

THE FOOTHILL INQUIRER

THE VOICE OF THE PEOPLE

fhinquirer@ftcnet.net

Monday January 25, 2010

Volume 3, Issue 2

Fathoming Foresthill

By Roy West

The Board of Directors for the Foresthill Public Utility District has some tough choices to make for the fiscal health of the district.

At the January 13th regular board meeting, Robert Johnson, the district's accountant/auditor gave his observations on the district's operations and also some recommendations for future action.

Mr. Johnson told the board that basically the district has lost approximately \$750,000.00 over the last three years, bringing the district cash reserves down from 1.77 million to around 563 thousand dollars in that time. This, he explained is a real problem when the age of the system components is taken into consideration. Many of the pipes

in the ground and other infrastructure have been in the system for over fifty years and some are past their expected life span.

This point was driven home later in the meeting by Kurt Reed when he showed a section of pipe that had been cut out near director Brett Grant's home for a leak repair. The four foot section of iron pipe had several holes due to rust and Kurt said that there is a lot of this pipe in the ground in various areas of the district and while some is in surprisingly good shape due to having a tar coating, much of it is notorious for leaks.

He also showed a "service saddle" (photo at right) taken from a leak on a Birchwood Drive water connection that was estimated to have been installed around

1973 that had failed due to the corro-



**Old service connector from
Todd's Valley**

sion of the iron clamp ring.

Mr. Johnson's recommendation was that the district should be funding the depreciation of the existing system; in other words, set money aside each

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February Forum Agenda

The agenda for the February Foresthill Forum includes two action items that the Forum will be asked to make recommendations on.

Both are zoning changes that the County is considering. The first is referred to as "Emergency Shelters, Transitional and Supportive Housing" and is a proposed revision to the Placer County Zoning Ordinance to bring the ordinance into compliance with State housing law for emergency shelters, transitional and supportive housing.

Crystal Jacobsen, Senior Planner of Placer County Planning Department will give a presentation describing "...amendments that will establish definitions for Emergency Shelters", etc "...and identify appropriate zoning designations where these uses will be al-

lowed".

The Forum members have been provided with a total of 52 pages of background information to read before the February first meeting.

The second zoning item concerns a revision to the Fowl and Poultry section of the Zoning Ordinance to allow for the keeping of up to three hens in the RS zone district. The proposed wording is as follows: "In the Residential Single-Family (RS) and Residential Multi-Family (RM) zone districts, the keeping of no more than three (3) chicken hens is permitted, subject to the approval of an Administrative Review Permit."

There are other details of both of these ordinance revisions that will be presented at the February first meeting at the Memorial Hall.

At the January Forum meeting, a special sub-committee was created to plan a "Re-lighting event" for the newly installed lights at the ball field at the corner of Harrison and Church Streets. At the upcoming February Forum meeting the committee will give an update on the progress of planning the event. The committee is in charge of recruiting community members to assist in planning events, providing food and refreshments, choosing the date for the celebration and other details.

If you are interested in getting involved in the planning of this event or commenting on the zoning changes please attend the next Forum meeting at 7:pm at the Memorial Hall on February first.

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 published twice a month. On the second and fourth Monday of the month. The FhI can be procured at our newsstands outside of the Foresthill Post Office, Worton's Grocery store and next to the Library, or by contacting us at our email address and requesting that you be placed on our email loop.
 If you would like to place an advertisement the priced is \$12.00 for two issues or one months worth of advertising.
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 If you have a community

Meeting	Date	Time	Place
Foresthill MAC/Forum	Monday February 1	7:00 to 9:00 p.m.	Foresthill Veterans Memorial Hall 24601 Harrison St. Foresthill
Foresthill Fire Protection District Board meeting	Tuesday February 2	7:00 p.m.	Foresthill Fire District office 24320 Main St. Foresthill
FPUD Board meeting	Wednesday February 10	7:00 p.m.	FPUD District office 24540 Main St. Foresthill
Foresthill Fire Safe Council	Tuesday February 16	5:30 p.m.	Foresthill Fire District office 24320 Main St. Foresthill
WAC MAC	Wednesday February 17	6:00 p.m.	Colfax Memorial Hall, 22 Sunset Circle, Colfax
North Auburn MAC	Tuesday February 9	7:00 p.m.	Planning Commission Chambers, 3091 County Center Dr. Auburn
Meadow Vista MAC	Wednesday February 3	7:00 p.m.	Placer Hills School 16801 Placer Hills Rd. Meadow Vista
West Placer MAC	Thursday February 11	7:00 p.m.	Dry Creek Elementry School 2955 PFE Rd.
Planning Commission	Thursday February 11 and 25	10:00 a.m.	Planning Commission Chambers 3091 County Center Dr. Auburn

