

Chapter 22

STEPPING DOWN

The National League of Cities annual conference was held in San Antonio in 1996. The keynote speaker was Alvin Toffler, the author of *Future Shock*, who spoke on the “knowledge revolution.” As he spoke of the evolution of work and productive output I could not help thinking about the gulf between those who are using their brain power, and generally doing very well, and those who use brawn power, and are being left behind.

Having attended the conferences each year since 1988, I was attending fewer seminars and was involved in more committees. However, I had to leave before the resolutions committee meeting was over in order to fly home to deliver my last talk as mayor, and to take part in the installation of Clyde Smyth.

Getting to the meeting on time was hard. My flights were running late, and I barely made it to city hall in time through the rush hour traffic. The strain took its toll on my parting talk, but I managed to list some of the city’s accomplishments of the past year. They included the defeat of Elsmere dump. Development featured a number of retail complexes and the beginning of the “Main Street” corridor at Valencia Town Center and the hotel/conference center. Two golf courses and a seventy-three unit residential approval in Sand Canyon (cut from a possible 202) had been approved. Also approved were plans for the development of the old Lockheed site in Rye Canyon. Several of these projects involved annexations, which meant that for another year our staff had been successful at providing both superior service in return for reduced density and more amenities for the people of our city.

Councilmembers Darcy, Heidt and Klajic mentioned some of the year’s other improvements to the press. We had acquired park property and had been instrumental in setting aside thousands of acres. We had cut twenty-five minutes from many commutes by improving Decoro Drive. We had improved the South Fork Trail, and bus and Dial-a-Ride service. We were making grants and had many volunteers and joint programs at work. Waste diversion was up to 34%.¹

Granddaughter Kylene Plummer and foster daughter Inna Shayakhmetova attended and joined members of my family in the parting photo session.

Clyde got off to a good start. He had been hired as the superintendent of the William S. Hart Union High School District after a period of real turmoil, during which the board went through a number of superintendents and a recall election, which saw two board members replaced. Clyde understood the function of a superintendent, survived, and prospered.

The next evening, December 11, we held the reception for Democratic Senator Barbara Boxer and our own Republican Congressman, Buck McKeon, in honor of their success with the Elsmere Canyon legislation. Even Senator Boxer laughed when Buck said, “This is a tremendous community, and it’s a bipartisan community. And this is all the Democrats in the community.”²

Staff met with some community leaders to discuss the possibility of putting the idea of a directly elected mayor on the ballot. I did not like the idea myself unless it included a runoff election so that there would be majority rule, rather than the prospect of a simply plurality winning the day. With majority rule I was all for it, but the leaders were about two-to-one against it.³

Dan Hon died December 21 at the age of 60. He had served as chairman of the Canyon County Formation Committee, and campaigned throughout the county for voter approval. He had not been so active in the incorporation drive, but had supported it with his wise playing of the devil's advocate, pointing out the questions we had to resolve in the minds of the voters. He was involved in doing the legal work for a lot of non-profit corporations. He had never run for public office, except for one unsuccessful attempt to win election as a judge. He would not compromise his law practice. He was a tremendous storyteller.⁴

Johnathan Skinner, the city's Recreation Coordinator, and Craig Glover, "the Chairman of the Boards" of the skateboard enthusiasts, had made a pitch for a skateboard park the previous May. We began work on planning.

The council softened what would otherwise have been outright opposition to the development of Newhall Ranch, realizing that opposition would fall on deaf ears at the county, while an attempt to soften some of the problems in the plan would probably be successful. We asked Jill Klajic to represent the city at Regional Planning Commission hearings; she said she would soften her personal stance in order to represent the council.⁵

Mayor Clyde Smyth suggested we seek membership on the CLWA's Integrated Water Resource Plan citizens committee. I did not think much of the idea but joined Clyde and Jo Anne Darcy voting in favor. "It's so easy for me to take potshots at the Castaic Lake Water Agency, but I think the Mayor's position is more statesmanlike," I said.⁶

Metrolink began Saturday service, and as long as its schedule was convenient I took the train regularly on my research trips to the Los Angeles Public Library. It cut a net fifty miles of driving from my trip although I had to drive out to the station on Soledad Canyon Road. Driving to the station cost about \$5 in gas, depreciation, maintenance and insurance, and parking was free, so all I had to add at that time was about \$6 for the train ticket. Driving to Los Angeles cost about \$20 plus parking, which was \$3.50 if I parked a good distance from the library. Most people have no idea how much it really costs to drive, nor how much they could save by taking the train, which became increasingly convenient as the service grew and our third station was completed.

