

Chapter 12

COMPLETING THE SHORT TERM

We had to deal with the press setting their own agenda. We never knew what it was until we got a call something like, “Do you know that you pay your staff extremely well compared to other cities, and would you like to add your comments to those of the other council members?”

Lawyers are not allowed to conduct themselves in court as journalists do over the phone. The reporters were trained well in questioning at California State University Northridge, the school from which the local press recruits many of its staff members. Nonetheless, many of the new ones had little knowledge of government, which meant that often they did not know what questions to ask.

Some reporters were better than others. Some knew their subject and others were willing to take the time to learn. I welcomed conversations with either type. I dreaded talking to reporters I did not know because I did not have any idea how good they could be. I disliked intensely talking to those who did not know much but were convinced they did.

Yes, we did pay our staff well, and Tom Mallory of *The Daily News* covered that topic on October 1, 1989. It was a topic upon which I did not like to comment. Readers who had good jobs would marvel at how a public administrator would take on a tremendous amount of responsibility for relatively low pay, but say nothing publicly. Lower income people who read the newspapers would look at a department head’s salary and ask, sometimes in a nasty letter to the editor, why he got paid three times what they were making.

Council members who commented on salaries could damage staff morale, or create wedges within the council. I did not know Tom Mallory, but when he called I had to answer his questions because I knew he had a lot more ink than I did. Fortunately all the members of our council were well versed on the issue, and Tom Mallory was probably not trying to cause trouble. We explained, as Jan Heidt said, “We have to be competitive to get the best people out there.”

Dennis Koontz said, “If you want the best, you have to pay for the best.”

“We were able to hire a man [as city manager] who’s now the president of the state city managers association and who has a very strong background,” I volunteered. “The formula was to average it out and add 10 percent because we felt that would attract experienced people with really good background.”

“We had to figure in a little bit more for the cost-of-living factor,” added Jo Anne Darcy.

Our openness was rewarded with Mallory’s comment, “Santa Clarita officials provided salary figures for their seven top posts upon request but other municipalities were reluctant to provide the figures. The salaries paid to Thousand Oaks’ top officials were released only through a state public records act request and those in Oxnard could be obtained only through a study of city budget documents.

“Santa Clarita City Council members said they considered city salaries a matter of public record that could not be withheld.”

Santa Clarita, with a statutorily computed population of 147,228 (three times the number of registered voters on the day of the incorporation election), but an actual population of perhaps 110,000, paid her city manager \$99,750. This compared to the \$109,500 paid to Grant Brimhall by the City of Thousand Oaks, population 101,500. Brimhall was effective and well liked. The city library has been named after him. However, he did not have to organize the government of “the largest newly incorporated city in the history of humankind,” as Los Angeles County Chief Administrative Officer Richard Dixon had labeled us. Our manager had to do exactly that.¹

We were convinced that we had to offer the best service if we were going to get the developers to work with us, annex to the city, and accept restrictions more onerous than those imposed by the county. Ken Pulskamp commented to me years later on this spirit of competitiveness in giving the best service. He and George Carvalho were struggling to catch up during the early months of cityhood. City hall was still in the storefront on Soledad Canyon Road and we were short staffed. This meant long hours for the city manager, Carvalho, and his assistant, Pulskamp. About 6:00 p.m. a developer seeking a plan check knocked on the locked front door. He was admitted and got his plans checked. Then Carvalho and Pulskamp had to find the city stamp in Donna Grindey’s desk, assemble it and stamp the documents. When the developer asked who the staffers were, and Carvalho and Pulskamp introduced themselves, the developer commented, “Your city is less than a year old and you are giving the best service.”

In the early years I had no doubt that every employee was delivering his best, all the time. Cindy Cameron was our receptionist. Sometimes people would call and berate her in the rudest terms, but she was always professional. One day I came through the door and asked her how things were going. She flashed me a big smile and said, “It’s one of those days where if I did not know better, I’d want to go home and beat my kids.” I loved seeing Cindy’s smile first thing when I came to city hall each afternoon after teaching. However, I understood what she was saying. She was an easy target of angry people, and, but for the councilmembers, she was the lowest paid.

