

Dispute Over Thinning The Forest Breaks Out In Upper Little Bear

By Mark Gutglueck

Substantial disagreement has arisen between a number of homeowners in a rustic area in the Lake Arrowhead area and those they have chosen to represent them as board members of their neighborhood's homeowners' association. Those differences pertain to the steps being taken as a means of reducing fire hazard in the less than one square mile district referred to as Upper Little Bear on the

southwest side of Lake Arrowhead.

In 1890, farmers in San Bernadino, Redlands and Rialto proposed arresting the natural northward cascade of water on the west side of the San Bernardino Mountains to keep it from reaching the headwaters of the Mojave River and instead channeling it south into the San Bernardino Valley to irrigate and expand the thriving citrus groves there. Thereafter, a hand-

ful of investors formed the Arrowhead Reservoir Company, and set about buying water rights at the top of the mountain. With what was deemed to be enough of those water rights in hand, the company began work on a dam for what was then called Little Bear Lake. By 1907, the dam reached a height of 90 feet, and the lake, fed by melting snowpack and rain, began to fill.

The project had faced

legal challenges from the outset, and in 1913, the Arrowhead Reservoir Company sustained a major blow when a court decision prevented the company from diverting water away from the Mojave River. With an already substantial lake in place, what was earlier intended as a reservoir was converted into a recreational community surrounding the lake shore.

In 1922, Little Bear Lake was renamed Lake

Arrowhead. Nevertheless, the district at the southwest end of the lake along Little Bear Creek retained the name Upper Little Bear, immediately next to the community of Blue Jay.

Today, the Upper Little Bear Mountain Club Homeowners' Association exists as a confederation of the owners of 38 relatively upscale cabins, most, but not all, of which are second homes to those who have title to **See P 2**

Battle On Over Wapner's & Hagman's Donors Developing Airport Property

More than half a decade after Ontario managed to liberate Ontario International Airport from the grip of the City of Los Angeles, it now appears that a determined move to develop warehousing and other logistical uses at its periphery is imminent.

Pushback against that development is manifesting, however, based not on the resistance to what

some locals at odds with the management of the airport feel is the short-sighted conversion of the airport's outlying property into uses that will crimp the prospects for the airport's long-term expansion but rather on environmental grounds.

Such legal action, in the form of a lawsuit brought under the California Environmental Quality Act, was filed in

San Bernardino County Superior Court yesterday, January 20.

In 1967, Ontario officials entered into a joint powers authority arrangement with the City of Los Angeles to have the larger metropolis, which already ran one of the world's largest airports – Los Angeles International – to manage the Ontario aerodrome, where a mere 200,000

passengers had passed through its gates that year. Under Los Angeles's guidance, Ontario International Airport experienced astounding growth over the next 40 years, achieving a ridership of 7.2 million by 2007. With the downturn in the economy that followed as a consequence of the intense 2007-to-2013 recession, the number of passengers flying

into and out of Ontario dropped drastically. Ontario Councilman Alan Wapner, accusing Los Angeles officials of purposefully mismanaging the airport during that span, led a spirited administrative, legal and public relations campaign to force Los Angeles to relinquish control of Ontario Airport. Wapner and his Ontario municipal col- **See P 9**

Two Board Members Depart From Volatile & Intrigue-Filled WVWD Board In Two Months

In the span of less than two months, a dynamic reshuffling of the lines of authority at the West Valley Water District has taken place.

From the outside, the district appears to exist as a conventional and somewhat obscure governmental entity dedicated to the routine provision of water to a 32 square mile expanse that includes some but not all of three incorporated

cities in San Bernardino County – Fontana, Rialto and Colton – and all of unincorporated Bloomington and a very slender slice of unincorporated Riverside County. Nevertheless, in recent years the West Valley Water District has generated enough political intrigue to more than match any other jurisdiction in far-flung 20,105-square mile San Bernardino County.

In November, Kyle

Crowther, a board member with district since 2017, announced he had been provided with an employment opportunity out of state starting in December and was accordingly resigning his post. More recently Clifford Young joined in the exodus from the West Valley Water Board. Once a dynamic political force, Young had been atypically sedate over the last year, a circumstance

brought on by the death of his wife, Jacquelynne, which came after a three-year battle with cancer. Word comes now that Young himself is facing a health challenge, and his resignation was necessitated by his need to move from Rialto to live with family members who are to look after him during his upcoming treatment and presumed recovery.

For more than four years, both Crowther

and Young were in the thick of a series of political struggles set within personal and combined power matches. That either would resign or even consider resigning was until recently virtually unthinkable.

Young's tenure on the water district board began four years before Crowther was elected. Indeed, Young's political status was established well prior to **See P 3**

Disempowering Valdivia Advances To The Next Level With Reduction Of Mayoral Salary

The effort to politically disempower San Bernardino Mayor John Valdivia advanced this week, consisting of his council colleagues voting to reduce the \$106,793 annual salary paid to the person holding the mayor's position to \$50,000.

While the reduction does not take effect immediately, it will apply to whoever is elected in this year's mayoral race when

the next term for the position initiates in December.