Some controversy developed over Newhall Land's request for funds to widen Magic Mountain Parkway and improve the interchange at Magic Mountain and I-5. Many saw the projects as growth inducing. Growth was coming no matter what. We could control it somewhat in the city, striving for quality, and cutting some of the growth outside by working with developers to reduce the density allowed by the county in return for better services. There was little we could do to control the rest. One problem was that we could never quite figure out whether

or not Newhall Land should pay for a project such as an interchange improvement.

They would argue that state and federal governments always funded interchange improvements. Precedent did not always make it right, but was Newhall Land responsible for all the growth? If the interchange and the Magic Mountain Parkway widening were funded out of federal taxes, would the city be able to exact more improvements from Newhall Land in the long run? I thought so. I cast the deciding vote in favor of city support for Newhall Land's position.⁷

A month later Jo Anne Darcy and I joined the mayors of Lancaster and Palmdale in a lobbying trip to Washington for local transportation projects. I also had the opportunity to testify at another committee hearing that we were putting more than the usual share into our projects, which got us approval for a few million more dollars to put into the process.⁸

However, Jill Klajic wrote a letter to get Congress to pull funding, saying it was corporate welfare for Newhall Land. This caused a storm of controversy, with people arguing on opposite sides of whether better roads will cause more growth, or growth creates a need for better roads. The result was several years of delay for a number of projects, although none were scrapped. One of the ironies was that in suggesting a substitute project she advocated funds for Magic-Princessa, a crosstown route that benefited another corporation.⁹

David Shaw of Saugus wrote to *The Signal*, "As far as the letter-writing to the feds, do us all a favor and when you make up your mind to do something like this again, please make that decision standing up. It may help."¹⁰

At the council meeting on March 25 Jill's letter was discussed. Jo Anne Darcy said, "I was frustrated and disturbed. I thought the policy here was majority rule."

Klajic had acknowledged that hers was a minority opinion on the council, but had also said that her views represented "the opinion of the majority of residents." Mayor Clyde Smyth said that council members have the obligation to voice their opinions during debate, "but my concern here is, once we go through a process, we have a way to resolve issues – through a vote, and at that point we have to come together."

Michael Symes' story continued, "Councilman Carl Boyer said he supports the right of council members to voice their opinions, even if they are in the minority.

"But he said he was most disturbed Klajic did not inform council colleagues of her action before she took it. He also said her letter to Congressman Bud Shuster, R-Pa., contained misleading facts and inaccuracies.

"I respect the right of a minority member of the council to let views be known," Boyer said. "I have a firm belief. If you're right, go ahead and stick to your guns. But, for heaven's sake, get your facts straight."

Jill Klajic responded, "I do believe very strongly in this position and I do believe I am right. Why should all of you be so afraid of my opinion? It's my opinion and I gave it and I stand behind it."

Tim Burkhart, the president of the Santa Clarita Valley Chamber of Commerce, said that he was “disappointed because Jill just doesn’t get it. Once you take a vote, you don’t stab the rest of the council in the back.”¹¹

As *The Signal* put it editorially, “The biggest problem with Councilwoman Jill Klajic is her distain, disregard and disrespect for those whose views are different from hers.”¹²

Jack Ancona, a leading activist, said in support of Jill, “It seems that any time federal money is being applied for, Newhall Land gets it, and it’s for the west side of the city.”¹³

Jack was largely right. While the city was beginning to make real headway in applying for federal funds, it was Newhall Land that had the expertise. The east side was being developed piecemeal, and while Jack Shine and his American Beauty operation had built more homes than Newhall Land he did not have a large economically-balanced master plan. The problems created by growth on the east side were left to the county or the city to solve.

Jill responded to a letter from Congressman McKeon, resulting from the flap, by saying she said she did not read it. “I threw it away.”¹⁴

Jan Heidt was silent. My remarks had been tempered by the fact that I remembered when Gil Callowhill, representing a minority of two, went to Sacramento at his own expense to testify against an expansion of the CLWA system. I always believed that Gil had done the right thing, that CLWA’s financial trouble grew out of a desire to expand at a breakneck speed without adequate knowledge of our water resources. The Agency put us into debt to the tune of \$132 million without a public vote, and without any questions from the establishment or the press, let alone an editorial.