Sometimes people had every reason to be angry, but did not know how to direct their anger. In late October 1989 a fourteen-year-old ninth grader, Jill Hartman, was killed while trying to cross Whites Canyon Road. A speeding car coming down the hill hit her. Staff, led by Public Works Director John Medina and traffic engineer Ed Cline, resisted demands for a traffic light at the intersection. They explained that lights could create worse danger, for when they were used to control speed people often ran them. Pedestrians do not realize that traffic lights and white lines cannot protect them from fast moving vehicles. I supported staff, calling for a traffic study (which was already underway), but due to public pressure the light was eventually installed.²

The ballot issue for a Mello-Roos tax to provide the money to build roads suffered a horrible defeat, with about 85% of the voters against it in the November election. I was willing to live with slower fixes, knowing it would take years to get the money to build the roads we needed. However, the size of the defeat indicated that aside from the measure being far from perfect, many were simply not willing to pay more taxes to solve a major problem.

In one area we had a staff problem. Kyle Kollar, our first Community Development Director, was with us a relatively short time when he got a fine job offer from Kaufman and Broad and went back to the Antelope Valley. Then we hired Mark Scott, who had been in charge of the planning department in Beverly Hills for four years, and took a pay cut to come to us because of the challenge. However, he was soon hired back by Beverly Hills, who decided he should be their new city manager. Finally it was decided to give the job to Ken Pulskamp in addition to his job as assistant city manager.

With the city election months away the press began to make it an issue in December. The incumbents got calls asking if we would run for reelection. We said we would. Ken Dean and Andrew Martin, candidates in 1987, said they would run again in 1990. Michael Carrozzo, a law student at Loyola Marymount who had graduated from Saugus High School in 1984, attended a city council meeting and said, "I really saw some naivete on their part. It seemed like they were looking at everything as kind of a second class kind of city." He talked like a candidate until he was told he was not qualified to run. He did not live in the city.

Andy Martin said, "It's terrible the games they're playing. What they're trying to do now is decide on the price that they'll sell out to." Not only did he alienate the council, but he alienated the seniors when asked about the age factor. At sixty-five he said, "A lot of people are senile at 65, it won't be an advantage." Karen Jenkins Holt raised the issue of Jo Anne Darcy's employment by the county as an aide to Supervisor Antonovich. Based on her performance I did not think it was an issue.

Jill Klajic said she might run. "My bluntness is rather intimidating. They don't know how to handle someone's [*sic*] who is that honest."

I was thinking about people like Jill when I characterized myself. "People know I'm a thinking person, who knows generally what I'm talking about and doesn't go off half-cocked." After all, no one else was going to say it.²

The fall travel season was arduous. The annual meeting of the League of California Cities was postponed for a month because of the Loma Prieto earthquake. Then came the National League of Cities conference in Atlanta the weekend before Thanksgiving. Thanksgiving weekend Jo Anne Darcy and I had to go to Florida. These conferences were indeed fun for a few council members from some cities. However, most of us started work at about 7:00 a.m. and did not quit until 8:00 p.m. or later, and then fell into bed exhausted. We met at breakfast to discuss issues, attended classes, heard state and national leaders at lunch and dinner, and participated in committee meetings.

When Newhall Land came to us with plans for the mall we found it difficult to figure out kind of quality they had in mind. They offered to pay our way to Florida to look at malls their designer had developed. This would not work. The taxpayers would pay our way because we represented them. It seemed an easy thing to do to piggyback a trip to Florida on the conference in Atlanta. We had to stay over Saturday night to get the cheapest airfare, so we would finish the conference Saturday afternoon, fly to West Palm Beach that evening, fly to Atlanta Sunday afternoon and then home on a cheap ticket.

We did not anticipate the fact that adding on a quick trip to Florida would cost \$600, while a trip the next weekend from California would cost \$357! So we flew to West Palm Beach on Saturday, stayed overnight, toured three malls on the Atlantic Coast, and flew home Sunday evening from Fort Lauderdale. It was no fun, but for a total cost of \$1100 we could make an intelligent recommendation to the council on a \$150 million project.

A big issue was how many dumps would be added to those already in the Santa Clarita Valley. Dumps had been proposed for Elsmere and Towsley canyons. Elsmere is the subject of another chapter. Towsley was an issue that did not take as much effort. Very early in the game Buck McKeon, George Carvalho and I were invited to a meeting in Los Angeles City Hall to discuss the dump issue. Carl Newton had advised us to negotiate. The longer we negotiated the more we would find out. We were supposed to play our cards close to the chest.

Buck and George were coming to the meeting together, but I had to drive from San Fernando High School, so I went by myself. I got there first, and Buck and George were late. The meeting, attended by a bunch of bigwigs including John Ferraro, the President of the Los Angeles City Council, seemed designed to intimidate us. We introduced ourselves. I felt very alone.