Valdivia, who was first elected to the city council in 2011, challenged and defeated incumbent Mayor Carey Davis in 2018, two years after the city's 1905 charter had been altered to convert the municipality's form of governance from the strong mayoral model it had functioned under for 111

years to a city council-manager system. Under the 1905 charter, the mayor had only marginal political power in that he or she presided over council meetings but did not have a vote except in making appointments or breaking a tie, augmented with veto power in the case of 3-to-2 or 4-to-3 votes. Nevertheless, the mayor traditionally had substantial administrative au-

thority, which extended to being, in conjunction with the city manager, a co-regent with discretion in hiring and firing city employees.

The 2016 charter change stripped the mayor of administrative reach and did not enhance the position's political status, meaning the mayor yet has no voting power beyond being able to veto narrow one-vote differ-

ence council decisions, break ties or participate in decisions with regard to hiring the city manager or city attorney and appointing city commissioners. Valdivia coveted having the control formerly entrusted to the mayor, and he opposed the charter change.

Upon being elected in 2018, he moved to artificially establish political authority and **See P 11**

Pre-Election Positioning Intense As Second District Race Looms

Spirited jockeying and even more intense speculation is ongoing as this year's wide-open race for Second District San Bernardino County Supervisor approaches. While a few known candidates are positioning themselves for an aggressive run, or at least trying to do so, business interests with a stake in the outcome are looking hard to determine which horse they are going to put their money on, even while they are seeking to winnow the field in a way that will take the risk out of backing whoever they settle on as a malleable candidate willing to do their bidding.

Perhaps the most remarkable development in the yet-to-fully-shape-up contest is the possible resumption of Paul Biane's political career.

In 2010, Biane, a former Rancho Cucamonga Councilman, was serving in the last year of his second four-year term as Second District supervisor and was looking forward to being reelected to a third term. At that point, he was challenged by then-Fontana Councilwoman Janice Rutherford along with Art Bustamonte, Greg Warner, Scott Markovich and Dennis Labadie. In the June primary, Biane had finished ahead of the others with 34.18 percent or 14,184 of the 41,492 votes cast. Since he had fallen short of being selected on a majority of the ballots, he was forced into a run-off against Rutherford, who had finished second with 31.74 percent or 13,169 votes.

In the November 2010 balloting, Rutherford outdistanced the incumbent, capturing **See P 5**

Upper Little Bear Board Content To Prescribe Cutting Trees and Scraping Chaparral To Limit Fire Hazard While Some Residents Claim Killing Trees & Allowing Invasive Grasses Will Damage Forest & Create Kindling *from front page*

them, contained on less than 50 acres at the 5,200 elevation that features a natural topography that is part of an indigenous mixed conifer-oak forest containing native wildland fauna and flora. Dominating the stands are ponderosa pine, Jeffrey pine, white fir, incense cedar, sugar pine, black oak, and live oak species, with understory shrub species that include ceanothus and manzanita. The Upper Little Bear District lies juxtaposed to and intermixed with the National Forest.

A basic wildfire mitigation strategy that has been developed by foresters and the U.S. Forest Service over the years is termed “fuel reduction.”

In explicating the concept of fuel reduction, the U.S. Forest Service states, “The objective is to remove enough vegetation or fuel so that when a wildfire burns, it is less severe and can be more easily managed. When vegetation, or fuels, accumulate, they allow fires to burn hotter, faster, and with higher flame lengths. When fire encounters areas of continuous brush or small trees, it can burn these ‘ladder fuels’ and may quickly move from a ground fire into the treetops, creating a crown fire. Thinning trees, removing underbrush, and limbing trees are done using hand crews or machines. Cut material is ground into chips or piled and burned during the winter.”

Areas such as Upper Little Bear qualify as what is defined as a “wildland urban interface.” According to the U.S. Forest Service, “Much of the effort in fuels reduction is focused in and around wildland urban interface developments both inside and outside of parks. Effective fuels mitigation treatments are implemented across jurisdictional boundaries, on adjoining private lands in coordination, collaboration and in partnership with local

communities and their governing mechanisms. Projects of this type include fuel breaks, thinning, pruning, landscape modifications, etc.”

The U.S. Forest Service shares jurisdictional responsibility over the San Bernardino Mountains with other governmental entities, which include the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, known by its acronym CALFIRE, the San Bernardino County Sheriff’s Department and the San Bernardino County Fire Department.

In reaction to a series of generally worsening and devastating fires, then-Governor Jerry Brown by executive order created the California Forest Management Task Force, making the funding for that unit what was intended to be a permanent part of the annual state budgetary process, simultaneously increasing from 250,000 to 500,000 the number of acres slated for fuel mitigation.

Traditionally, the board of the Upper Little Bear Homeowners’ Association has been granted relative autonomy in acting in what has essentially been deemed the best interest of the Upper Little Bear community as a whole. Less than thorough minutes of the board’s meetings are generated, ones that do little more than note the outcome of votes taken or actions initiated, and which do not reflect any spirited debate or differences over those policies, which for the most part have not occurred in any event, at least until recently.

