

THE FOOTHILL INQUIRER

THE VOICE OF THE PEOPLE

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Monday May 23, 2011

Volume 4, Issue 10

PUD Meeting to Pick New Board Member

By Daniel West

The Foresthill Public Utility District (FPUD) Board of Directors held a special meeting on Tuesday May 11, to choose a new Board member to fill the seat vacated by Director Cantrell.

There were three candidates for the position, Brett Finning, Duane Frink and John Northup.

The only action item on the agenda was to "Interview and select new board member."

Before beginning, President Adam Larsen told the audience that his thought was to interview the candidates in alphabetical order with the two not being interviewed waiting outside so as not to hear the other candidates answers to the board's questions.

Each candidate was asked 11 questions by the board which were: "Please explain your experience in/an/or knowledge of local government." "Why are you applying for this position?" "What do you hope to accomplish and what goals would you set for the district during your term of office?" "What do you believe the Board's primary role

should be in this community and do you believe this will/ should change and why?" "Complete this sentence; long-short term planning is ___?" "Land use planning, Growth and Development: what is your view of the district's involvement in this process?" "What are your personal and professional experiences that you feel qualify you for a position on the board of directors?" "Fiscal responsibility and accountability are important core duties; please tell us what other duties the board is responsible for." "Have you ever been convicted of a felony?" None of the candidates have ever been convicted of a felony. "Are you informed about Measure B and in your opinion is it a good or bad initiative for Foresthill? Explain your answer." "Do you have any additional questions or additional information that you would like to ask?"

In answer to why they applied for the position, the

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Foresthill the Centerpoint of New Book

Foresthill is to be the centerpoint of a new book written by local criminal defense attorney David A. Brooks. The book, "Foresthill: A Public Defender's Bedtime Reader" is a compilation of stories about people Brooks met during his 20 years as a Public Defender in Placer County.

"The stories are about the people I've met as I go about my job as a Public Defender. There are some 'real characters' in my book. Some stories are very funny, some are very sad, and throughout you'll know that these are real people and real places because you really can't make up this stuff" Brooks says. "I fictionalized everything to protect confidentiality. Many of the stories take place in the town of Foresthill. I picked Foresthill because quite a few of the stories really did happen there, because it is a town that you would never see unless you intend to go there, and because the mix of people who live there makes this town unlike any place I have ever visited."

Brooks, (who now works for El Dorado County as a public defender), originally wrote the stories for some friends who asked him to tell them a bedtime story. "I based the stories on things that happened to me at work... My sons enjoyed them, so I saved them. Over time they morphed into a collection. A manuscript found its way from a friend, to the friend's wife, to a book club, to the publisher" says Brooks.

The book is being produced entirely in the foothill area with the publisher in Folsom and the printer in Rancho Cordova. The book is currently for sale at yourbookplace.com and can be purchased by clicking on the "Foresthill" advertising banner or "Buy" and scrolling down to "Foresthill".

Right now, the book's launch is entirely grassroots. A book-specific website is planned in the near future as are some local book signing events.

Community Briefs

The Foresthill PUD 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 lecture it will be put in the 'Community briefs' section free of charge.

Meeting	Date	Time	Place
Foresthill MAC/Forum	Monday June 6	7:00 to 9:00 p.m.	Foresthill Veterans Memorial Hall 24601 Harrison St. Foresthill
Foresthill Fire Protection District Board meeting	Tuesday June 7	7:00 p.m.	Foresthill Fire District office 24320 Main St. Foresthill
FPUD Board meeting	Wednesday June 8	7:00 p.m.	FPUD District office 24540 Main St. Foresthill
North Auburn MAC	Tuesday June 14	7:00 p.m.	Planning Commission Chambers, 3091 County Center Dr. Auburn
Meadow Vista MAC	Wednesday June 1	7:00 p.m.	Placer Hills School 16801 Placer Hills Rd. Meadow Vista
West Placer MAC	Thursday June 9	7:00 p.m.	Dry Creek Elementry School 2955 PFE Rd.
Planning Commission	Thursday May 26	10:00 a.m.	Planning Commission Chambers 3091 County Center Dr. Auburn

A memorial service for the late Myrtle Bakker will be held on June 4, 2011 at Canyon View Assembly at 1:30 p.m.