“Let’s talk about Towsley Canyon first,” I said. “We fought that war before, and we won. We’re not going to fight it gain.” I spoke slowly, looking around the room at each person, straight in the eye, to let them know that I was really serious. “If you try to build a dump in Towsley it will be over my dead body. Now let’s talk about Elsmere.” Buck and George arrived, and Towsley was off the table, although it was mentioned later by the occasional bureaucrat.

I had not been bluffing. The people of our valley had killed an effort to put a dump in Towsley Canyon before incorporation. It had taken a tremendous effort. My own interest in Towsley was responsible for a large amount of effort on my part to get the canyon bought by some government as park land, and effort which began in 1969, the same year I had begun to think about incorporation. Jan Hinkston and others in the Chatsworth and Simi Valley areas had put perhaps one hundred times more effort into the park effort than I had. We had a vision of that canyon and the hills to the west and south of it being part of a huge buffer between Los Angeles and Santa Clarita.

Laurene Weste had put many hours into working the system. As a parks commissioner she would not be beaten down. She prepped me and dragged me

to meetings. On December 9, 1989, State Senator Ed Davis was able to announce that the public owned Towsley Canyon as the first increment in the Santa Clarita Woodlands State Park. It killed the dump proposal for Towsley once and for all. While there was still room for trash, Senator Davis had bought the access, joking that the County of Los Angeles could bring in trash “by Huey helicopter” if they wanted to.³

The Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy and the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority had been willing conspirators. Joseph T. Edmiston, the executive director of the Conservancy, had really helped to make it happen. Joe said, “The Conservancy acquires land from cooperative and willing land owners for parks.” He went on to say that dumps were not his business, but that he was aware that the grant deed contained a restriction prohibiting the use of park roads for dump access.

Don Mullally, a biologist who inspired many to get involved, and had done much to take public officials on hikes in the area, said, “This is about as rewarding a day a person can have in a lifetime.” Mary Edwards, a Granada Hills activist opposed to dumps, was very happy. Kathleen G. Ungar had coordinated the local effort in obtaining signatures for a park bond initiative, and got to see the fruits of her labors begin to grow. George Carvalho had moved money around to make the deal happen, and was just as happy. The entire council had been behind his efforts. I wound up getting a lot of the credit from the press. The *Daily News* ran my picture on January 13 with the caption, “Battled 20 years for park.” I never battled for anything even if I was willing to take up arms in defense of Towsley. I did write a lot of letters over the years, but that was work, not fighting. I am still amused at the politicians who claim they fight for the people.

Meanwhile, the political season was upon us. On December 11 the *Daily News* ran a story that Shari Solimini and Debra Hinkle had filed their intentions to run for the council, along with Dennis Koontz and me. Filing early was a part of campaign strategy, for it might discourage serious opposition. Jo Anne Darcy announced she would file in January. Dennis had filed already with the Fair Political Practices Commission in Sacramento so he could receive campaign contributions. It was obvious this was going to be a more complicated campaign than that of 1987, when I had raised somewhat over a thousand dollars and my next door neighbor, Al Madrid, had been my campaign treasurer. By the end of the month the anti-Proposition P committee, SMRT, which helped defeat the road tax in November, was talking about back a slate against the incumbents, but began squabbling among themselves. Brian Drygas had started posturing before he had the support of his committee members.⁴

Vandalism, spray paints, curfew and noise became issues. I said nothing about the curfew issue. I felt the rest of the council would have to figure out the need for that, and would in good time. I had strong personal feelings about noise, but waited until I began getting complaints from others before asking the city attorney to draw up an ordinance.

We reorganized the council the week of our second birthday with Jo Anne Darcy sworn in as the new mayor, and I as mayor pro-tem. So far the rotation idea was working well. Jan Heidt, speaking as outgoing mayor, mentioned the construction of Canyon Country Park as a major achievement for the year. The county had talked about it for ten years, and we had the park almost finished in two. Jo Anne cited traffic congestion and school overcrowding as top issues, as they were ten years later. Neighborhood groups opposed every effort to relieve congestion, and it took the council a long time to develop the political will to solve the problem in the face of strong objections. As for the lack of enough schools, the city was more than willing to cooperate with the districts and require real contributions from developers towards building new schools. For once we even had the state supreme court behind us as a result of the *Mira* decision, but eventually the legislature changed the law, required local contributions of bond money, and placed caps on what the developers could be required to contribute.⁵

