

THE FOOTHILL INQUIRER

THE VOICE OF THE PEOPLE

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Fathoming Foresthill The Saga Continues

By Roy West

Since the water rate increase has not taken effect yet it stands to reason that that the discussions are not over yet either.

As you may know FPUD publicly noticed an impending rate increase that is due to take effect on July 15th of this year; that is unless enough ratepayers submit a "protest" in writing to FPUD.

This protest movement was begun I suspect as a joint effort by the Ryan family of Forest Ranch fame and Cynthia Wardleigh, manager of Everybody's Inn and there may be others on board as well; you may have noticed the sign in front of her establishment beckoning people to come in to, "STOP the water rate increase Sign Here".

I personally find this interesting when I consider that Everybody's Inn is not even served by the FPUD; that property is on a well.

Anyway the "protest" is accelerating and a new sign has been added declaring, "We need you, sign here".

I have also been told that there is a door to door canvassing effort as well as some phone banking on behalf of the protest effort as well.

I don't have a problem with this process as long as the truth is being told to people as they are asked to sign the petition or to send in a protest. From what I have heard and read though there are details of the truth sorely lacking in the presentation of the protest movement. Of course they are making the same claim about their "opposition".

We have made our small efforts to tell

a different side of the story based on information gathered by regular attendance of the FPUD board meetings and many conversations with directors and FPUD staff.

I am frequently asked to sign various petitions purported to right some wrong when I am out and about at stores but I have learned to take down some information and check the facts before signing my name to anything. I have been told that there has been at least one case of a Foresthill resident who had turned in a letter protesting the rate increase and then upon reading more information opted to return and tear up the protest.

I have to say that I can really respect a person who upon getting more information is willing to take steps to correct previous actions.

Of course it may be that after getting more information, folks will hold to their original position, which I also respect. The point is that being open and making an informed decision is important.

In fact that leads me to an observation; recently FPUD sent out a "Special Report" with information explaining the reasons for the proposed rate increase. Every rate-payer in the district received one by mail. At the Foresthill Post Office I saw several of these reports discarded in the circular file with other junk mail.

I believe that this mailer was in response to some statements about FPUD not explaining the rate increase in a previous mailer which was also destined for interment in the round file in quantities.

After pondering the situation for a few days I have come to the conclu-

sion that the people who threw these away are probably not even aware of the fact that a rate increase is on the way. If they had been paying attention, they would have read about it in the Foothill Inquirer and the other local publication not to mention various e-mails that have circulated and the aforementioned roadside signs.

After all of this exposure it stands to reason that most folks would notice and pay attention to anything that FPUD sends them these days; after all, their monthly expenses are being affected. But alas, it is not to be. People just do not seem to be interested enough to pay attention.

I decided to call Cynthia Wardleigh to ask her what the folks who are doing the phone banking and door to door signature gathering are hearing; she said that most people are not even aware that there is a rate increase. Others thought that the water **rights** application protest petition which was circulated by FROG was about water **rates**. She went on to say that some folks are upset that, "they had less than thirty days notice about the July 15th 'protest meeting'." All of this in spite of the fact that FPUD had pre-noticed in the Auburn Journal, Messenger, and Foothill Inquirer and held a public workshop meeting at the Memorial Hall on May 22nd.

Somehow there is a definite communication gap in the community. In reality people just don't care enough to pay attention. I guess there are too many other distractions and concerns in our lives.

See The Saga on Page 6

Community Briefs

Note:
 The Foresthill Forum, FPUD and Fire Protection District board meetings are filmed by the *FhInquirer*.
 Copies of these meetings can be rented from the Foresthill Library or can be purchased from the *Inquirer*.
 Contact fhinquirer@ftcnet.net

The Foothill Inquirer
fhinquirer@ftcnet.net

The Foothill Inquirer is an independent newspaper/newsletter that covers news-of-interest mostly dealing with the foothill area but also covering State and national issues.

Our goal is to provide current and accurate news for the foothill area.

The FhI is now available only on the web or by email. There are also hard copies at the Foresthill Library for reference. If you would like to be placed on the e-mail loop, email fhinquirer@ftcnet.net and request that you be placed on our email loop.

If you would like to place an advertisement the priced is \$12.00 for one months worth of advertising, plus your ad is on our website.

Contact us at our email address to place an advertisement.

