy’s husband, Curtis, died after a long bout with heart disease.

The Census Bureau said we had a population of 110,642, a number that seemed too low, particularly in light of the fact that both Dennis Koontz and I had to hassle them to get our families counted.

The city looked good when it agreed to pay no more than \$9.95 million in infrastructure support for Newhall Land’s proposed mall. This was projected to bring in \$126 million in sales tax revenue over a thirty-year period. A week later we got \$7 million in financing from the state, cutting the city obligation to less than \$3 million.

I was asked to install the officers of the Santa Clarita Valley Chamber of Commerce, with Gary Choppé as president. I had never been to an installation before, and almost bent over laughing when the officers repeated quite precisely after me, “I, state your name, do solemnly....”<sup>5</sup>

A great pleasure of being Mayor was having the opportunity to help recognize people who had worked very hard in volunteering for their community. The Bahá’í Faith recognized Chris Connelly during their celebration of Human Rights Day. Chris had worked with many organizations, and had spearheaded a drive to equip each of the public schools with trailers equipped for disaster preparedness.<sup>6</sup>

When the question of garbage collection franchises came up, Waste Management tried to get into the picture. They had just begun soliciting business in the valley. I started to get clippings in the mail from anonymous contributors about the time their efforts to snatch part of the franchise became public. Larry Spittler, the general management of Waste Management’s San Fernando Valley operation, attended the hearing. Before it began, I showed the clippings to City Attorney Carl Newton, who said that I should be very careful about how I used them, that there might be a question of broadcasting libel. I knew that one should not believe everything he reads in the papers, and did not figure out how to use the clippings until a moment before the hearing began.

I did not mention them. I simply asked questions, such as “Did your corporation recently pay a \$1 million settlement in a price fixing case so you would not have to go to court?” Other questions concerned felony convictions for pollution. That disposed of Waste Management for the time being. The public did not have much to say about the idea of a franchise, and while I was no expert I had no reason to believe that granting a franchise to the three existing companies was not a good idea. Splitting up the city among them on a pro rata basis, at the existing rates, with 10% of that going to the city treasury, seemed to be a good solution. We cut the traffic on the streets and noise in the neighborhoods significantly. We held the line on rates. We put part of their income back to work in the city budget. We saved the trash companies a lot of money. Why would not everyone be happy?

The public ignored the hearings. However, when we took action, the criticism was immediate. “I can’t believe it. They did not even put out bids,” was a part

of one entry in “Tell It to the Signal.” Soon people began to call about rude employees. They were upset because they could not change companies. We had not done enough to educate the public. We had not explained that if we put the system out to bid there was nothing to prevent our being given a lowball price; and that under state law the existing companies would continue to provide service for five more years. It was desirable to have the existing companies continue to provide services, knowing they would not soon be out of business. The most valuable asset a trash company has is its contracts with cities and counties. Without contracts they cannot borrow to buy new equipment, and service deteriorates. After I left the council in 1998 the new council did what we should have done. They audited the companies to find out why our rates were higher than the rates in other cities of comparable population. I felt that the higher rates were justified because our city was more spread out. It took the drivers more time to complete their routes. However, we had not asked for an audit to prove it. Waste Management did get into the city in the long term. They bought out Blue Barrel and Santa Clarita Disposal.<sup>7</sup>

The Census Bureau released figures stating that Santa Clarita had grown 65.8% in ten years, from 66,730 to 110,642, the eighth fastest growing city in the nation. There were problems with both numbers. The census tracts were different in 1980 and 1990, so the 1980 figures were extrapolations. The 1990 figure seemed way low. For the entire valley the figures were 79,015 and 158,100, an increase of 100.1%. Thus the area outside the city had grown from 12,285 to 47,458 in ten years.<sup>8</sup>

On February 10, 1991, the *Daily News* projected that growth would slow as a result of either Gloria Molina or Art Torres being elected to the Board of Supervisors in a federally mandated election. Meanwhile, Mike Antonovich expressed concern that Poe’s development of Stevenson Ranch was being held up because of our lawsuit. He explained, “Failure to get this project going could mean the loss of nearly \$11 million in road and traffic improvements.” What he did not say was that these improvements came with more traffic than they could handle.

The city agreed to put in \$2.7 million in infrastructure improvements to attract the Price Club, now Costco, to one of Jack Shine’s properties. Jan Heidt and Jill Klajic voted no. Jan owned a small business, One for the Books, on Lyons Avenue in Newhall, and complained about what the big companies were doing to the small ones. I understood her concern, but had some difficulty with the idea of preserving small business at the cost of making everyone in the valley pay more money at the cash register. The economy was changing, and we would have to change with it. At the time it was not apparent what they were doing to wages.