A LITTLE HISTORY

Yorkville, Todd's Valley, Stony Bar, Horse-shoe Bar and Bird's Valley

Re-printed from Placer County Directory of 1861

The village of Yorkville is situated on a narrow ridge running down between First and Second Brushy Canons, about one mile and a half northeast of Yankee Jim's. At this place there are both tunnel and hydraulic diggings, some of which are very rich and have yielded immense sums of gold. The place has an average voting population of about ninety. The diggings were first discovered in 1853, by Ben. Moss, Frank Emmens and Henry Ewer, who sunk a shaft from the surface to the bed-rock on top of the ridge just below where the village now stands. The hill has been pierced by a large number of tunnels, some of which run entirely through it from one canon to the other. The business houses, at the present time, consist of one store, one billiard saloon and a boarding-house, each of which is doing a good business. There have been a large number of tunnels run into the hills at this place, some of which cost as high as thirty thousand dollars.

Attempts have been made by large capitalists to penetrate the rich deposits in the Forest Hill Divide, by tunnels run through the bed rock from the Brushy Canon side of the ridge, but up to this time, although tunnels have been run a great way into the hill, at a very great expense, none of them have ever reached the main gravel deposits supposed to exist in the center of the hill. A great many, however, have obtained good paying dirt upon the rim rock, and although they failed in the main object of their enterprises, lost nothing by their investments. Some companies even yet, after six years of constant labor in running these tunnels, do not despair of yet reaching the "main lead," and at once becoming million-

aires.

Todd's Valley

Todd's Valley was first settled by Dr. Todd, who built a log house for a store and hotel, on the site of his present residence, at his ranch in the lower suburbs of the town, in June, 1849. The location at that time was the most eligible one to be found north of the Middle Fork of the American, and was the proper distance from the river to catch all the travel from the old diggings in El Dorado county to the new placers at Stony Bar, Horse-shoe Bar and Rester's Bar. The doctor also built a corral near his house in which to drive horses when he desired to catch them for his own or his customers' use, and took horses to ranch at the moderate sum of five dollars per week, cash; the owners to run all risks and hunt up their stock, themselves, when they desired to use them. The stand as a ranch and trading post was valuable, and perhaps could have been sold in the fall of '49, or spring of '50, for \$10,000, or \$15,000.

Although Todd's ranch was much resorted to by miners from the river and gulches adjacent to it, for the purpose of purchasing their supplies, and obtaining their letters and papers upon each arrival from the "city" of the , yet the town of Todd's Valley did not commence to grow up until 1852, after the discovery of rich diggings in the "flat," at the head of the little stream upon which the Doctor's house was situated. The discovery of these mines drew the attention of miners and traders to the place and a town was laid off on the ridge, midway between, and at a convenient distance

from the "flat," and "Poker Hill." The mines were rich, and although Yankee Jim's, the nearest town and rival of Todd's Valley, was *the* place of the Divide, yet it flourished until eventually it became the most populous town of the two. In the early part of the fall of 1859, a fire broke out in the town which destroyed the whole of the business part of the place except the provision and grocery stores of A.A. Pond & Co., and Reed & Benedict, which, being fire-proof, escaped damage by the conflagration. The property destroyed was estimated to be worth nearly two hundred thousand dollars. After the fire, the town was again re-built, and soon presented a better appearance than before the conflagration. There are now in the place twenty-five business houses of all kinds, among which are two hotels, three grocery and provision stores, several dry goods and clothing establishments, one banking office, one livery stable, three variety stores, two butcher shops, one brewery, etc., etc. Since the fire in 1859, the town has been gradually improving in appearance and increasing in population. There are in the place a Masonic Lodge, an Odd Fellows' Lodge, and two Temperance orders, all of which are in a flourishing condition and constantly increasing in membership. The mining here is both tunnelling and hydraulic mining, and both methods prove remunerative to those who own claims. Some of the richest mines upon the Forest Hill Divide are located near this place, and the trade of the miners is divided between the two towns.

See Yorkville page 6

The Editor's view

Your Future ?

Recieved in an e-mail

You're sound asleep when you hear a thump outside your bedroom door. Half-awake, and nearly paralyzed with fear, you hear muffled whispers.

At least two people have broken into your house and are moving your way. With your heart pumping, you reach down beside your bed and pick up your shotgun. You rack a shell into the chamber, then inch toward the door and open it. In the darkness, you make out two shadows. One holds something that looks like a crowbar. When the intruder brandishes it as if to strike, you raise the shotgun and fire. The blast knocks both thugs to the floor. One writhes and screams while the second man crawls to the front door and lurches outside. As you pick up the telephone to call the police, you know your're in trouble. In your country, most guns were outlawed years before, and the few that

are privately owned are so stringently regulated as to make them useless.