If you have a community notice of an event or lec-

Meeting	Date	Time	Place
Foresthill MAC/Forum	Monday July 12	7:00 to 9:00 p.m.	Foresthill Veterans Memorial Hall 24601 Harrison St. Foresthill
Foresthill Fire Protection District Board meeting	Tuesday July 13	7:00 p.m.	Foresthill Fire District office 24320 Main St. Foresthill
FPUD Board meeting	Wednesday July 14	7:00 p.m.	FPUD District office 24540 Main St. Foresthill
Foresthill Fire Safe Council	Tuesday July 20	5:30 p.m.	Foresthill Fire District office 24320 Main St. Foresthill
WAC MAC	Wednesday July 21	6:00 p.m.	Colfax Memorial Hall, 22 Sunset Circle, Colfax
North Auburn MAC	Tuesday July 13	7:00 p.m.	Planning Commission Chambers, 3091 County Center Dr. Auburn
Planning Commission	Thursday July 22	10:00 a.m.	Planning Commission Chambers 3091 County Center Dr. Auburn

More Updates

Foresthill Public Utility District proposes to increase its monthly water rates for all users and they will hold a public hearing on the proposed rate increases on Thursday, July 15, 2010 at 7:00 p.m. at Foresthill Memorial Hall located at 24601 Harrison Street, Foresthill, CA 95631.

A LITTLE HISTORY

Historical Echoes

Re-printed from The Foresthill Divide Community Forum (1980)

Following is an exact transcript (including spelling) from the daily log of the Justice of the peace, Michigan Bluff. Date: July 29, 1888)

On this 29th day of July, 1888, personally appeared before me one Mrs. Ah Fung Gee, a China woman, and made complaint that the following men made an assault upon her with clubs of wood and did beat & bruise her with their fists "to wit," Ah Gee, Lung Fan, Kim Lue & Sam May. Ah Gee is her husband, and asked that a warrant be issued for the arrest.

A warrant was issued & placed in the hands of E.L. Dooley, Constable.

Ah Gee was arrested and brought into court and acknowledged that he had abused and whipped his wife, and plead guilty and at the defendants request, and to get the other parties. Sentence was deferred to Tues., July 31st, at two o'clock p.m. and a bond was taken for \$300 with Wing Chung Lung, and Sam New as bondsman for his appearance. (July 31st) Met in Town Hall, Ah Gee stated to the court that he had whipped his wife but that the other defendants had done nothing to the plaintiff. The court fined Ah Gee \$30.00 which was paid. Bonds cancelled and all defendants acquitted. Courts costs six dollars. Constable \$6.80, which \$12.80 and left \$17.20 to the county. Sent county treasurer \$17.20 by postal order. I have his receipt for the same.

James A. Van Eman, J.P.

Ed. Note: Above is copied from the ORIGINAL log of the Michigan Bluff Justice of the Peace, that is all hand-

written. Courtesy of Dorothy Turco, Mich. Bluff.

The year 1880 must have been a depressed season for gold production. The State Mineralogist Report released the following figures: Bath \$65,000, Dutch Flat \$44,000, Gold Run \$53,999, Iowa Hill \$16,000, Mich. Bluff \$110,369. It is surprising that Foresthill was not even listed.

In old emigrant diaries the word "pizzmeir" was used. In modern dictionaries this word cannot be found. No, it is not a dirty word but refers to that pesty insect, the ant. We can find no justification for the word's re-use.

In 1857 there were 30 buildings at Maine Bar on the Middle Fork, nine miles from the North Fork junction. Included were the St. Nicholas hotel and a fandango house. The river in this area was damned and sluiced for 13 miles, to expose the river bed to gold prospecting. The sluicing operation employed about 50 men. Every year the flume would be washed out by floods and float to Sacramento and beyond; every year the whole operation would have to be rebuilt. Workers at Cranville's Claim labored 14-hour shifts.

The true Mother Lode extended north as far as Placerville. The area north of that was known as the Northern Mines.

Jim Beckwourth, noted Mountain Man, prospected in El Dorado Canyon adjoining Michigan Bluff, in 1850.

John W. Mackay, who later was to become one of the Big Four of Comstock fame, at one time mined on the

Middle Fork underneath Michigan Bluff.

When early travelers paid toll at the Grizzly Bear House, the keeper kept a jug of whiskey on a rope down in the well. He let anybody drink all they wanted for 50 cents. Whiskey, that is.