We were going through a state water shortage in 1991. California had cut back the amount of water we could import by fifty per cent. This would not result in a crisis because of our ground water supply. However, over reliance on ground water would cut quality, and there was always the problem that we really did not know the extent of our resources.

I was very concerned about the long-term problem of Elsmere dump, if it was built. We got the heaviest rains in Newhall Pass, and this microclimate which encompassed Elsmere Canyon was not understood well.

Council meetings were long. Chip Meyer criticized me for running the meetings briskly, sometimes denying people the opportunity to speak because they had not filled out the required cards in time. However, we were also denying folks an opportunity to speak when they could not stay until past midnight to take their turn, and the council was not at its best in the wee hours of the morning.<sup>9</sup>

With the flags out on Lyons Avenue for the duration of the Gulf War, we were dubbed “America’s most patriotic city.” On George Washington’s birthday our flags and a local Army Recruiting sign were hit by vandals, who sprayed red paint on them. I could understand anti-war sentiment, but this was sick.<sup>10</sup>

In February I attended a seminar in Washington, D.C., where I met numerous officials from the Eastern Bloc. There I made a casual remark to Vladimir Sotirov, a member of the Bulgarian parliament, about Santa Clarita being a large but young city. The result was his invitation to visit Sofia, his country’s capital, which was undergoing significant change as power was passing from the Communists to the United Democratic Front. He said, “We can’t pay your way, but if you will come to Sofia we will show you good hospitality.”

I said I would be glad to make a visit. His response was, “Great! When can you come?”

“July.”

“July? We may not have a government in July!”

On February 23, 1991, *The Signal* published a letter from Ed Schullery, who raked me over the coals on the issues of taxation, garbage dumps and growth. I was amazed that the editor responded with a lengthy note. He corrected Mr. Schullery’s statements, and I hoped this meant a change in policy. I was wrong.

Steven Wells criticized the conduct of the council meetings, saying that public hearings ought to be held at the top of the agenda so people would not have to wait for hours to testify. He was right. We changed the order of the agenda. It only took one person pointing out this problem to bring about change for the better.<sup>11</sup>

The growth in the Hispanic population was significant. Ernest Moreno was serving on the Santa Clarita Community College District governing board in 1991, and Gloria Mercado served on the William S. Hart Union High School District board from 1997 to 2001. With thirteen per cent of the population, Latinos were a presence in the city, but Latino representation at the municipal level was limited to the Parks Commission. Meanwhile Louis Brathwaite of the Planning Commission was suffering ill health, and this was creating an occasional problem with the quorum. Louis never did recover completely from the illnesses that struck him a week after his retirement from Federal service, but he served longer than any other commissioner.<sup>12</sup>

Newhall’s Walk of Western Stars inducted Hoyt Axton, Hugh O’Brien and Denver Pyle in a late-March ceremony. Milt Diamond, the owner of The General

Store, had conceived the idea, and Jo Anne Darcy kept pushing it. Bob Martin was able to report that the festive dinner was sold out in advance. People were not too star struck. We were used to seeing people like Cliffie Stone and Tex Williams in the supermarket.<sup>13</sup>

George Carvalho was picked to join nine others in a trip to Russia and Ukraine by the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs on the same day that USC informed me they had a full tuition scholarship for Zhenya Lindgardt. I made plans to go to Bulgaria and then Leningrad, with the idea of escorting Soviet students to the U.S., and cashed in frequent flyer miles to get a ticket.<sup>14</sup>

Joe Edmiston of the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy drove the final nail into the coffin of a Towsley dump by arranging the purchase of 273 acres to be added to the Santa Clarita Woodlands.<sup>15</sup>

I was invited to give an award to Ruth Chedsey of Agua Dulce, but made a point of telling the audience that we had no aspirations to annex Agua Dulce. During my second term as Mayor, when the Castaic Chamber of Commerce met in Santa Clarita for their annual meeting, I got a good laugh when I welcomed them to Castaic's southern suburb.<sup>16</sup>

Nine days after April Fools Day we published an infrastructure wish list worth \$712 million. Years later we were surprised at how many came to fruition.

Seniors were concerned about whether the council would understand how important Dial-a-Ride service was to them. I responded that "we know who votes in this town and we know what our job is, which is to serve the people."<sup>17</sup>

The Dale Poe Development Corporation settled our lawsuit by paying the city \$675,000, more than twice what they had offered originally, but less than half what we had asked.