Myrtle was a member of our community for the last 42 years. She was born on June 16, 1929, in Pittsfield, Mass. She moved from Massachusetts to Monterey, California in the 1940's. She married William T. "Bill" Bakker in 1953. They had one son, Scott William Bakker, born in June 1956. She later moved to Foresthill where she worked as the Court Clerk for Placer Co at the Foresthill Justice Court serving for the first female sitting judge, Frances Rains. Myrtle retired from Placer Co in the 1990's and maintained her State of California Notary License for 30 years as a service to the community.

She passed away on April 24, 2011.

A LITTLE HISTORY

Damascus

From the accumulated files of Barbara J. Van Riper

Damascus had its beginning in 1852. Dr. D. W. Strong, who was prospecting in the vicinity, discovered gold in an outbreking stratum of quartz gravel upon a point between the two branches of Humbug Canyon, near the southern, or Damascus, branch. For the first several years, until a post-office was established, it was known as Strong's diggings.

Strong and his associates dug a small ditch from a spring at the head of the canyon, which conveyed a small head of water, and began to ground sluice. The gravel at the rim was not more than two feet deep and was gold bearing from the surface to the bed-rock. Later, hydraulic apparatus was placed in position, and the ground washed off during the portion of the year when water was obtainable, and continued until too much barren overlying material was encountered.

Then, in 1854, a tunnel was begun for the purpose of drifting out the paying stratum, under the name of the Golden Gate. The tunnel was to mine the compacted gravel from one of the ancient river-beds that lay along the ridge. West of the claims of Strong & Company, was the Mountain Tunnel Company, also having begun a tunnel. The two tunnel companies became involved in boundary, drainage, and priorities disputes. They settled their differences in 1863 and consolidated under the name of "Mountain Gate Mining Company," with twenty-one shares, representing an ownership of that number of persons.

The first tunnel was found to be sixty-five feet too high to profitably work the gravel which it encountered when the tunnel reached a length of 300 feet. A second tunnel was driven and it reached the gravel in a distance of 800 feet.

Much of the quartz gravel of the "white-channel" was worked through the second tunnel; but eventually it, too, had to be abandoned.

A third tunnel was dug and at 7,000 feet it met a chocolate-colored cement with no paying gravel. A shaft was sunk thirty-eight feet deep which encountered rich gravel but not of the "white channel". The stratum was called the "black channel" and it was eighty feet lower than the "white channel". The new tunnel was dug at an incline and was used to drain the water as well to move the ore by horses in ore-cars on a track. The ore was moved almost one and quarter miles to a large dumping receptacle at the head of the sluices. There it was washed with water flowing from the tunnel. In 1882, the ore was yielding an average of one-quarter ounce of gold to the car-load of gravel.

The Mountain Gate Mine extended 9,600 feet to the East, 10,000 feet to the West, 5,500 feet to the North and 5,500 feet to the South where it met the tunnel from the Hidden Treasure Mine. Between 1860 and 1882, it produced over \$1,000,000. The owners in 1880 were: John H. Thomas, Tunis C. Broom, John B. Parker, A.S. Campbell, Christopher Elliott, Owen Jones, Robert J. Thomas, J.P. Rains, William Rowlands, William Brown, Jr., G.W. Snyder, J.F. Moody, J.T. Ashley, Albert Burgess, Mrs. J.N. Lombard, R.R. Abrams, Nicholas Weaver, William Broom Sr., and Mrs. Jane Weaver.

Damascus is situated on a steep hill-side overlooking the junction of Blue Canyon with the North Fork of the American River, the gorge of Humbug Canyon and a stretch of the Southern Pacific Railroad on the ridge to the North of the American River. There were many houses with gardens and orchards, a school house with up to twenty-five students, a large hotel and a store owned by Owen Jones.

The Damascus School District was organized November 8, 1867, with J.T. Ashley, M.H. Power and N. Lombard as Trustees. Miss Claudine Rounder taught the first school in a miner's cabin, with twelve pupils in attendance. School was maintained several years by rate-bills and a little public money. The school house was small, and plainly furnished with seats of home manufacture. It had a small library. The District clerk was F.E. Cameron and J.P. Darwin was the teacher in 1881 with twenty-seven students enrolled: 16 boys and 11 girls.

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PUD

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candidates said: Brett, “I’ve lived in the community for 20 years...I’m interested in the community and want to do what I can to help it be a successful place to be. It seems like the water agency is currently where the focus of attention is and where it seems like I might have some skills that could be helpful, so when the opening became available I decided to throw my name in the hat.”

Duane, “I think that this is probably the most important local government entity here on the Foresthill Divide. I worked on several committees and on several projects while I was a director and I would like to have the opportunity to continue seeing some additional items come to fruition.”