In 1882 there were 250 people at Butcher's Ranch. A drug store, saloon, school, two hotels, a blacksmith shop, carpenter shop & several homes made up the town.

As early as midsummer, 1848, a party of miners left Sutter's Fort, led by J.D. Hoppe, and followed the Middle Fork of the American River as far as the vicinity of Michigan Bluff. Hoppe later published the Californian.

In 1929 there was one house in Damascus still standing. H.T. Power, Supt. of the Hidden Treasure mine and T. Rouner were students there together (In Damascus) and saw each other again after 57 years, on June 10, 1926 in Pittsburg, CA.

The price of gasoline in 1911 was 4 1/2 cents.

The widow of William C. Ralston, San Francisco financier, who drowned in San Francisco bay in 1875, retired to Georgetown after his death and lived there several years. She died on Dec. 1, 1929, at age 92.

In 1928 Bartlett Finning died in Foresthill, leaving an estate producing an income of \$10,000 per year.

John Comstock, of Nevada's Comstock Lode fame, lived and mined at Damascus in the 1850's. Comstock was well known to H.T. Power's mother.

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Letters to the Editor

Dear Editor,

I am a Foresthill Public Utility District Board Member and I would like to set the facts straight on a lot of the misinformation concerning the proposed rate increase. First let's start with the rate increase itself. The rate study was done by an outside consulting firm that specializes in water rates. This study was paid for by a grant from Placer County Water Agency, not a loan like was suggested in the most recent Foresthill Messenger. I have heard multiple times that we are doubling the rates over four years when in fact it's a 59% increase over four years. That equates to a \$23 increase over four years. I have also heard people upset about us lowering the minimum usage from 10,000 gallons a month to 7,500 gallons a month. There are two reasons for this. Governor Schwarzenegger signed into law a bill requiring water districts to reduce their water use by 20% by the year 2020, this was our attempt to comply with the new regulations. Secondly, we were simply trying to keep the water rates as low as we could. If customers still received the 10,000 gallons, their monthly bill would have been higher. In an attempt to help customers that regularly go over the minimum, we lowered the overage charge from \$2.24 per thousand gallons to \$1.50 per thousand gallons. We did this in particular to help the schools who are traditionally our biggest users.

Another comment I've heard is that the purchase of Sugar Pine Dam was supposed to control future expenses. The purchase of Sugar Pine Dam does in fact control expenses. When the FPUD Board purchased Sugar Pine Dam they were paying \$100 per acre foot for the water they received from Sugar Pine to the Federal Government, they decided to purchase the

Dam when the Government was talking about raising the price to around \$250 per acre foot, with the forewarned likelihood of an increase every 5 years thereafter. If that had happened, our water rates would be much, much higher.

One of the biggest things I've heard people talking about is an increase to employee wages and benefits. In a recent letter in the Foresthill Messenger from Doug Ryan he states how much employee wages and benefits have gone up. What he fails to state is there were two new employees added during that time which inflated his number. The employee wages and benefits were found to be extremely low compared to surrounding districts and they were losing employees to bigger districts for more money, I myself was one of them. The employees have not had a raise in 18 months. The FPUD Board recently did another salary survey and that showed that they are now in the middle of the average of surrounding communities. They are not overpaid by any means.

One question that keeps coming up is, why now? This rate increase needed to take place three to four years ago. However the board felt it was not a good time because the economy wasn't doing well and people were losing their jobs and their homes, so this was put off as long as possible to try to give the economy a chance to turn around. We cannot wait any longer.

I cannot tell you how saddened and disappointed I am by some of the people in our community. People have been taking out their frustration on our staff. I have personally read the protest letters and most are very respectful. However, there have been some very vulgar and disrespectful comments made to our staff. Some staff members have even been called at home and cursed at. Please, if you have any questions come to a board meeting and talk to the board members. The staff is just doing their job.

One quote that stood out to me in the latest edition of the Foresthill Messenger was "they are spending too much on attorneys." This statement is true. We have currently spent approximately \$120,000 in legal and attorney fees dealing with all the different lawsuits brought forth by the Forest Ranch. Keep in mind; these are rate payer's dollars being spent on property that is not in our district. This total is only going to grow with all the pending litigation. I don't like having to spend rate payer's dollars on this but we have to protect the water rights of the properties within the district.