City Manager George Carvalho picked up on K.C. Caesar's suggestion that we should tap the hairdressers in the city to find out what people thought. We decided to invite them to lunch. Some people thought the idea was "hairbrained," and it got national publicity (and later a national public relations award), beginning with the bulk of Steve Harvey's humor column in the *Los Angeles Times*. The result was that the hairdressers began to discuss city issues actively with their customers. We got a lot of good input at the luncheon, with Assistant City Manager Ken Pulskamp moderating the proceedings. Ken teased the hairdressers during the session but my own barber, Harry Craig, had the last word. Referring to Ken's balding, "All we'd have to do is shrink your head."<sup>18</sup>

Then Christo paid the city a visit. The Bulgarian, who spent \$26 million placing gigantic umbrellas in the Gorman area as well as Japan, was really clever. He sold many millions of dollars worth of lithographs of his plans, and by actually completing the project gained such publicity that his work was profitable. My first reaction was that the idea was pretty weird, but I became a convert when I saw the finished product.<sup>19</sup>

May 15 was Dodger night. I was given the job of making the first pitch. Buck McKeon and I played catch; I knew I would have to warm up. When Buck

had had his turn he had thrown the ball into the dirt. When the time came I burned it in. I threw a “high, hard pitch to McKeon that was called a strike by Councilwoman Jill Klajic.” Of course it was a strike. Jill was not about to cut me any slack. I was told Tommy Lasorda was watching, but no contract was offered.<sup>20</sup>

On the other hand, I was appointed by Fran Pavley of Agoura Hills to the Regional Issues Task Force of the Los Angeles Division of the League of California Cities, and was elected chairman of the Resolutions Committee of the California Contract Cities Association. The importance of the latter position was that a seat on the executive board went with the chairmanship. Santa Clarita would be at the table.

Buck McKeon resurrected the idea that we should have a popularly elected mayor. This time I supported it, because I had come to know what a killer the job could be, and I felt that if the people could elect the mayor directly they would support paying a full salary for the position. The problem was not the burden of conducting council meetings, or doing the occasional ribbon cutting. It was that we had to represent our large city to the county, state and federal governments, and that took a major effort. I said that I favored holding the election to change the system as soon as Jill Klajic had had her chance. Tim Whyte quoted Jill as saying, “There are still people out there who think Tom Bradley is our mayor. And they’re very happy with him.”<sup>21</sup>

I knew this was true. One afternoon I was making a purchase at ThriftyDrug on Lyons Avenue, now Rite Aid. The clerk at the register looked at me and said, “Your face is familiar. Where have I seen you?”

I finally suggested she might have seen my picture in the papers. “I’m the Mayor,” I volunteered.

“No, you’re not!” she answered brightly. I did not argue. Tom Bradley was a good deal taller than me, and had a darker complexion.

During the last part of June we had eleven council meetings in twelve days. We approved the General Plan, the budget and the Capital Improvement Program, and judged the competition for a city hall design. It was a situation where a lot of different projects had come together at one time. Completion of the work on the largest general plan for a new city in world history was topped off by a debate over Newhall Land’s plans for a five-acre mini mall on the southeast corner of Seco Canyon Road and Copperhill Drive.

Of the general plan I said, “We have adopted the most stringent, most effective growth management tool in California. The general plan shows what the people can expect of this city over a long-range period.” Tim Whyte asked exactly what they could expect. “They can expect serious attention to significant ecological areas, to the problems of noise pollution, water pollution, traffic, roadbuilding, developers paying for infrastructure. An improving situation rather than a deteriorating situation as we go along. They can expect a non-political approach, I think. There’s no reason to expect a lot of amendments and monkeying around.”<sup>22</sup>

Indeed there was no monkeying around. Unlike the county, the city showed the political will to stand by its plan.

I spent a few hours attending the Filipino-American Association's celebration of Sa Karagatan. I never prepared a speech for such occasions, but tried to make a few appropriate remarks. In spite of the recent death and destruction caused by the eruption of Mount Pinatubo, we managed to join in some laughs.

For the Fourth of July parade Chris and I were driven through town perched on the back of a 1954 Plymouth convertible. Sometimes the parade organizers had us in a BMW or some other foreign automobile, and I would hear a few barbs about being in a fancy foreign car. My own car was a Ford. That was what a schoolteacher could afford. My council salary made the payments on my wife's car.