The difference was that I was convinced that Gil had his facts straight. I said little at the time because it would have made no difference, and my public voice would have been compromised. Jill accomplished nothing in the long run.

Our Republican Assemblyman, George Runner, introduced a bill in Sacramento to establish a board that would examine the fiscal impact of breaking up Los Angeles County. This action was a surprise to me, and was opposed by Democrat Bob Hertzberg of Van Nuys, also a member of the Assembly Local Government Committee. Jill Klajic remarked, “You have just too big of a monster. It just gets too big...and people feel totally disenfranchised from the government when it gets that large.”

I agreed, saying, “I like the idea of looking at how to make the largest county in the world something more of a local government.”¹⁵

Leon Worden, in his column “Seize the Day!” credited Ruth Newhall with being the first person to publicly state that city formation was okay, “but what you really need to do is form your own county.”¹⁶

She was right. If we had been able to form Canyon County in 1976, or in the second election on the question in 1978, our whole situation would have been different. While court decisions would have protected the rights of developers, we would have had one general plan, responsibly enforced.

We did not pass up the opportunity, having voted strongly in favor twice. The voters of the remainder of Los Angeles County had defeated us. They exercised the right given to them by the State Constitution of California to refuse to let us go. Once the Los Angeles County employees and lobbyists went to work in Sacramento we lost our legal right to use the process a third time.

The only way remaining to solve the problem of a city surrounded by county territory is to break up Los Angeles County all at once, in one huge county-wide vote where everyone has a reason to vote to let the other people go in return for their own autonomy. George Runner, from the Antelope Valley, understood, but his bill went nowhere.

The Signal published a special section, "Santa Clarita 2000 and Beyond," on March 28. These sections were always an opportunity for people to present their views. My piece was titled, "Governmental Change Is Overdue."

"The City of Santa Clarita enjoyed a 91 percent approval rating in a recent poll. However, this sense of satisfaction may only serve to cover up a larger problem existing in California: The absence of civil behavior by citizens toward government."

This idea was not new to me. The lack of civil behavior towards government had been discussed at state and national League meetings, as well as those of the National Civic League, an organization of governments and non-profits which deserves more attention than it gets from cities. Non-profits do a tremendous amount of problem solving that would be left to cities otherwise.

What is it that makes Santa Clarita different? We are one of the larger cities in the state, in the top 20 in population. We are bigger than the largest city in many states. Nonetheless, our government is accessible.

Our city works because most citizens know that if they see a problem, such as a traffic light not working properly, they can call 259-CITY and get results. Council members can be called at home, or found where they work.

Yet at the county and state levels our government does not function so well. The cause is that there has been no fundamental change in the way we are governed for many years.

I went on, but we had tried county formation and failed. The state had looked into constitutional and local government reform at fundamental levels, and then lost its collective nerve. My proposal for a summit in the Santa Clarita Valley between county, city, developers and all other stakeholders such as the Chambers of Commerce and the neighborhood and nonprofit organizations, was ignored.

I pointed out that we should look at a physical map in an entirely civil way, the way the ethnically diverse mayors and council members of the cities in Los Angeles County dealt with each other. Boundaries should be drawn geographically, not according to some ethnic division of spoils. The distribution along racial lines changes, but the location of the mountains and the rivers do not. In the 1970s a state study found that the ideal population to be served by a local

government was 300,000. There had been no follow up. I wondered what would happen when Santa Clarita contained a million people, and some began to consider splitting up the city.

On another front, we authorized eminent domain proceedings so we could build the Newhall metrolink station. This station was later named for Jan Heidt, who had made a specialty of transportation. We once again voted to cut the size of the planned redevelopment zone, but still could not get any answers on whether or not the CLWA would support it. We came up with revisions to the mobile home ordinance to further stabilize the rents. We let Princess Cruises know in clear terms that while we could not guarantee there would be no tax increases for fifteen years, we were willing to lay down a moral obligation. In the long run Princess Cruises turned down an “incredible package” offered by the City of Los Angeles to relocate to Santa Clarita.¹⁷

On April 25, 1997, more than 4,000 more people became citizens of Santa Clarita when LAFCO recorded the annexation of territory in the area of Seco Canyon Road. The immediate benefit was a cessation of their utility taxes, although we had to ride herd on the utilities to stop collecting them for the county. The downside was that their garbage rates went up a little.¹⁸