At the same time the acquisition of land for a permanent city hall was a topic of public conversation. Many felt this was a waste of the taxpayers' money, but did not stop to think about why the majority of people in Santa Clarita owned their own homes. It was simply cheaper to buy than it was to rent. Our problem was that we did not have roughly \$20 million to buy the Saugus Rehabilitation Center from the City of Los Angeles. The Castaic Lake Water Agency also wanted to buy that site. I was not happy with that, having served on the CLWA board. Their general manager, Robert Sagehorn, obviously wanted the property, but would not explain why. He had the support of a majority of the board even though the public was not being informed about the reasons for many of the decisions the agency was taking.

The same week we opened Ed Davis Park in Towsley Canyon, and neighboring property owner Joel Brandon, 71, complained about people straying onto this oil well property on the other side of it. "I'll sell it – I don't care who I sell it to. I anticipate selling the land because frankly I'm too old to do anything with it except develop the oil that's on it." We were in a race to get some money together before the bureaucrats advocating a dump figured out a way to put the issue back on the table.⁶

As we were moving into 1990, Allan Cameron put into words what a lot of us had been thinking, saying that as members of the City Formation Committee, "We thought that many would regard cityhood as a miracle cure." He had speculated that "whoever was on the first Council, they would be regarded as a failure, and they would probably be recalled." Obviously people were relatively content with the progress we had made in building a foundation, getting our government organized, and banking tens of millions of dollars with no tax increase. We did not even get a negative reaction to comments favorable to affordable housing.⁷

Our list of accomplishments probably did not mean much to the average resident. However, we had assumed responsibility from the county for all planning, building and safety and parks and recreation services. A key issue was

building and safety, because if we could give developers superior service in that area we could make them happy about the concessions we asked of those developing in the city, and annexing to the city. Generally we were asking more amenities and lower density.

We had also done nineteen “quick fixes” designed to help traffic move. Often this meant putting more lanes at intersection approaches, or fine tuning the number of turn lanes. The projects were not expensive, and made real improvements in circulation. However, we needed to build some roads, and although we had adopted an alignment for Rio Vista Road, it was not built. Nonetheless we had started the completion of the “bridge to nowhere.” That was the bridge south on Whites Canyon from Soledad Canyon to Via Princessa, which the county had built half way across the Santa Clara River before stopping construction. The county had not gotten enough right of way, and was held up by Dan Palmer’s unreasonable demands.

We had developed the city’s Emergency Preparedness program, and set up an Emergency Operations Center.

For those who were aware of how important it was to annex territory and gain more control over area planning, the completion of the sphere of influence study was a big achievement. However, LAFCO denied our application. At least 1989 saw our first annexation at the request of a developer seeking city services.

We had secured \$150,000 in funds from the County Aid to Cities program, and maintenance of our streets was proceeding at an excellent standard.

We provided our people with professional representation at the Regional Planning Commission and the Board of Supervisors. To some people it was quite refreshing to be able to concentrate on making a living, rather than making the sacrifice of trying to represent our valley in the absence of local government. There had been forty-five amendments proposed to the county general plan for our valley.

We had developed a program for rehabilitation of sub-standard housing, for clean-up programs and for infrastructure improvements in substandard areas. While unpaved streets were not a problem, curbs and gutters were lacking in some of the old neighborhoods. The results of our efforts were eventually excellent.

Of less significance to the public, we had completed the third floor of city hall to the extent that Public Works and Parks and Recreation had permanent homes, and had adopted a fiscal year 1989-90 budget which showed tens of millions of dollars in the bank, with no increase in taxes.

However, heat was beginning to develop locally on the issue of the Council’s stand on Elsmere Canyon. We had been advised to negotiate, and had refused to take a stand against a dump in Elsmere for over a year. Our purpose was to elicit as much information as possible before taking a stand. In November I wrote a memo to City Attorney Carl Newton asking that we bring the question of Elsmere policy up for public discussion and a decision. Newton advised against it in a memo addressed to me, saying this was not the time. We should take no position

until we had studied the Environmental Impact Report so that we could take a position on that “free of previous bias.”