It takes a lot of time to adopt an ordinance, and the drought ordinance relating to water conservation was adopted no more quickly than any other. I did not fear a local water shortage, but did worry about how we would be perceived if we did not make every effort to conserve. What was to prevent the state from taking our local groundwater? They had already cut back on state aqueduct water, which we paid for whether or not we were allowed to use it. Jill Klajic wanted a complete water audit. We still need one.<sup>23</sup>

Henry Chu summed up "Santa Clarita's Wish List" in an article for the *Los Angeles Times* on July 11. We had conducted a strategic planning session in April, attended by hundreds of local residents who threw out ideas for consideration and ultimately ranked their goals. At the top of the list was building a Nordstrom department store in the mall; the mall itself was just becoming reality. Nordstrom's being at the top of the list made the *Wall Street Journal*. Many also wanted to recruit the Raiders. I kept quiet about that, but did not want anything to do with Al Davis. Ultimately, the problem with recruiting Nordstrom was that they wanted \$40 million to come to Santa Clarita. That dampened public enthusiasm and that goal did not surface at the subsequent sessions, which were held every three years. Having the public actively involved in strategic planning was an activity carried on in only about fifteen per cent of American cities, and few elsewhere in the world. We worked hard on achieving the listed goals, and one result was a 93% approval rating for city government a few years later.

A major problem was the lack of public knowledge about what was going on in our city. Voter turnout after 1987 was low. Many did not read a local paper and we had no radio or television station providing local news. The council scrapped a proposal for a city newsletter. The feeling was that those people who read the papers would be the ones who read the newsletter. On the other hand, we did begin to put more information in the parks brochure which was mailed to every home each time new programs were starting.

Jennifer Rinkenberger, 16, of Canyon High School was featured in a *Daily News* article on July 30 about her impending trip to Russia with brother Larry and other students being sponsored by a student homestay program. She said, "It'll be great to be there now when the country is going through all the changes. One



day I'll be able to say I was there when it was all going on." How right she was! Her final scheduled day in Russia was during an attempted coup d'état, and the group managed to catch the last Finnair flight out of Leningrad, which took off with seconds to spare. Two students almost missed the flight. A Finnair gate agent walked them to the plane, ignoring demands that the students go through the formal exit process.

Earlier I had flown to Istanbul in Turkey and taken the train to Sofia for four days of consultations. The city government was undergoing a transition from Communist to democratic control. The newcomers to government did not know how to run a city, and the Communists, who had been doing it, wanted to keep their jobs. Then I headed for Leningrad, stopping in Bucharest, Romania, for a day, and spending another day working to get out of the country and into Hungary. Once in Budapest I relaxed for a couple of days and then took night trains to Warsaw, which I had visited in 1989, and Leningrad.

Central Warsaw had been rebuilt, finally, and looked pristine. The train to Leningrad was not a good one. The ride took thirty hours through Belarus, Lithuania and Latvia. I met some interesting people on board.

Zhenya's father met me at the station and I spent a week with her family. It was a wonderful time, seeing the others who had been to Santa Clarita and greeting our contingent when they arrived on the train from Moscow early one morning. My being there was very helpful to the students who would be returning to the U.S. with me. I was able to talk the consulate into giving them multi-year multiple-entry visas and Aeroflot into selling them tickets home from the U.S. for rubles, which meant a roundtrip from New York would cost only \$65 because rubles were almost worthless. A multiple-entry visa was prized because it meant that the kids would not have to stand in line for an average of four days each time they wanted a visa to attend college for another year in the U.S. Changing their visas was easy because I could whisk them in the door reserved for Americans, who did not wait in line.

On our arrival in Los Angeles we were met by a gorilla and my son-in-law, Scotty Plummer, who was playing "Yes, We Have No Bananas" on his banjo. The girls were huge fans of bananas, which were very scarce at home. The press had speculated ahead of the event that the gorilla (my daughter Denise), might get through security by slipping a few bananas to people there.<sup>24</sup>

On my return I faced the need to catch up with developments on the Planning Commission. Rita Garasi resigned after the general plan was finished, John Drew of CARRING, Scott Voltz of Santa Clarita Residents for Responsible Planning, and Ken Dean were among the first applicants for the vacant seat. I observed, "I'm just not interested in dealing with candidates who have already shown a bias one way or another. As for anybody who has taken a far-out stand on growth or no-growth, I think it's really tasteless for them to apply."<sup>25</sup>

That feeling left Lee Schramling, David Doughman and George Offshack to consider. With Jill Klajic absent the council could not break a tie on the method used to select the candidate, whether one would be nominated by Buck McKeon,

whose appointee had resigned, and then confirmed by the council, or we would use a ratings system. Knowing that Dave Doughman had the support of McKeon and Darcy, and that Jill Klajic would have supported the nomination process (because she wanted her own person on the commission), I voted to appoint him to the commission without an interview by the entire council.