A big issue in May was whether or not the Council would help Sally Swiatek of Valencia protest before the Alcoholic Beverage Control board an application by the 99 Cents Only store to be allowed to sell warm Bulgarian beer. I brought the issue to the council, which voted to stay out of the controversy. I had done this as a courtesy to the protestors so they could be heard. When I did not get testy about being on the losing side I got criticized.¹⁹

Later in the month we opposed the planned Tesoro del Valle development being heard by the county, but the Evans-Collins developers of Newport Beach bought the support of the soccer moms by promising playing fields. That was all the county needed to approve the massive project. We had no sphere of influence.²⁰

We gave approval to an ordinance prohibiting adult businesses within 1,000 feet of a school, church, park, residential neighborhood or other adult business. Proponents of an outright ban, which we knew would have been ruled unconstitutional, protested. I suggested that if the people really did not want adult businesses in the city they should build just a few more churches. There were very few places where an adult business could be built under the ordinance. The irony is that every time someone wanted to apply for zoning to build a church there was a big protest, generally based on the increased traffic it would generate.²¹

Mayor Clyde Smyth and I went to bat for Propositions E and L, which were on the ballot to allow the continuation of taxes, which existed already, for fire services and libraries respectively. These propositions had to pass because of tax limitations and court cases. Without them, the majority of local fire stations would have closed, and the libraries would have been cut again. In the case of Proposition E, the difference was \$3 per house. Our insurance rates would have

gone up far more than \$3. However, by supporting the measures we opened ourselves to criticism that we favored tax increases. To that, however, we were immune, as we both planned to retire. Both measures passed, but it was not fun being part of county systems where we could not decide for our own city without the whole county being involved.²²

The council spent a lot of time on ISTEPA. No, we were not drinking a cold one, but dealing with the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act. This was the subject of all the controversy over Councilmember Klajic's dissenting letter to Congressman Shuster. She wanted to be able to raise objections, and I wanted to get everything into the open so we could act in a united fashion. It did not do any good. Arthur Sohikian of the Metropolitan Transportation Authority went through a long explanation of the process. Jill said that they want "demonstration projects that alleviate smog and traffic congestion. They don't want to fund private roads so developers can be let off the hook." I really wanted those federal monies so we would have a strong hand negotiating with Newhall Land about other local needs.²³

Michael Symes wrote one of those rare stories, for *The Signal* of June 15, 1997, which deserves to be repeated in its entirety.

One night, during one of many meetings the city held this year to garner support for its Newhall redevelopment plan, an elderly man approached Assistant City Manager Ken Pulskamp.

He listened intently as consultants told of their studies showing Newhall exhibited all the characteristics of blight necessary to make it a candidate for redevelopment, but he was puzzled by one thing.

"You must be a moron to not know Newhall is blighted," he told Pulskamp.

This was the story Pulskamp began with Wednesday night, as he tried to convince the Castaic Lake Water Agency to support the city's effort to revitalize Newhall through redevelopment.

At least 50 residents joined Pulskamp that night, cheering him on as he made his presentation to the CLWA board. If there was a common thread uniting everyone in the room – board members included – it was the belief that Old Newhall needs some help.

Still, when the presentation was over and the board moved to the next item on its agenda, one thing remained painfully clear.

With less than two weeks to go before the City Council's deadline to adopt a Newhall redevelopment plan, the two agencies remained far apart on what constitutes blight and no one on the CLWA board had ruled out the possibility of taking the city to court over the differences.

City parks commissioner Laurene Weste, Newhall resident Kim Wooten, architect Mary Merritt, lifetime resident Tom Frew, redevelopment committee chairman Frank Maga, Newhall Hardware general manager Victor Feany, school official Lew White, chamber representative Connie Worden-Roberts, realtor Valerie Thomas joined Pulskamp and me in presenting many different arguments

to the CLWA. We were stonewalled at a time when we were running against a deadline to complete the process. Starting over would add years to the process.²⁴

We did make progress in another area, however. We approved \$4.1 million to purchase twenty acres in Canyon Country from Merle Norman Cosmetics and begin turning the buildings into recreational facilities. I had been amazed to find out that one of those warehouses contained enough rare cars that an auction would have raised the \$4.1 million very quickly. Unfortunately, the cars did not come with the property.²⁵