John Castner, co-chairman of the Elsmere Canyon Preservation Committee was leading public demonstrations, including a candlelight vigil in front of city hall. I was frustrated. I wanted to tell John we were on his side, but I could not do that. One evening, during a vigil, I said to John, “I appreciate what you are doing. There are times that members of the public can say things the Council cannot say.” If we got into a law suit later, we wanted to be able to say we had considered all aspects of the dump impartially and carefully. The issue of tipping fees to be allowed the city under one proposal, was something we never took seriously. \$43 million was a projected figure, but none of the Council wanted to take this bribe. We had no intention of selling out our environment. We also talked about assistance from the city of Los Angeles and the county for our annexation requests. That would never happen either. It was difficult to stall them without saying something, so we took a lot of heat. Our Congressmen, Carlos Moorhead and Elton Gallegly, along with Howard Berman of nearby Van Nuys, stayed aloof.⁸

Soon I decided to respond to some of the ink the opposition was getting. I wrote a letter to the editor of *The Signal*, which summarized the issues. We had approved one zone change in two years. We had resolved our lawsuit with Tenneco/Arco with no expense to the city for legal services, a limit on cogeneration, and strong controls on the plant that was to be built. We had put Proposition P on the ballot for a vote by the public. We had attended conferences so we would be well informed. We had made no deals on Elsmere. I asked people to call me at city hall, or at home, if they had any questions. I got no calls.⁹

On February 1 I walked from my office the few feet over to the city clerk’s office and filed my papers to run for reelection. I was not happy to be running. The field of candidates had been a major topic in the press for two months. I was tired of all the speculation. A number of people had announced and fallen by the wayside. Shari Solimini, Debra Hinkle, Michael Carrozzo, Corey Lovers, Tamsie Irvan, Mel Fullmer, Brooke Logan, William Weatherman, John Gwynn and John Buckner Smith either failed to file, or filed petitions with an inadequate number of signatures. However, ten of us were on the ballot. Laurene Weste came to me, said that I needed a campaign manager, and volunteered. She promised to put some zip in my campaign.

In the race I joined Linda Calvert, 45, real estate agent; Wayne Carter, 62, retired maintenance supervisor; Mayor Jo Anne Darcy, 58; Kenneth Dean, 50, interior designer; Vera Johnson, 62, community activist and ex-president of the Santa Clarita Civic Association. Additional candidates were Jill Klajic, 42, community activist; Dennis Koontz, 50, councilmember; Andrew Martin, 65, insurance agent, and Herbert Wolfe, 75, a retired U.S. Air Force investigator.¹⁰

Andrew Martin had been involved in the community for many years, including the incorporation effort in the 1950s, and was an active Democrat. He

had an acid tongue and was angry. Kenneth Dean had made a serious effort in 1987, but had been unsuccessful. Linda Calvert had attended a number of council meetings, and could be pretty abrasive. Wayne Carter was unknown politically, and not serious about campaigning. Herbert Wolfe never got a campaign off the ground.

The three incumbents as well as Vera Johnson and Jill Klajic were serious. Vera Johnson had worked hard on city incorporation, knew the issues, and seemed to have a real chance. I thought Jill Klajic would shoot herself in the foot, but she did have real political instincts that helped make up for her inability to put anything on paper by herself.

Some good things happened that week. The city closed escrow on 238 acres in the center of town. The Western Opera Theatre came to Hart Auditorium with a fine production of Bizet's *Carmen*, starring Karen Parks and Dennis McNeil, both of whom have since built international reputations. Orthodontist Alan Barbakow, developer Jack Shine, chamber executive Viki Rudolph, planning commissioner Louis Brathwaite and cellist Joyce Geeting were among the many involved in overselling the house by fifty tickets. When everyone showed up it was necessary to put folding chairs in the aisles.¹¹

A campaign limitations ordinance, which had been in the works for months, was adopted on February 13, to go into effect thirty days later. Buck McKeon and I voted against it. A major problem was that first amendment rights prohibit anyone from being denied spending his own money to campaign, and while I agreed that the ordinance was a worthwhile effort (and abided by the \$250 contribution limit it imposed), our city attorney had real reservations about adopting it. It was elitist in that anyone wanting to spend his own money could do so with impunity. Furthermore, it prohibited those with contracts of \$50,000 or more donating to candidates, but said nothing about franchises.¹²

Don Wilder and Jim Robinson of the Santa Clarita Mobile Home Owners Council made a campaign issue out of rent control on mobile home parks. On the surface rent control seemed unfair. However, in this case the property owners who had moved their homes onto another property owner's space were being gouged. Some of the units could not be moved, and it would have cost tremendous amounts, compared to the value of the units, to move others. When the land rents went up too fast there were some who simply could not pay, and were forced out of their homes, which they had to leave behind because they could not move them. A big problem was that the landowners were pushing tenants into signing long-term leases that would not be affected by any future rent stabilization ordinance. We were advised that we could not pass an urgency ordinance to prevent the signing of leases while rent stabilization was being considered.¹³