Randy Wicks, the extraordinarily fine cartoonist who stayed with *The Signal* until he died, had fun with that. He showed a still shaking diving board labeled “Santa Clarita City Council,” the splash of a new dive, and bathing trunks labeled “appointment procedure” stuck on a nail at the end of the diving board.<sup>26</sup>

While the lack of an appointment system drew fire from the press, the fact was that it probably had very little effect on the relationships within the council. We all knew that any system, or even an ordinance, that we adopted could be overturned by three votes. The only point of adopting a system at all was to require a separate vote in the future, should the majority wish to change it. A separate vote would alert the public to the fact that a change in procedure was being made.

When the reporters accused me of “flip-flop politics” it was because they could not understand there was nothing political in what I was doing. All I ever wanted to do was to get things done. The vast majority of the public equated good government with solving problems and a lack of graft and corruption. I was most interested in trying to create a tradition of good government.<sup>27</sup>

While my interest in creating good government at the county level might have led me to run for supervisor one day, I did not have the fire in the belly to take on that huge task. Creating “the largest newly incorporated city in the history of humankind” had taken eighteen years of my life. That was enough.

Meanwhile the Soviets were suffering from bad government. Our three college students suffered day after day, following the news but not knowing how their families were doing. At least the Santa Clarita Valley group which had been in the Soviet Union on the day of the coup got out, and were able to contact home within hours. Day after day, every time Zhenya passed a telephone she would stop and dial home. The line was always busy. She tried perhaps fifty times a day, for a couple of weeks. Finally she got through and talked to her father for a long time. When she hung up, she smiled brightly and said, “My father’s a revolutionary!”

Alexander Sobchak, the mayor of Leningrad, had gone on television and said that if the Communists succeeded in their attempted coup against Gorbachev there would be an immediate move to confiscate dual-cassette recorders and end cable television services. The Lindgardts had a prized dual-cassette recorder and cable television, which showed “western” movies in the evening and MTV all day. I often wondered how many people joined the huge demonstrations against the Communists because they did not want to lose their MTV.

Zhenya’s father, Dimitri, had been a member of the Communist Party until the day Gorbachev resigned his membership. A graduate of Leningrad State University, Dima had been an engineer for the state firm of Rotor, which was in

plastics, and was obligated to be a party member. He said later that the problem with the party was that it was rotten to the core because too many people like him were required to join in order to advance their careers.

On August 27 Jill Klajic moved to have the CARRING initiative placed on the April 1992 ballot by a vote of the city council. She did not get a second. Had Jill not been so confrontational she might have accomplished a great deal. On several motions she was able to win a three to two vote with support from Jan Heidt and me, but she could not seem to help antagonizing all of us. Prior to the meeting Jan Heidt had said, "I think she is trying to make us look bad. I think we have told them all individually just how we feel about" growth. She favored using the general plan to control growth. "I think that will be very, very sufficient in managing the growth."<sup>28</sup>

With the council failing to support putting the growth control measure on the ballot, in part because it would look as if the council supported the proposal, CARRING went to work quickly to gain the necessary signatures. We had no doubt that the proponents would get them, but I was not sure they would win at the polls. The measure bowed to state law by allowing an unlimited number of low-cost homes to be approved by the city council, and I said, "If I didn't think this initiative was absolute idiocy, I would support it. All it does is put a cap on higher-priced homes. I don't want to put a ghetto in the Santa Clarita Valley." We did need lower-cost housing for people who worked in the valley, as well as for seniors who wanted to live near their children in the valley.<sup>29</sup>

It would only have taken a lawsuit to force us to approve more low-cost housing. Another possibility was that the developers would support candidates who would approve low-cost housing. I had no idea what they would do to fight a cap on residential growth, but did not want the Santa Clarita Valley to be the testing ground. I did not believe the council would betray the 1991 general plan, and in the long run I was proven to be right.

John Drew, who called himself a government professor but could not get a job teaching government full time, also knew that the measure called for a complete halt in residential building if a water shortage developed. That draconian provision would have put a lot of local people out of work. I pointed out that people use less water than agriculture, so that residential growth would actually reduce demands on our local aquifers.<sup>30</sup>

When the city was getting close to its fourth birthday we began to consider the problems of signs. At first we began to work on illegal signs, those that had never conformed to the county sign ordinance, or which had been put up without a permit but conformed otherwise. Part of forming our government had been building a code enforcement department with Vyto Adomaitus as chief. We kidded him, calling him "Vyto the Enforcer," but he was a skilled diplomat and very effective.<sup>31</sup>

On September 12 we held the ground breaking for the mall. By taking off from school for two periods, my conference period and a class period covered by a volunteer, I was able to participate. My picture was on the front page of the *Los*

*Angeles Times* valley edition the next day. Gail Foy (now Morgan), our public information officer, was excited. “I know people who would kill to get their picture on the front page!” she exclaimed.

“Really?” I kidded. “Then how come you didn’t get them to put my name in the caption?” Having my face in the photo was a fluke. They liked the balloons in the background.