When it was announced that our area code would be changed from 805 to 661 I made another stab at changing our ridiculous street numbering system. At least my proposal gave the newspapers something to write about on slow news days. I did take some comfort in Leon Worden's column telling how the County of Los Angeles came into town in the middle of the night back in the mid-1950s and took down all the signs on Spruce Street, our main drag. They renamed it San Fernando Road and changed all of our house numbers from our local system to the five digit county plan.²⁶

Of course I should be happy that the number of digits in a street address can be a matter of debate. In Tokyo they number buildings according to the order in which they were built. The first building on the street is No. 1, the second is number 2, and so on. Can you imagine driving up and down Soledad Canyon Road looking for an address when the people do not even bother to put numbers on their buildings, if they were numbered according to the date of construction? Worse yet is Managua. There many streets have no names, and the houses have never been numbered. Thus the people will give directions to their home based on some landmark (which often no longer exists, having been destroyed in the earthquake of 1972), traveling "up" or "down" (although there is no standard for what these words mean), a certain number of varas. Since the word *vara*, which means the length of a nobleman's arm, is an ancient term no longer used in most Spanish-speaking countries, even a Spaniard, or Mexican, might not understand. In one neighborhood the point of reference is "where the puppy died."

Then we got into a squabble over who was going to pay to relocate water pipes during the course of improvements to the streets of Newhall. The Newhall County Water District had not responded to city letters dated August 6, September 17 and December 18 asking for input. All the other utilities responded, and moved their lines when necessary. The NCWD was being asked to provide \$267,000 to relocate some pipes that were only eight to twelve inches below the surface of the streets, and that got a response in April. I suggested that the city buy the NCWD, thus putting the problems under one roof, as well as giving the city a seat on the CLWA board.²⁷

Finally we made progress on redevelopment. The CLWA agreement, a special meeting of the city's redevelopment committee, a special meeting of the Planning Commission, and a special meeting of the city council at a time the mayor could not attend, all fell together in hours. Jan Heidt could not vote because of a conflict of interest, so the council vote was 3-0.²⁸

Even more pressing for me was saving the life of Diego Diaz, a Guatemalan four-year-old who had won our hearts when Healing the Children brought him up for open heart surgery two years before. His case had been very difficult, and we sent for his mother to follow him when we found the surgery would be high risk. It so happened that a television camera was on when Dr. Alfredo Trento told his mother, Sandra Diaz, about the problems. She said simply, "I have placed him in God's care, and I believe that your hands are the hands of God."

Diego had done well, but now a valve was leaking and he needed another surgery. With the doctors and hospital donating services, we needed only \$8,000 for disposable supplies. I made a few phone calls and wrote a few letters. We got the money in days, with enough left over to help another child. After I left the council, I found money very difficult to raise, even for an American child.²⁹

While I had made the motion, which was adopted by a 5-0 vote, to require a complete cleanup of the Bermite munitions site in the center of Santa Clarita before any construction could take place, by August 1997 I was beginning to wonder if we could ever get anything done on the site. Would it be safe to build roads across it? Would development in stages enhance the prospects of getting the job done? I said that I would be willing to reconsider my position if the Department of Toxic Substances Control and CalEPA endorsed any kind of phased development. [Since that time the magnitude of the pollution has increased as the number of toxics found on the site have multiplied, and over more than twenty years private interests have been unable to complete the job.] I wondered why Bermite and its successors should be held liable for the cost of cleanup when the need for cleanup was traceable to the federal government's need for munitions dating back to World War I.³⁰

Amanda Larson, 15, was killed by an oncoming car while crossing Haskell Canyon Road in March. There was a big campaign to get a stop sign put in to slow the traffic. While this idea was very popular, it would have created a bigger problem than had existed before. Unless intersections have cars of roughly equal numbers approaching, stop signs do not work. Soon people begin to run the stop signs. Then, because the state sets forth standards for stop signs, the city becomes liable for any accidents, injuries or deaths occurring at that intersection. I had been on the short side of a 4-1 vote for a traffic light on Whites Canyon that should not have been installed. I was very glad that the council decided to support traffic calming in this instance. Nothing could bring back Amanda Larson, and I did not want more parents to go through the horrors her parents, family and friends suffered.³¹