President Bush's visit to the Santa Clarita Valley on March 1 had many of us forgetting about the election campaign for a few days. Sheriff Sherman Block had enough clout in Washington that he was able to get the President to cut the ribbon for the opening of the North County Correctional Facility between Saugus

and Castaic. The council families were given a police escort to the Pitchess Honor Rancho, where we passed through rigorous security and then were conducted through the jail, where every little sound seemed to bounce off the walls. Then we were all seated and the President's party arrived in multiple helicopters. While Bush toured the facility Supervisor Antonovich vamped for the audience, joking that he was the filler. Mayor Darcy got to sit on the platform and shake hands with the President. The rest of the council got whatever seating was available.¹⁴

The Signal made a good effort to bring out the issues in the election campaign. Their coverage began with a question on whether or not each candidate supported a developer agreement with G.H. Palmer and Associates which would allow Palmer to build some high density housing in exchange for millions of dollars worth of roads. I was quite willing to negotiate to bring something to the table about which we could talk. The problem was that the terms being discussed were changing all the time. Jo Anne Darcy, Dennis Koontz and I gave qualified support to the concept. Vera Johnson supported it, and the rest were in opposition. We also supported the *Mira* decision, which required developers to fund school construction. All except Linda Calvert supported campaign limitations. All opposed Elsmere. The issue of mandatory recycling elicited shadings of opinions. Generally we favored voluntary recycling. Opinions on roads varied considerably. The debate showed a general appreciation of the complexity of the issue, although I was not sure what Andy Martin meant about capturing control of the city from the "wheeler-dealer staffers."

One piece of literature published during the campaign was *The Santa Clarita Enquirer*, vol. 1, no. 1, dated March 21, 1990. On the front page there was a warning: "This *shall remain* a bad inside joke. The press will only see it if *you* let them." Circulation must have been very small, for it never made the gossip columns. According to the mission statement, "It is the intent of *The Santa Clarita Enquirer* to show the *humorous* side of Santa Clarita city politics, in a twisted kind of way. The concept was born late one council night when Carl Boyer lost it and screamed at a poor, sweet, innocent, elderly, handicapped widow for no apparent reason." I did indeed lose it one night when a lady who was neither poor, elderly or handicapped, but was sweet and innocent, rambled on over the three minute limit for public input on an agenda item. We had imposed an 11:30 p.m. deadline for adjourning meetings because decisions made when we were really tired were not generally good decisions.

We were approaching the deadline. The red light went on. She did not notice it and kept on talking. I interrupted her to let her know she had exceeded her limit. She acknowledged me and kept on talking. I explained why we had a limit, and she kept on talking. I lost it. What I never told anyone was that I got her name and address off the speaker's card and went to see her the next day, to apologize. We had a nice chat, and she was indeed very sweet.

Elections at-large were supported by most of the candidates, although Linda Calvert tended to favor change. We were all slow-growthers except Andy Martin,

who opposed growth. Buck McKeon endorsed the incumbents. I got the only endorsement of the Young Republicans, who had planned to endorse three of the candidates.¹⁵

One Saturday I took a walk in the park, the Santa Clarita Woodlands proposal. I did not think about it, I just went by invitation. I was the only candidate on the walk, and it got a big writeup in the *Daily News*. Laurene Weste was very clever.¹⁶

I did not know if Jerry Reynolds was a supporter, but the Santa Clarita Valley Historical Society monthly contained an article on the society's founding which mentioned me as a founding board member with Art Evans, Jerry Reynolds, Lavaughn Yetter, Mimi White, Tom Mason and Dorothy Riley.