Jan Heidt was the subject of intense criticism by Joan MacGregor, then president of the Sulphur Springs Union School District. The school district was in the process of closing an old school and building a shopping center on the land to provide funds for a new school. Jan voiced concern about traffic and aesthetic issues, and the council voted four to one (McKeon dissenting) to send the plans back for revisions. Joan said she was going to work against Jan’s reelection bid in April. The project came back eventually with a better plan, and was approved and built. Joan MacGregor calmed down and went on to bigger and better things.<sup>32</sup>

Jill Klajic and John Drew continued their campaign for growth-control. Meanwhile city staff members were working on the growth management plan as a result of the adoption of the general plan. Klajic did not know enough about government to understand that the growth management plan had been in the works for months. She seemed to think that we could cook one up overnight in an effort to derail CARRING’s proposal. This would have been impossible without someone from the staff releasing information about the effort. Of course John Drew understood the situation very well, but it was not convenient for him to admit it.<sup>33</sup>

Klajic paid to have her letter printed in *The Signal* on September 25, which said in part, “Consider that these same four council members refused to include an effective proposal within the General Plan which could have become part of an effective growth control system....

“Consider their attitude toward the CARRING initiative, which is now well on its way towards the April ballot, and happens to be the only growth control measure proposed so far for Santa Clarita. The four member majority of the city council refused to put the initiative on the ballot.”

Meanwhile, developers were upset because we were “downzoning” them.<sup>34</sup>

On September 29 Tim Whyte’s story in *The Signal*, “Klajic’s ‘Voting Record Hypocritical’,” revealed that Jan Heidt had voted more often against residential development than Jill Klajic. Klajic protested that the published results did not reflect accurately her position on growth. She was correct. They did not reflect any council member’s position accurately. My own votes were always with the council majority (except that I was absent on business from the final vote on Palmer’s Santa Catarina). In each case, the approved project had been improved in the process, as density was decreased and greater amenities required. However, since I was the swing vote, I often made the majority. Nonetheless, I did not have a close friend such as Allan Cameron working as a developer’s representative on many of the projects for which I voted.

At the end of September I went to New York City with a small delegation to work on Moody's and Standard and Poor's ratings for the city's bonds. We were granted a healthy A+ rating, above average for any city, and saved the city \$52,500 per year by coming in above a BBB rating, the next one down. We used part of the \$18 million issue to buy the building in which we had our offices. Once we owned the building we had a net income from the space we rented out for some years. That was like having a city hall rent free.<sup>35</sup>

In October we honored our volunteers. We held the groundbreaking for the Boys and Girls Club facility in Newhall Park, where Mike Gordillo, Stephanie McDougale and a young man named Yusef helped Jim Ventress, Tom Lee, Sam Garcia, Tom Veloz and me turn the dirt. We adopted a \$200 per home fee for transportation facilities. We lost the support of Val Verde for a sphere of influence over that community, and were threatened with a lawsuit by the Dale Poe Development Corporation. We worked to have our entire city included in one congressional district, one state senate district and one state assembly district. We held a physical fitness rally for the fourth, fifth and sixth graders; Arnold Schwarzenegger and Kathy Smith got the kids pumped and I gave the key to the city to Schwarzenegger. A photo of that presentation wowed young visitors to my office for years afterwards. We discussed city control of the sanitation districts, and posted our rating as the third safest city in America, out of 119 in the 100,000 to 250,000 population range.<sup>36</sup>

CARRING qualified their initiative for the ballot almost as quickly as the second Canyon County formation effort, which had taken only six weeks. I decried their effort, saying, "The political winds are blowing toward limitations on growth, but I'm hopeful we'll be able to inform voters the harm the CARRING ordinance will do. It will destroy the relationship between developers and the city, and developers will build in the unincorporated areas, which will then truly lead to the rape of those areas, just as this area was raped."<sup>37</sup>

The council immediately declined to order staff to work on a growth management ordinance, but instead to work on implementing the general plan. Jan Heidt voiced her priorities, "Let's finish the hillside ordinance, let's finish the zoning ordinance and then let's work on an ordinance that pulls it all together."

I had not read the CARRING proposal and had no intention of wasting my time. They did not understand my faith that an open government, developing ordinances in public hearings, could do a much better job than Jill Klajic and John Drew did in private.