John, “Because I have attended a few of the meetings in the past several months, it seems to me that there is some unique needs and problems and issues the the board and district has to deal with that my particular background, my skills and abilities and experience as an accountant, lend themselves well to helping resolve those needs. I think that accounting issues are at the crux of at least three different issues and problems that the board is dealing with and I just think that it really makes sense for an accountant to be represented on the board in helping everybody understand the nuances of decisions that have to be made and it seems that the Government Accounting Standards Board [GASB] is forcing rules on us that are directly affecting the pocket-books of a lot of people in the community and I’m just not convinced that is has to be. So I’d like to have a first-hand opportunity to...see if just an accounting rule has to translate into hard dollars and cents that come out of the ratepayers pockets.”

On whether or not they think Measure B is a good idea, they replied: Brett, “I believe I’m fairly well-informed about Measure B, the measure to roll back water rates to what they were prior to the last increase. I understand where the anger and frustration that generated the measure came from...I have made it a point to find out a little more about the finances of the district and as far as I’ve been able to tell thus far Measure B would be a disaster if it was approved, the board needs additional funding to meet the obligations and duties it is charged with.”

Duane, “I am familiar with Measure B and I have read the Board’s position on Measure B and I think that Measure B is not a very good idea. It would be bad for our community if it were successful in passing. It would make this district relatively insolvent and it would undo the work of previous boards for many years.”

John, “My understanding of Measure B is that it provides the Board with an alternative and a simpler way of changing rates or increasing rates by modifying the Prop. 218 procedure and if rates in fact have to increase then annual or however frequently the board needs to do rate increases is to be done in a way that doesn’t deplete the efforts that the staff have to put out for the costs the board has to incur in publicizing and convincing the ratepayers that the rate increase is necessary. So I think the Measure B that attaches rate increases to the CPI as one solution to providing rate increases is a good thing.”

It was interesting to note that John Northup was the only candidate to have a copy of the questions beforehand.

After all the candidates had been interviewed, the board took a short break before choosing a new board member.

After coming back from the break, the board voted by secret ballot for the candidates they thought should be on the board. The vote was a tie, with Adam Larsen and Brett Grant voting for Brett Finning and Bill Angerer and Brad Reeves voting for John Northup.

Because the board was split 2 to 2 on the vote, the issue will now be sent to the Placer County Board of Supervisors who will review the three candidates and choose the new board member.

VOTE NO
ON MEASURE B!

Please Visit www.measureb.net

Paid for by Committee Against
 Measure B

Foresthill Police and Fire Reports

Fire Study Foresthill Divide Community Plan Area

Press Release by the Foresthill Fire Department

On Monday June 6, 2011, at 6:00 p.m. at the Foresthill Veterans Memorial Hall, 24601 Harrison St., Foresthill, the Foresthill Fire Department in conjunction with Anchor Point Group, will be holding a public meeting to gather input on the fire study being performed by Anchor Point.

Please join us before the Foresthill Forum for the last chance to discuss a fire study of the Foresthill Divide Community Plan (FDCP) area. The study has been considering the impacts of the most likely fire scenarios that could affect the FDCP area and evaluate the probable efficacy of existing emergency and evacuation plans. This plan is being prepared under the terms of a Settlement Agreement between several Foresthill non-profit citizens' groups and Placer County.

The meeting is an opportunity for the public and stakeholders alike to provide input before the study is finalized. County, Federal and State partners will be present and can

discuss existing or planned risk reduction measures and provide information on what individuals can do. Anchor Point Group, LLC from Boulder, Colorado, a fire behavior and fire management consulting firm, is completing the study and needs final public and stakeholder assistance to ensure all major concerns have been considered. Again, this is the final chance to preview the draft study and present your concerns and issues.

For more information, please contact:

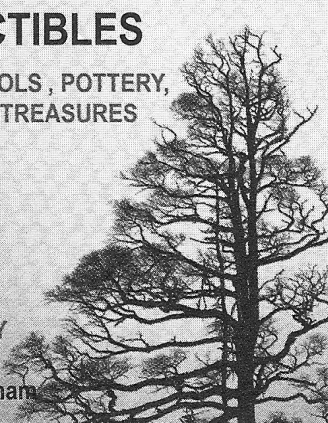


Richard Simmons, Placer County Office of Emergency Services, at rsimmons@placer.ca.gov or 530-886-5306 for administrative questions, issues and concerns; or Rod Moraga, Anchor Point Group LLC, at rmoraga@anchorpointgroup.com 303-665-3473 for details of the Study content, methodology, agency and individual qualifications, etc.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Hello Rod, I was given your name and address by Sherry Wicks of FROG when I contacted her after missing the March meeting held here in Foresthill on progress of the fire study which your company is undertaking by contract with Placer County. I recently was able to obtain the DVD of that meeting and have some concerns which I would like to address.