We attended a number of candidate forums. They were not very exciting. It was hard for some to get used to a two- or three-minute limit. Herb Wolfe used all of his time at one forum telling a joke. Andy Martin won the race for most barbs per minute easily. In a series on the issues in *The Signal*, however, it was Jill Klajic who set a different tone when discussing her view of the future. "Under our present course I foresee a catastrophe – a chaotic, sprawling, decaying San Fernando Valley North, precisely where our council's timid and shameful course is leading us."¹⁷

Some people were insisting that we announce our plans to fight Elsmere Canyon Dump. I placed an anonymous line in the comment section of *The Signal*, "Announcing the city's plans for opposition to the Elsmere Canyon landfill would be like revealing the plans for D-Day in the London Times on June 5, 1944."¹⁸

G.H. Palmer and Associates' Santa Catarina proposal became a hot issue during the campaign. Dan Palmer, the lead character in this drama, wanted to build three projects, of which two would be in the city and one in the county. He wanted to deal road construction for approvals of his plans. Santa Catarina was proposed for the north side of Soledad Canyon across from Golden Valley. In theory, one road we would get would be Golden Valley from the Antelope Valley Freeway to Soledad Canyon, which would have been a major link freeing up congestion in Canyon Country. I did not believe we could ignore the possibilities, even though Palmer wanted a lot of density.

Santa Catarina itself would have been built a couple of hundred feet below the residences of Malia Campbell and Dean Paradise, who led the campaign against it. I had difficulty understanding their concern, for to see the proposed site I had to stand at their rear property lines on a big hill and look almost straight down onto what had become a dump. Some of the staff favored taking a serious look at Palmer's plan, and the Council generally supported doing this. So did Vera Johnson. The rest of the candidates found it very easy to criticize the proposal, which was fluid and open to a lot of negotiation. It was not easy to say that I had to keep an open mind. The incumbents were getting pounded on this as well as Elsmere, but we could not quit doing our job, whenever it was election season.¹⁹

Steve Padilla characterized our city in the April 7 issue of *The Los Angeles Times*. "The valley and its scores of new housing tracts became a stucco haven for families looking for affordable homes and a small-town atmosphere. Locals call it 'Leave It to Beaver Country' and 'Des Moines With Palm Trees.' As testament to Santa Clarita's family values, a recent UCLA study found an unusually high number of diapers in the city's garbage." He was right. "Beaver" still lives in Santa Clarita, literally.

We had indeed inherited a growth mess from the county. LAFCO had cut our territory down considerably from our natural boundaries. It was not possible to stop growth in the city while it was going on outside. We were doing our best to slow it down, requiring the developers to contribute more than their share to solving our traffic and school problems. The challengers could say whatever they wanted. The incumbents could not. I was concerned because I knew Dennis Koontz was vulnerable. People had not forgotten how his marriage ended. On the Sunday before the April 10 election *The Signal* gave its endorsements to Boyer, Darcy and Johnson.

Very late in the campaign I received what I believed to be an illegal mass mailing (illegal because its source was not printed on the piece) criticizing Jill Klajic. I took it straight to the Sheriff's Office. Apparently there was a smaller mailing of supporting documents to community leaders. Someone showed me a copy of a letter Jill had written to the Los Angeles County Regional Planning Commission on November 10, 1989. I read it and thought, "So what?" I was asked to read it again, and gave the same reaction. I was tired, and did not get the point. On the third reading, however, I picked up on the intent, which I had missed twice while turning from one page to the second. Jill had not only signed a Santa Clarita Civic Association endorsement of dump expansion in the mountains between Newhall and Granada Hills, but she favored expansion in East Canyon, where I had seen streams still flowing after four years of drought, right on top of our water supply!

Re: Browning Ferris Industries CUP# 86-312-(5)

Honorable Commissioners:

Sunshine Canyon in less than two years will reach its permitted capacity. The need for an immediate landfill has been well established. Our present landfills are rapidly reaching their limits. Sunshine Canyon (BFI) has requested a 542 acre expansion for their landfill operation. The Santa Clarita Civic Association, at its general meeting November 2, 1989 voted to support this expansion. The operator, Browning Ferris Industries, has been a responsible company and a good neighbor. The Company has taken progressive measures in compensating for the destruction of the natural forest of Oaks and conifers. After careful study of other proposed landfill sites, it is our recommendation that the Sunshine Canyon site be expanded. We believe this site will be the least destructive to natural resources, take less time to prepare and will certainly be the most economical. The East [here turned the page turned]

Canyon, proposed for expansion, is remote and well buffered by hills. The operator's grading plan and tree replenishing program is commendable. There are no major traffic problems concerned with the Sunshine Expansion. Their water monitoring and gas recovery systems are also acceptable. The Santa Clarita Civic Association would like to recommend the extra precautions of extended liners be applied and that a comprehensive recycling program be established immediately. The latter should include asphalt, corrugated [*sic*] paper, composting and wood products, etc. We would further recommend that the Regional Planning Commission begin an in depth study of the four rail haul proposals for future waste management plans.