Bob Lathrop, a most faithful gadfly, said, "We seem to be all closing our eyes to the reality that the train left the station at 10:30 this morning. And most of the staff and city government were not on board." He missed the point that we were not going to be railroaded.<sup>38</sup>

The problem with development on our immediate borders remained. The Newhall Land and Farming Company was pushing for approval of their Westridge project just west of I-5 between McBean Parkway and Valencia Boulevard. The city, the Santa Clarita Civic Association, the Santa Clarita Oaks

Conservancy and SCOPE all raised objections to plans to build 200 homes within a Significant Ecological Area and cut down 149 oak trees. The school impact was not clear to the public; apparently Newhall Land was going to set aside a site which would be bought by one of the school districts out of development fees. It took ten years for that project to get underway, with modifications.<sup>39</sup>

Developers turned out en masse to ask for exclusion from our latest sphere of influence proposal. It was later clear that the city was asking for too much, but LAFCO's lack of cooperation in giving good advice or helping to find a reasonable compromise was also at fault. The developers might have shown more willingness to work with the city, but Jill Klajic's campaign was not helping.<sup>40</sup>

On the same day we were losing at LAFCO, and Newhall Land was losing in the Regional Planning Commission, November 14, 1991, Gil Callowhill died at home of a heart attack. Gil had moved to Saugus in 1972, the year he retired as a manager for an industrial pump company. He had worked tirelessly as a volunteer, had been active in the Canyon County formation movement, and had been elected supervisor in 1976. He had also run for the city council in 1987, had served in the Santa Clarita Civic Association, the Highway 126 Improvement Committee, SCOPE, SCV Chamber of Commerce, Independence Day parade committee and as an elected director of the Castaic Lake Water Agency. Gil was extraordinary in that he never spent money to campaign, and he won office five times by simply walking door-to-door, talking with people. Gil was tight with the taxpayers' dollar and was often a minority of one against growth, but never allowed his views to get in the way of his relationships with people.<sup>41</sup>

Jim Van Horn, a long time council member of Artesia and a LAFCO member, pushed Newhall Land to give a population figure for their planned developments west of I-5, much of which was referred to as West Ranch at the time. Gary Cusumano provided a figure of 50,000 to 100,000, the first time we had been given a population figure. In spite of that we were making progress with the annexation and development of the commercial site in which Best Buy was developed.

One of the little known duties of a council member was to take turns serving as a director of Sanitation Districts 26 and 32, little known special districts responsible for the treatment of sewer effluent. A three-member board comprised of one supervisor and two council members ran those sanitation districts partially in the city and partially in the county. They were part of the hidden governments of Los Angeles County, along with the lighting districts, the mosquito abatement district and the like. Charles Carry and a bunch of able bureaucrats ran the operation. Operations personnel, who were to risk their lives in a big way to stop a disaster that could have resulted from the Northridge Earthquake in 1994, ran the sanitation plants.

Board members were given their agendas in advance, and were expected to approve everything by the numbers. If we did not fool around, a meeting could be completed in forty-eight seconds. This is not to say we did not do our homework. We did, often with the help of city staff. Charles Carry did not know

what a “no” vote was. If Newhall Land’s commercial site was going to be developed it had to be annexed to Sanitation District No. 26. When the item came up, Jill Klajic and I voted no. We were immediately told by staff, “You can’t do that!”

We replied, “We just did.”

We got Newhall Land’s attention. Had they sued they might have won, but they found it easier to communicate and negotiate than to sue, which would have cost them a lot of time. The site was annexed to the city as well, and Best Buy became our largest single contributor to sales tax revenue.<sup>42</sup>

*The Signal* could not wait to speculate on who was going to be the next mayor. On November 19 they ran Tim Whyte’s story saying that Jill Klajic had the support of three council members and Buck McKeon would be out of town for the reorganization meeting, so would not be present to vote against her. I felt that the rotation was important. I did not feel it was Jill’s turn, but the written policy supported her and I was not going to play politics with it. Jan Heidt’s statement represented me. “My feeling is this: That the community has a right to see each one of us in a leadership position. I believe in the system. We all jumped into it with both feet....” Jo Anne Darcy pointed out that Jill would be responsible for representing the council and its positions.

When asked how I was doing as mayor, Jill said with a laugh, “Carl’s done a great job. He’s been fantastic. I’m going to be a good girl, like Buck said. I’m going to be very nice and not cause trouble.”<sup>43</sup>

Jan Heidt proposed creation of an area council to be created by inviting representatives of eleven unincorporated communities to a meeting in the city. Mindful of the Middle East peace talks going on at that time, I asked if she meant Madrid or Washington.<sup>44</sup>

Meanwhile we had voted to appoint commissioners by a system of nomination by a councilmember, with ratification by the council. I had originally supported that process, but decided that it was too political and voted against it. I had received some criticism for changing my mind, but the fact was that I could see both sides of many issues, and frequently had difficulty voting one way or the other.