In September, October and November of 1997 a controversial amendment to the Circulation Element of the General Plan was a major item. Sadly, the newspaper stories, a copy of Resolution No. P97-113 and the notes I took on it do not tell the story clearly. On September 30 there was a lot of testimony by Michael Kotch, Karen Pearson-Hall, Jack Curenton, Allan Cameron, Marsha McLean and Bob Lathrop. I believe it was Mike Kotch who said in essence that government (and I believe he included the county in this) was going to spend the

taxpayers money in the amount of \$175 million to help Newhall Land build a bunch of units. Kotch did ask that in adopting the element we delete the Old Road on the county side of I-5 in Significant Ecological Area 64. Karen Pearson said something about peace. Jack Curenton wanted us to eliminate the super truck route 126. Allan Cameron said that while documents were not available, the population projections were being increased again. Marsha McLeon talked about the proposed bridge (now long since built) over the Metrolink tracks. Bob Lathrop said he did not want it. Someone made comments about restoring the railroad to Ventura, and another made a comment about McBean being restriped to six lanes.

The notes I took at the time would have helped me to recall enough to help me make a decision that evening, but not enough five years later to allow me to avoid reviewing the minutes. I made a motion, which was seconded by Klajic and passed unanimously, which put most of the ideas submitted by Kotch, Pearson, Curenton, Cameron, McLean and Lathrop into the element. We liked the ideas, and did not pause to consider the ramifications.

A couple of days later I got a call from Gary Cusumano at Newhall Land.

“Carl, are you mad at us?”

“No, why?”

As I recall, he went on to say that the motion I made was going to require a new Environmental Impact Report. Years of work would have to be scrapped, and he wanted Newhall Land to be able to comment on it.

I had no problem with letting Newhall Land have its input, but I cut him off there. I did not want to discuss this anywhere except in open session. I said I would move for reconsideration of the motion. I then put the question on the agenda.

On October 14, 1997, as a result of my putting reconsideration on the agenda, we discussed the amendment to the General Plan, and I moved to place the issue of reconsideration of my previous motion on the agenda of a special meeting at 4:00 p.m. on the 21st. The second came from Jan Heidt, and it passed 4-1, Klajic voting no. I moved placing the issue of reconsideration on the agenda of a special meeting rather than moving reconsideration right away, because I wanted to make sure that the public had plenty of time to find out what was going on. Frankly I was embarrassed to even bring it up, and wanted to be sure that no one thought I was railroading the issue.

According to Michael Baker in *The Signal*, someone handed me a letter from Newhall Land addressed to Mayor Smyth during the course of the public testimony at the special meeting. I glanced at it, commented publicly, and passed it on. I assumed that someone from Newhall Land had handed the letter to Carl Newton, who was seated closest to the public, and that Carl handed it to George Carvalho, who handed it to me at the end of the council table to be passed on to the Mayor. It was common for letters to be passed up to the Mayor by that route with people taking very little notice of them. The assumption was that if there was anything of interest in the letter the Mayor would let us know.

Baker quoted me as saying, “I’ve just been handed a letter – a draft letter – from The Newhall Land and Farming Company concerned that the council, by certifying the environment impact report, has missed an opportunity to meet the city’s desperate need for new road infrastructure and it’s a two page letter,” as I held it up. “I’ll just pass it on so you can glance at it.”

Later, Jill Klajic said the letter threatened a lawsuit, and that we reconsidered out of fear. I believe all the council members had the opportunity to read the letter, but being occupied with the meeting did not do so. If Jill had said the letter threatened a lawsuit at the meeting, at the time she said she read it, I am sure we would have dissected it word for word. Jill said that I took the letter from her as she was going to hand it to Carl Newton. At any rate, I never read the letter beyond the first paragraph or two. It may have gone into the papers I threw out at the end of the meeting.

Newhall Land’s only statement was, “No formal letter was sent.” That is true, to my knowledge. I would not have said it was a draft letter unless it was marked a draft, and all reports say it was unsigned.

On the 21st there was a great deal of testimony on the issue of reconsideration, most of it in opposition. Ed Dunn, John Annison, Joan Dunn, Vera Johnson, Cynthia Neal-Harris for the Oaks Conservancy, Marsha McLean, Jack Curenton, and Barbara Wampole spoke to the issue. John Steffen, Fr. Ed Renehan, David Royer, Cam Noltemeyer, Connie Worden-Roberts for the Valencia Industrial Association and the Transportation Committee, Bob Lathrop, Joan MacGregor for College of the Canyons, John Lukes, Paul Belli, Allan Cameron and Randy Wheeler of Newhall Land also gave testimony.