While I realize you don't need a recitation from me of the Settlement Agreement ("Agreement") between FROG, etc.

and Placer County, it states that a study shall "analyze various likely fire scenarios that might affect the existing population and the population projected under FDCP, to evaluate existing evacuation planning and its effectiveness for existing and potential future population...." From viewing the DVD, I can certainly see that you are fulfilling a portion of this Agreement in analyzing likely flashpoints along the Foresthill Divide and their potential effects on the local habitat and structures. See Letters Page 6

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Damascus

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The total expenditures in 1881 was \$371 to operate the school.

A post office was established November 15, 1856 with thomas Moreland as the first Postmaster. It was discontinued May 17, 1860, and mail for Damascus was sent to the Forks House from July 25, 1861 to March 23, 1867. Mail service was resumed in the area when a post office was established at Bullion and it operated from June 21, 1888 to January 15, 1908.

The town supported a band called the Damascus Brass Band. One of the members was Leopold Richard Dorer. It also had a baseball team.

The population in 1880 was 71, most of whom worked in

mining operations. The voting register for 1922 shows eight votes — six Republicans, one Democrat and one who declined to state.

A forest fire in the early 1920's entirely destroyed what remained of the town.

The road to Damascus has now disappeared under the growth of pine trees, buck brush and other vegetation. The road began at the site called "The Sheep Ranch" just beyond the locked gate on the road to Humbug Canyon and the Pioneer Mine.

When last visited by Jeep in the 1960's, no trace of Damascus remained except for a few boards, some unidentifiable metal scraps and a couple of apple trees.

LETTERS CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

What I don't see, and it concerns me greatly, is any analysis of the human evacuation plans as stipulated in the Agreement.

In the meeting, it was stated that your contract does not encompass that aspect of the Agreement. Further, it was stated that in your experience, very few people have ever taken advantage of evacuation centers when they are provided. My question to you on that issue is to wonder if any of the scenarios you are referring to have had a population that could conceivably be held in place without ability to get completely out of the area. Of course, I'm referring here to the stated policy of evacuation in place. As has been acknowledged by your company, there is really only one road out of here, and if that road has to be used for fire and other emergency vehicles, or if the road has fire on either or both sides, where do people go? Several years ago, in the Ralston fire, the largest evacuation site identified here on the Divide was the old mill site (Carpenter's Place). It was almost exclusively used as a staging area and housing center for fire and emergency personnel, as it needs to be.

Not to denigrate what your study is accomplishing, but shouldn't our local fire officials have identified those areas of the most potential for major damage years ago? I'm sure that you have provided much greater detail on the spread of fires in these areas and that is very helpful, crucial information. However, some of us in this community have been trying for years to get an answer to a question that perhaps has no answer, namely, what about us? I understand that anyone choosing to live in a forested such as this does accept a different and higher degree of risk

(perhaps unconsciously) than living in a more populated city. This "people" question was asked at least twice at the meeting and essentially given a pass.

It becomes more urgent with the possibility of a huge housing project being promoted by some investors who own a large tract of land here. Their project would almost double the population on this Divide. While the project is a long way from getting County approval, the potential is there. I certainly don't expect you to get involved with the controversy surrounding this development, but significant increases in population will only exacerbate the seriousness of the evacuation issue.

When the FDCP was finally approved after years of debate, the segment of that plan that addresses fire concerns was, in my view, sadly lacking in any degree of specificity and direction. It used words like the County shall "encourage" or "shall work with" local fire officials. With typical bureaucratic obfuscation, this means essentially nothing. I will not attempt to place blame for this to any one particular party, since I wasn't privy to all the discussions concerning the language; however, I feel it is a necessity to put some "teeth" into these parts of the plan as it is of vital concern to the public health and safety, an area that many local officials have been charged with and need to pay more attention to.

Perhaps my concerns more correctly should be addressed to local County and fire officials, but since you have been contracted to perform various studies stated in the aforementioned Agreement, I thought it might be appropriate to bring my concerns to you as well.

Thanks for taking the time to read my letter.

Sincerely, Ron Flodine