The real estate market was anemic, and growth had slowed considerably. Newhall Land was building no residential projects. However, they were still doing well in commercial and industrial development, in part because they owned their land outright. Henry Mayo Newhall had bought it for about \$2 an acre over a century earlier. Also, they had the best industrial land in all of Los Angeles County. The people of the valley enjoyed new amenities, such as the Hilton Garden Inn and the new mall then under construction. We were making real progress in writing a hillside and ridgeline preservation ordinance.

The last controversy of my first term came from the Anden Group, one of what turned out to be many developers who wanted to build on the Porta Bella area in the middle of the city. This was a brownfields project, but at the time we did not have much knowledge about just how polluted the soil was. Anden asked

to be exempted in advance from the slow-growth initiative so they could build homes at a greater rate, hinging their donation of land for the Santa Clarita Metrolink station to their request.

I was frosted. Anden was putting the council in a difficult position, and the station had to be built somewhere, and soon. However, that, like the question of an Elsmere dump, was not to be decided at that time.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>*The Signal*, Dec. 16, 1990.

<sup>2</sup>*Daily News*, Dec. 26, 1990.

<sup>3</sup>*Daily News*, Dec. 27, 1990.

<sup>4</sup>*The Signal*, Jan. 17, 1991.

<sup>5</sup>*Daily News*, Jan. 18, 26 and 30, 1991; *The Signal*, Jan. 26-27, 1991, and *Governing*, March 1991.

<sup>6</sup>*The Signal*, Jan. 30, 1991.

<sup>7</sup>*The Signal*, Feb. 2 and 17, 1991.

<sup>8</sup>*The Signal*, Feb. 6, 1991.

<sup>9</sup>*The Signal*, Feb. 14, 1991.

<sup>10</sup>*The Signal*, Feb. 23, 1991.

<sup>11</sup>*The Signal*, Feb. 28, 1991.

<sup>12</sup>*Daily News*, March 3 and 8, 1991, and *The Signal*, March 7, 1991.

<sup>13</sup>*The Signal*, March 25, 1991.

<sup>14</sup>*The Signal*, March 29, 1991.

<sup>15</sup>*The Signal*, April 6, 1991.

<sup>16</sup>*Daily News*, April 7, 1991.

<sup>17</sup>*Daily News*, April 11, 1991.

<sup>18</sup>*The Signal*, April 16, 1991, and *Los Angeles Times*, April 18, 1991.

<sup>19</sup>*The Signal*, April 17, 1991.

<sup>20</sup>*The Signal*, May 16, 1991.

<sup>21</sup>*The Signal*, June 28, 1991.

<sup>22</sup>*The Signal*, July 1, 1991.

<sup>23</sup>*The Signal*, July 10, 1991.

<sup>24</sup>*The Signal*, Aug. 10, 1991.

<sup>25</sup>*The Signal*, Aug. 13, 1991.

<sup>26</sup>*The Signal*, Aug. 18, 1991.

<sup>27</sup>*The Signal*, Aug. 15 and 18, 1991, and *Daily News*, Aug. 15, 1991.

<sup>28</sup>*Daily News*, Aug. 25 and 28, 1991, and *The Signal*, Aug. 28, 1991.

<sup>29</sup>*Daily News*, Aug. 29, 1991.

<sup>30</sup>*The Signal*, Sept. 8, 1991.

<sup>31</sup>*Daily News*, Sept. 1, 1991.

<sup>32</sup>*The Signal*, Sept. 15, 1991.

<sup>33</sup>*Daily News*, Sept. 20, 1991.

<sup>34</sup>*The Signal*, Sept. 25, 1991, and *Daily News*, Sept. 25, 1991.

<sup>35</sup>*The Signal*, Oct. 3, 1991.



<sup>36</sup>*The Signal*, Oct. 6, 13 and 24, 1991; Boys and Girls Clubs Central Facility Ground-Breaking Ceremony program, Oct. 10, 2001, and *Daily News*, Oct. 6, 11, 14, 20, 23, 25 and 31, 1991.

<sup>37</sup>*Los Angeles Times*, Nov. 12, 1991.

<sup>38</sup>*The Signal*, Nov. 13, 1991.

<sup>39</sup>*The Signal*, Nov. 14, 1991.

<sup>40</sup>*Daily News*, Nov. 14, 1991.

<sup>41</sup>*The Signal*, Nov. 15, 1991.

<sup>42</sup>*Daily News*, Nov. 18, 1991.

<sup>43</sup>*The Signal*, Nov. 19, 1991.

<sup>44</sup>*Los Angeles Times*, Nov. 28, 1991.

<sup>45</sup>*Los Angeles Times*, Dec. 7, 1991; and *The Signal*, Dec. 9, 1991.