Yours was never registered. Police arrive and inform you that the second burglar has died. They arrest you for First Degree Murder and Illegal Possession of a Firearm. When you talk to your attorney, he tells you not to worry: authorities will probably plea the case down to manslaughter. "What kind of sentence will I get?" you ask. "Only ten-to-twelve years," he replies, as if that's nothing. "Behave yourself, and you'll be out in seven." The next day, the shooting is the lead story in the local newspaper. Somehow, you're portrayed as an eccentric vigilante while the two men you shot are represented as choir-boys. Their friends and relatives can't find an unkind word to say about them. Buried deep in the article, authorities acknowledge that both "victims" have been arrested numerous times. But the next day's headline says it all: "Lovable Rogue Son Didn't Deserve to Die." The thieves have been transformed from career criminals into Robin Hood-type pranksters. As the days wear on, the story takes wings. The national media picks it up, then the international media. The surviving burglar has become a

folk hero. Your attorney says the thief is preparing to sue you, and he'll probably win. The media publishes reports that your home has been burglarized several times in the past and that you've been critical of local police for their lack of effort in apprehending the suspects. After the last break-in, you told your neighbor that you would be prepared next time. The District Attorney uses this to allege that you were lying in wait for the burglars. A few months later, you go to trial. The charges haven't been reduced, as your lawyer had so confidently predicted. When you take the stand, you anger at the injustice of it all works against you. Prosecutors paint a picture of you as a mean, vengeful man. It doesn't take long for the jury to convict you of all charges. The judge sentences you to life in prison.

This case really happened.


On August 22, 1999, Tony Martin of Emmeth, Norfolk, England, killed one burglar and wounded a second.

In April 2000, he was convicted and is now serving a life term.


How did it become a crime to defend one's own life in the once great British Empire?

The story will continue in the next issue of the Inquirer.

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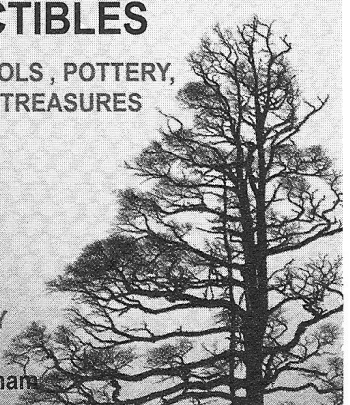
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 Pam Covell & Jeanne Cunningham



Fathoming

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month in a reserve account specifically for the replacement of aging infrastructure. This program was started in 2008 when the board agreed to create a "repair and replacement surcharge" to be added to the monthly water bill of each FPUD ratepayer; the \$3.31 surcharge was to be phased in incrementally over four years for a total of \$13.22. The first phase was implemented but the board decided in 2009 to not go ahead with the second.

Another recommendation by the auditor which has already been instituted was to make sure that steps are taken to fine-tune the tracking of expenses by requiring the match up of invoices to purchase orders.

Employee benefits is another area that he mentioned needs scrutiny; he noted that the State of California is considering a multi-tier system for ben-

efits which means that new hires would have a different benefits package than existing employees. This could in the long range save the district money.

One of the benefits that he was referring to is what he called "unfunded pensions"; retirement pensions that are ongoing expenses for the district and must be accounted for as mandatory obligations. This has been a subject of discussion at more than one board meeting in recent months.

Mr. Johnson gave examples of other districts in Northern California who found it necessary to cut staff and one general manager even gave up his health benefits and cut his work week down to four days in order to meet the budget. In fact, our own FPUD has taken similar measures by freezing employee wages in 2009.

The task before the board is the

same one as many districts, large and small are facing these days; how to operate responsibly and efficiently while trying to not burden the rate payers with too many rate increases.

Other business at the January meeting included the rotation of officers; each year the positions of Board President, Vice President and Treasurer are rotated through the directors so that each has a chance to serve in the various capacities.

Former director William Sadler was in line for the president's seat but unexpectedly resigned so that position went to Brett Grant with George Shaw taking vice president and the freshman director Adam Larson becoming treasurer.

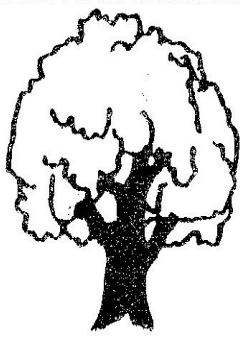
The vacant seat once held by Sadler will become an appointed position until the regular election cycle in November of this year.

More Community Updates

The Widowed Person's Association of California will hold it's monthly "Get Acquainted" dinner on Thur. February 4, at 4:30 p.m. at the Sizzler Restaurant in Auburn. Call 530-878-1728 for reservations by Tues. Feb. 2. If you are new to WPAC this is an appropriate time to meet people who are widowed.