That brings me to the local journalism. In my opinion, it's very apparent from the last edition of the Foresthill Messenger that Scott Nelson (the editor) appears to have a very clear agenda. He did not represent both sides or report facts. I have seen Scott at ONE board meeting and there was no rate information discussed at that particular meeting. He didn't ask a single question or try to gather any facts on this topic. Instead, he chose to write up and publish a one sided article, leaving the impression that it was all factual and then he printed a ballot in the paper saying that our 218 process was supposed to include this. This is not true. A ballot is only used for an assessment, not a rate increase. However, just like in the rest of the Messenger this was presented as fact, although it is not.

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Letters to the Editor policy

Note: Letters printed in this section do not necessarily reflect the views of the Editor. Also, we reserve the right to NOT print letters or portions of letters due to space, content, or accuracy.

Letters to the Editor Continued
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I urge you to please find your own facts. You are more than welcome to attend a board meeting, check out the recorded board meetings from the library, or if you are going to get your facts from a newspaper, I would encourage you to consider the Foothill Inquirer. Daniel West (the editor) shows up at the meetings, asks questions, and reports the facts.

Thank you,
Adam Larsen

Dear Editor,

First off, I want to start by stating how much I adore our little town and how blessed I feel to live here and raise my family in this community. Lately however, I feel a sense of disappointment in a lot of our resident's lack of ability to think on their own, or gather enough information to form their own independent opinion.

As we all know, the PUD has come to a hard but much needed decision to raise the rates that we all pay for our water. It is a hard pill to swallow, not just for rate payers, but for the group of people who were forced to make the decision (btw, they are rate payers as well, all but one). Because of this decision, and out of the anger and frustration that we are all feeling due to the economy and struggles that most households are facing just to make ends meet, it seems as though a very ugly monster has reared its head and is successfully dividing our beautiful divide. I've heard so many lies and rumors. Why do I say "lies"? Because there are absolutely people, or a group (aka "clan") of people, that are looking to capitalize on this issue for their own benefit. These are the ones spreading lies. As for rumors...I hate to even call it that because I know that it's really just a lot of angry misinformed residents passing along what they have

heard but that IS what a rumor is, so I'm calling it like it is.

I'll name a few: 1) Why are they raising the rates when the employee's all just got huge raises? *First of all, the PUD holds a board meeting, open to the public, once a month and all of this information is available and on hand for viewing if you just ask. Had you attended a board meeting, or simply called the office to ask the questions, you would know that all PUD employees have in fact been on a wage freeze for the last 18 months. Did their salaries go up before the freeze took effect? Yes, in the years prior to the freeze their wages did go up, but they HAD to make some attempt to pay fair wages to their employees to prevent our little water district from turning into a training ground where you could get hired, make a small wage while the district paid for your training and licenses and then get a job off the hill and nearly double your salary. Even with the wage adjustments that the employees received, it still hardly makes the PUD's pay scale competitive in the industry, and I sure would not call the employee's compensation "significant" as stated in a prior letter.*

2) The PUD is going to double my bill! *To double your bill, the PUD would have to raise it 100%, right? The increase you will see is progressive over the next 4 years and, said and done, will increase a total of 59%.*

3) But they are also lowering my usage allowance from 10,000 gallons per month to 7,500 gallons per month. *That statement is true but there are a few reasons for it. State regulations are tightening and putting pressure on all districts to reduce average usage. I am sure many residents don't come near the 7,500 gallon mark, just as there are probably many who go*

above and beyond 10,000 gallons (these customers may even see a savings on their bill now that the per thousand gallon rate is lowered to \$1.50 from \$2.24).

4) But why so much so quick? *I am the first to agree that this rate increase should have taken place years ago, but our current board has to make decisions and do what is right and necessary for NOW. They don't have the ability to go back in time and progressively raise the rates. I also know that even if this process had started years ago, and your water bill progressively started the climb years ago, you would still probably be paying the same that you will be paying with the rate increase. It would have just been a slower climb.*

I could go on forever fighting the ridiculous rumors and lies that are being spread but the bottom line will remain the same. This rate increase, although it may sting, is totally and completely necessary to maintain the great water that we are beyond blessed to have. I don't mind paying a little extra for peace of mind knowing that I will have good clean water, and the staff needed at the PUD to ensure that, and back up anything that might go wrong.