At the conclusion of the public input I moved for reconsideration and setting a public hearing for November 25. That motion passed 3-2, with Darcy seconding the motion and Clyde Smyth supporting it. Heidt and Klajic voted no.

Whatever the case, Allan Cameron said that the city could be sued for passing the amendment because it was based on the assumption that the Newhall Ranch project would be built, even though it had not yet been approved. The city was sued constantly, but Cameron’s argument held a lot of weight with me because it pointed up a defect in my reasoning. Until he made his remarks I was leaning towards supporting the slow growth group as I had done at the previous meeting.

The location of the draft letter came up again. George Carvalho said that Randy Wheeler, a vice president of Newhall Land, had given him the letter. “The letter was given back to me and I had lots of other papers and I think I threw it out. I am sure from the audience’s perspective they think we are trying to hide it, but we’re not.” Wheeler did not have a copy of the letter. He claimed it said nothing about a suit. At that time Jan Heidt disagreed with him.

On October 23 Jo Anne Darcy said that the letter said we could be subject to litigation. In any event, we decided to deal with the issue on November 25.³²

At the public hearing on November 25 the council heard more testimony and the members made many motions, with the votes being split just about every con-

ceivable way. The only motion that passed was one to continue the hearing until December 9, when Ed Dunn was the only speaker. Fifteen people handed in written statements. Then I moved restoring most of what Newhall Land had lost, with support from Darcy and Smyth. Heidt and Klajic voted no.

The difference between the meetings late in November and the final meeting on the issue in December was that we had had time to absorb staff input. Staff wanted traffic to circulate, and felt that slowing had to be done when we exercised our zoning powers.

Two days earlier the Reverend Lynn Jay of St. Stephens Episcopal Church got her wish. The council approved a homeless shelter, and put up \$10,000 of the taxpayers' money to go with the temporary use of a building. The action was quick, positive and unanimous. By this time we had learned that the local homeless were our own people.³³

On November 2, 1997, I felt a lot older. I was a part of history. John Boston's weekly column dealing with old stories "on this date" contained mention of my attending a high school board meeting to express my displeasure with the fact that a band member could not take a science class. However, being history did not hurt as much as the first time one of my students at San Fernando High School told me his mother had been in one of my classes. At least our foster daughter, Inna Shayakhmetova had returned to us from Russia. Having a four-year-old around the house made me feel much younger.³⁴

The meeting concerning the Circulation Element on Nov. 25 involved some "unusually contentious" discussion. Jo Anne Darcy, who had been in a traffic accident the day before, was absent. We did not know she was home watching us on Channel 20. With Mayor Smyth and me on one side of the argument, and Jan Heidt and Jill Klajic on the other side, any motion could be defeated and none could be passed. On a less sophisticated council someone making the right motion might have gotten a negative decision to suit, but that did not happen.

Jill Klajic was in rare form, saying, "Sometimes I wonder why some of our staff is not paid by Newhall Land and Farm." She moved to support the original amendment passed by the council on September 30. That motion failed 2-2.

After a break, Jo Anne Darcy arrived to Jill's accusation that she was loyal only to the county. "I have never seen you down there, Jo Anne, fighting for us." I could not imagine how that statement could be true. It was below the belt. Because Jo Anne had been privy to all of the discussion she was able to vote.

I moved to keep the Old Road out of the city's circulation element while acknowledging it was in the county's plan, and expressing our opposition to it. I disliked intensely the prospect of SEA 64 being plowed up within view of I-5. That passed 3-2. Then I moved to allow the widening of Valencia Boulevard to eight lanes, provided that trees be planted north of the proposed curb quickly, so they would be more mature at the time of construction, and that passed 3-2.³⁵

The five of us appeared together on the December cover of *The Magazine of Santa Clarita*, looking happy in our old fashioned costumes, celebrating the tenth birthday of the city.

“In accordance with established council policy,” I nominated Jan Heidt to be mayor on December 9. There was no reason not to. Jan and I had disagreed on a number of issues, but she expressed herself well. However, when it became time to nominate Jo Anne Darcy for mayor pro-tem, I made the nomination and there was no second. Silence.

Jan Heidt nominated Jill Klajic. “Jo Anne Darcy is next in line and I don’t know why these politics are occurring,” I said.