All Widowed People are invited to attend three activities of this organization prior to joining our membership. Other activities include: card playing, luncheons, bingo, bowling, trips to Reno, coffee clatches and special activities.

For a free newsletter call 530-885-1728. For one-on-one grief support call 530-885-8298
Submitted by Ann Steinhart, 530-367-3586 Publicity Chairperson.

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Yorkville

Continued from page 3

The Dardanelles tunnel and the Big Spring tunnel are situated about midway between Todd's Valley and Forest Hill, and until the last two years Todd's Valley commanded the whole of the trade of this vastly rich section. The Independent Bedrock Claims, No. 1 and No. 2, situated at the foot of Parker Hill, are very rich hydraulic claims, and have paid their owners immense sums every year since they were opened. Some of the longest tunnels that pierce the main divide are run in here; one of them is now just completed and has been run through bed-rock a distance of 1800 feet. It is intended to drain the large flat at the back part of the town, and will open by the next year a large extent of mining ground that is known to be rich, but could not be worked to advantage for want of sufficient fall for drainage, which this tunnel was run for the purpose of supplying.

Stony Bar, Horse-shoe Bar and Bird's Valley

As the settlements at all these places were made at about the same time, and as they are but a short distance apart, we will notice them all conjointly.

Bird's Valley was first settled by a man named Bird, a packer, who built a log cabin for the purpose of storing his goods on his arrival from the city each week with his train of pack-mules. It was called Bird's Store, until the great influx of population from El Dorado in February and March, 1850, when quite a town was built up, and the name was changed to Bird's Valley. The diggings first discovered were in Dutch Gulch and Stitchner's Gulch, and a few dry ravines, which pitch off rapidly into the Middle Fork.

Below Bird's Valley about three miles are Stony Bar and Rester's Bar, on the North Fork of the Middle Fork, both of which were esteemed rich by the miners of '49 and '50. The diggings were shallow, and the greatest difficulty to contend with was the large stones which had to be removed by the miner in order to sink a hole to the bed-rock. Some of the stones were of immense weight, and as there were no blasting tools to be procured in that part of the country, and no blacksmith's forge at which to sharpen tools, they had to be removed by prying them up and rolling them out of the hole upon "skids." To obtain a few pans of earth off of the bed rock a company of a half dozen miners would often work a whole day to remove one of these stones, and yet the dirt was so rich under them that when removed the miners got well paid for the labor incurred.

Horse-shoe Bar is upon the Middle Fork of the American river, about two miles below Stony Bar, and about three miles from Bird's Valley. Here was cut the first bed-rock tunnel in the State. The work of cutting the Horse-shoe Tunnel was commenced in the month of February, by a company composed of seventeen men, under the leadership of a gentleman from Maine, named Butterfield. The company was organized at a mining camp in El Dorado county, then called "Bald Hill," and known as the Horse-shoe Bar Tunnel Company. The object of the company was to turn the water through the narrow ridge into a race leading from the mouth of the tunnel to the lower end of the bar near the mouth of Mad Canon, and thus drain the bed of the river for a distance of about one mile and a half. The company persevered in their undertaking until the first object—draining the water from the river bed—was accomplished, with the labor of the members, and at the completion of the work people had so much

confidence in the success of the enterprise, shares were sold at \$5,000 each. But the limited knowledge of the miners at that day of the science of mining, and the great disadvantages which they labored under for the want of proper tools and machinery to work with, together with the high prices of labor, caused the enterprise to fail, and the adventurous men who performed the vast labor of cutting a tunnel twelve feet wide and six feet high, through the hill, in solid slate of the hardest quality, were compelled to lose their whole year's work. In anticipation of the completion of the tunnel and the opening of the diggings in the bed of the stream to miners on the share, hundreds of them had flocked to the bar, and quite a town was built of tents, board shanties, etc. But the early rains of September of that year demolished the frail dam which had been thrown across the river when the water was low, and there being no mines open for the crowd of laborers, who had been lying around waiting for a chance to work among the boulders in the channels, where they could make their ounce per day, the camp was soon deserted and the miners scattered off the mines on the hills and in the gulches of El Dorado and Placer Counties.

The river has been worked every year since with varied success; but the prospects obtained one year were never sufficient to induce the miner of one year, whether successful or not, to "try the river again the next year." At the present time there are a large number of permanent settlers upon the different bars upon this part of the river, from the mouth of Mad Canon to Stony Bar, and the miners are making good wages the whole year round. The diggings are extensive and rich, but require considerable capital to work them properly. There are several stores along here for the sale of miners' supplies, and quite a number of excellent gardens, orchards and vineyards.