Given the many positive points in regard to the expansion of Sunshine Landfill, we feel confident in recommending the approval of Browning Ferris Industry's expansion proposal for Sunshine Canyon Landfill.

Sincerely,
Jill Klajic
Co-chairman,
Waste Management Committee
Santa Clarita Civic Association

I knew that the mailing was truthful, but felt very strongly that whoever had put it out should have done so legally and openly, and in time for the candidates to respond. Dirty politics would not make good government in Santa Clarita. I was on my way to a press conference Jill had called about the illegal mailing. My purpose in going to it was to stand up for Jill, and against last-minute illegal mass mailings.

However, as I drove the five miles from my house to city hall I began to fume. I was very upset that she had come out in favor of any dump, for that could put a wedge between the anti-dump forces in the San Fernando and Santa Clarita Valleys. We needed to stay together. I expressed my concerns about the dump endorsement and the problem of electing someone to an office of trust when they were financially vulnerable, which the Klajics had admitted to the press. I did not like criticizing a fellow candidate. I knew I was hurting my own standing, but felt that staying silent was not an option. Jill should have been open about her endorsement of a dump. Also, she should not have claimed to be "a partner with her husband in an aerospace calibration company" in a campaign piece signed by her chairman, Maureen Focht on March 9, 1990. That company had gone bankrupt because of failure to forward employee withholding taxes to the Internal Revenue Service.²⁰

I never used material about wife beating that I received in the mail in any campaign.

According to the election-day stories in *The Signal* and *Daily News*, Jo Anne Darcy led in fundraising with over \$19,941. I raised \$8,081. Dennis Koontz raised \$7,941.45. Jill Klajic raised \$6,676. Herb Wolfe managed to raise \$2,528

in contributions and \$1,900 in loans. Vera Johnson only raised \$810, but borrowed so she could spend \$2,929.97.

In the city-run election the returns came in fairly quickly. With only 17.6% of the 53,186 registered voters turning out, Jill Klajic came in first with 4,081 (running strongest in Canyon Country), I was second with 4,042 (leading in Newhall, Saugus and Valencia) and Jo Anne Darcy was third with 3,548. Jill had the advantage of being on the outside and having a large volunteer campaign. Jo Anne had been hurt by carping about her serving as a field deputy for County Supervisor Antonovich, which I felt did not matter in her case. Kenneth Dean polled 3,015, which was particularly strong considering his having raised only \$1,160, but he was closely allied with Klajic. Vera Johnson garnered 2,804 votes in the preliminary returns, with Herbert Wolfe taking 2,689 and Dennis Koontz 2,155. The rest trailed, with 1,772 for Calvert, 1,643 for Martin and 983 for Wayne Carter.²¹

The resolution of the city clerk showed that the final canvass results had Klajic leading by thirty-one votes. Only the winners were listed. Klajic had 4,093, with Boyer at 4,072 and Darcy at 3,563. 9,432 had cast ballots.

Perhaps an effort at team building would help.

¹*Daily News*, Oct. 1, 1989.

²*The Signal*, Dec. 3, 1989.

³*The Signal*, Dec. 10, 1989.

⁴*Daily News*, Dec. 29, 1989.

⁵*The Signal*, Dec. 13, 1989; *Daily News*, Dec. 13, 1989.

⁶*The Signal*, Dec. 18, 1989.

⁷*Daily News*, Dec. 29, 1989.

⁸*Los Angeles Times*, Jan. 6, 1990; *Daily News*, Jan. 21, 1990.

⁹*The Signal*, Jan. 20, 1990.

¹⁰*Los Angeles Times*, *The Signal*, and *Daily News*, Feb. 2, 1990.

¹¹*The Signal*, Feb. 1, 1990, and Feb. 5, 1990.

¹²*The Signal*, Feb. 15, 1990.

¹³*The Signal*, Feb. 18, 1990, and Feb. 22, 1990.

¹⁴*Daily News*, March 2, 1990.

¹⁵*The Signal*, March 7, 9, 11, 14, 15, 18, 21-23, 25, 28 and 30, 1990, and April 1, 4, and 8, 1990.

¹⁶*Daily News*, March 26, 1990.

¹⁷*The Signal*, April 1, 1990.

¹⁸*The Signal*, March 28, 1990.

¹⁹*Daily News*, April 2, 1990.

²⁰*Daily News*, April 8, 1990.

²¹*The Signal*, April 11, 1990; *Daily News*, April 11-12, 1990.