Jill immediately answered, “I don’t know how I got jumped up. I had absolutely nothing to do with it.” She said she was not planning to run again in two years and would not mind being mayor again. Her nomination died for lack of a second.

When Clyde Smyth suggested electing a mayor pro-tem in April, Klajic said she would second Jo Anne Darcy’s nomination. Thus I repeated the nomination and Jo Anne was elected, 5-0.

Jan wanted to have an April team building session for the newly elected council members and all the old ones, to build a high level of support for the youth, pay more attention to arts and culture, finish the Newhall Metrolink station, and help small business.

Clyde Smyth pointed to progress on Newhall revitalization, the building of Central Park, the defeat of Elsmere and the development of strategies for dealing with development in the county territory.³⁶

At that meeting I reluctantly supported staff’s recommendation that we approve the eventual widening of Newhall Ranch Road to eight lanes, with some of the intersections being considerably wider. I was convinced that widening the road was preferable to having traffic moving slowly on it, causing more noise and smog. We would not be able to stop the growth outside the city, and had to be able to move traffic through the center.³⁷

On December 23 I gave myself a Christmas present. I announced I would not be running for reelection. I said, “I want people on the council who are pragmatic. I hope they’re interested in public service, not developing their political career.” I wanted to retire from teaching as well, and write some more books, including one on the history of the city. I would volunteer with Healing the Children, and work for reform of the county. With Clyde Smyth having made it clear he would not run again, I hoped Jo Anne Darcy would go for another term.³⁸

¹*The Signal*, Dec. 17, 1996.

²*The Signal*, Dec. 12, 1996.

³*Ibid.*

⁴*The Signal*, Dec. 22, 1996.

⁵*The Signal*, Jan. 15, 1997.

⁶*The Signal*, Jan. 29, 1997.

⁷*Daily News*, Feb. 8, 1997, and *The Signal*, Feb. 8 and 13, 1997.

- ⁸*Daily News*, March 8, 1997.
- ⁹*Daily News*, March 15, 1997, and *The Signal*, March 27, 1997.
- ¹⁰*The Signal*, March 23, 1997.
- ¹¹*The Signal*, March 26, 1997.
- ¹²*The Signal*, March 27, 1997.
- ¹³*The Signal*, March 26, 1997.
- ¹⁴*Los Angeles Times*, March 28, 1997.
- ¹⁵*Daily News*, March 21, 1997.
- ¹⁶*The Signal*, March 26, 1997.
- ¹⁷*The Signal*, April 9, 14 and 18, 1997.
- ¹⁸*The Signal*, April 25, 1997.
- ¹⁹*The Signal*, April 29 and May 9, 12, 15, 20 and 21, 1997, and *Daily News*, May 13, 1997.
- ²⁰*The Signal*, May 24, 1997, and *Los Angeles Times*, May 27, 1997.
- ²¹*The Signal*, May 29, 1997.
- ²²*The Signal*, May 30, 1997.
- ²³*The Signal*, June 2, 1997.
- ²⁴*Daily News*, June 9, 1997.
- ²⁵*The Signal*, June 12, 1997.
- ²⁶*Daily News*, June 26, 1997; *The Signal*, July 4, 14, 16, 19, 20, 23, 26 and 27, Aug. 3, 9, 10, 12, 14, 17, 21, 24, and 27-30, Sept. 7 and 9, Nov. 20-22 and 30, 1997, and *Business News of Santa Clarita*, Aug. 1997.
- ²⁷*The Signal*, June 26, 1997.
- ²⁸*The Signal*, July 3, 1997.
- ²⁹*Daily News*, July 12, 1997.
- ³⁰*Daily News*, Aug. 3, 1997.
- ³¹*The Signal*, Sept. 11, 1997.
- ³²*The Signal*, Oct. 17, 19, 22 and 23, and Nov. 5 1997.
- ³³*The Signal*, Oct. 23, 1997.
- ³⁴*The Signal*, Nov. 2, 1997, and *Antelope Valley Press*, Oct. 23 and 29, 1997.
- ³⁵*The Signal*, Nov. 26-27, 1997.
- ³⁶*The Signal*, Dec. 10, 1997.
- ³⁷*The Signal*, Dec. 11, 1997.
- ³⁸*Daily News*, Dec. 24, 1997, and *The Signal*, Dec. 24, 1997.