On another note, I don't appreciate hearing disrespectful comments towards PUD employees, in fact it disgusts me. I've heard some really horrible words spewed out of the mouths of people that I respect and would normally call a friend. I feel like too many of you are listening to these ridiculous accusations and not only are you believing them, but you are contributing to the "agenda" of their creators by repeating them to others.

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Historical Echoes

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He and other Canadians discovered the Canada Claim on the NW hydraulic pit at Damascus.

Phillip Diedesheimer took \$300,000 from his mine in Foresthill, then left for the Washoe, where his invention for timbering mines saved the Comstock.

Chas. A. Tuttle, a graduate of Hobart College, conducted a miner's store at Bird's Valley, near Mich. Bluff, and later became one of California's ablest lawyers.

One of Placer County's most popular vacation areas during the 1920's was the Forest Hill resort, well known for its low prices and complete equipment.

The publicity pamphlet published for it said: "The Forest Hill resort is located at Forest Hill, Placer County,

in the mountains among the pines where the scenery is magnificent, the air invigorating and the water clear, cold and sparkling."

Equipped with a dance pavilion, at which dances were given twice a week, facilities for tennis, fishing, hunting and hiking excursions were offered. Rates at the resort where vacationers lived in tents were on a monthly basis, with the most expensive being \$16.00 per month.

Site of the old resort is now owned by Mr. and Mrs. E. M. Bockover, who operate the Bargain Spot and the Forest Hill Pines at this location.

It is not known in what year the first game of baseball was played in Placer County, but it is safe to say the first game was played in Auburn prior to 1870. The old Placer Herald of Oct. 2, 1875, contained a brief account of a game between Auburn and Colfax (first nines) resulting in a victory for Auburn 52 to 16.

Later that same month the two teams

met again, this time Colfax winning, 44 to 37. The reason for the high scores is also unknown; obviously there was a lot of hitting.

In 1891 the Auburn club was known as the Golden Crowns, and played such teams as Foresthill.

In the early days the fans bet heavily on games. One umpire recalled a game between Foresthill and Michigan Bluff in which he held bets amounting to \$2500. "It was a wild game, with a saloon in the brush, with men on horseback insisting on riding onto the diamond."

Among the teams that had baseball in the 80's and early 90's were Iowa Hill, Foresthill and Michigan Bluff. The teams travelled in those days in horse drawn vehicles that took a good part of the day, but the slow mode of transportation never bothered them. One player from Iowa Hill, Bill James, went up to the majors and pitched for Boston in the World Series.

Letters continued from page 5

Not to demean the intellectual capacity of the authors, but 1 or 2 of the previous letters to the editor strongly resembled the penmanship of Mr. Doug Ryan, the man (for lack of better terms) behind Forest Ranch.

Just keep in mind, not all of the one-sided rhetoric you read in the

newspaper is true (what happened to fair and balanced journalism anyway?).

I encourage you to stop and do a little homework on your own. Ask a few questions and embrace a little understanding. Or better yet, consider the alternative. What will happen if I sign that little ballot thing in the paper (which btw was NOT a requirement of the PUD as stated incorrectly in the messenger...but that's a WHOLE dif-

ferent subject).

If this rate increase fails, we will all be sorry. If it really hurts your budget that bad, maybe you should have thought twice before you paid \$200 to upgrade your phone to the newest and greatest device with an extra \$30/mo. data plan...which is more important in the long run?

This is all just "As I see it."
Tiffani Larsen

The Saga continued from page 1

In the end I am sure that there will be wailing and gnashing of teeth about the rate increase after the fact and many will complain that they were not informed in a timely manner.

So what is the conclusion?

If you figure it out, please let me know.

BY THE WAY THERE IS A REGULAR FPUD BOARD MEETING ON WEDNESDAY, JULY 14TH AT 7PM AT THE FPUD OFFICE ON MAIN STREET.

THERE IS ANOTHER PUBLIC MEETING ON THURSDAY, JULY 15TH AT 7PM AT THE MEMORIAL HALL ON HARRISON STREET IN FORESTHILL.

<p style="text-align: center;">NEED A KITTEN? WE HAVE TWO REALLY CUTE ONES THAT NEED A GOOD HOME! ONE MALE, ONE FEMALE 367-3414</p>
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