That changed when the board, essentially on its own volition and with little or actually no input from its members’ constituents, after taking stock of what the State of California fuel reduction program offered through CalFire at no cost to communities falling within the wildland urban in-

terface, applied to be put on the roster for intensive tree cutting.

Minutes of the Upper Little Bear Homeowners’ Association Board meetings are not routinely publicly available. Using deduction, based on known quantifiables and a few minutes that have leaked out, the most recent request to CalFire for the fuel reduction strategy to be applied in Upper Little Bear was made in January or February of 2021, with no fanfare, such that most or perhaps even all residents of the community other than the board were not aware of the application. In CalFire’s processing of the request, notification of the pending tree cutting in Upper Little Bear was made to the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, such that by April 2021, a biologist with the department, Edith Martinez, penned a letter noting that CalFire crews should use caution in carrying out the thinning process to prevent destruction to the habitat of several species known to inhabit the area in and around Upper Little Bear, including the southern rubber boa snakes and any birds that would be nesting in the trees to be taken down. Martinez noted in the letter that CalFire or its contractors would need to obtain a specialized permit under Fish and Game Code Section 86 if the animals needed to be captured and relocated or potentially killed in carrying out the fuel reduction program.

It is not clear whether Martinez’s letter was actually sent and delivered to CalFire or how it was processed if it was delivered.

At issue is a pointed disagreement as to both the efficacy of the fuel reduction program as pursued by CalFire in preventing conflagrations and the wisdom of the strategy in terms of the trade-off it involves in terms of havoc to the flora eradicated and damage to the habitat of the animals living within the biosphere of the flora that is removed.

The rationale provided for the CalFire strategy of fuel reduction is that by thinning the forest of

smaller trees and brush, the “fuel load” is reduced and the distance between trees is increased, lowering the potential for the contagion of fire once it has begun.

Countervailing that theory is that by eradicating trees, which do not catch fire, relatively, as quickly as sparse or even thick bushes and grasses, a vacuum of space is created and that vacuum, if not immediately then eventually, is filled with grasses and shrubs that burn quickly and serve as kindling, when a fire does come, to ignite the trees around them. Moreover, critics of the aggressive natural scrub brush scraping and tree cutting approach assert that leaving the indigenous plants and small trees in place serves to provide shade and prevent evaporation and the retention of moisture, which can, to a point, retard the progression or initiation of a fire. The U.S. Forest Service previously used federal funds before they became unavailable to engage in fuel reduction efforts. Now, CalFire is using state money to carry out fuel reduction. Opponents of the process say chain saws or masticators that have been used in other areas are utilized to clear out trees and vegetation, and embedded in the teeth of the masticators or the blades of the saws are seeds of combustible and invasive grasses from other areas, which are thereby transplanted to the land being cleared. This, those advocating against the fuel reduction strategy maintain, reduces native species and often increases invasive species of plants, including grasses and vegetation that are commonly more vulnerable to catching fire rapidly and leading to the spread of flames than the indigenous plants and understory growth that is being removed.

In Upper Little Bear the project confines itself to approximately 40 acres of the forest, which are of lesser and greater proximity to homes and are thus designated as lying within a so-called “state responsibility area.” The already accomplished and planned fuel reduc-

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tion treatments extend to cutting down trees up to 12 inches in diameter at breast height to an average spacing of 20 feet between tree trunks. Residual trees have been or are to be pruned to a height of eight feet or ½ the tree height, whichever is less. All vegetation within the drip-line of residual trees has been or will be removed using chainsaws or a masticator, according to CalFire. Ground-based equipment, including a rubber tracked skid-steer and rubber tracked chipper, has been and will continue to be used throughout the project area. Dead wood, to the extent that it has or will become apparent, has been or will either be chipped or covered with clear plastic. Within chaparral dominated areas, up to 85% of brush groundcover has been or will be masticated or cut using chainsaws and chipped onsite or piled and burned in order to create a mosaic of islands of vegetation of various natural appearing shapes and sizes. Vegetation cut using chainsaws will either be chipped onsite or piled and burned. CalFire has expressed the intention of engaging in the inter-planting of seedlings in the future. CalFire maintains that erosion control measures and project design features have been incorporated into the project so that significant adverse impacts to resources will be non-existent.

Among those who are critical of the fuel reduction strategy being applied in Upper Little Bear are Dr. Chad Hanson, Ph.D., of the *Earth Island Institute*, an ecolo-

gist who is a co-founder of the *John Muir Project*; Steve Loe, a retired U.S. Forest Service biologist; and Hugh Bialecki of the *Save Our Forest Association*.

Hanson told the *Sentinel*, “A large and growing body of scientific evidence is now telling us that removing trees from forests is most often associated with faster and more intense wildfires, despite misleading terms like ‘thinning’ and ‘fuel reduction’ being used to promote these projects. The reason is simple. Wildfires are driven mostly by weather and climate factors – hot, dry, windy conditions – and when trees are removed it reduces the cooling shade of the forest canopy, which alters the microclimate of the forest and makes it more susceptible to extreme weather and climate. In a nutshell, removing trees and mature shrubs makes the forest hotter and drier, and it reduces the wind-break effect that denser forests have against the gusts that drive flames. In addition, after ‘thinning’ and mastication, we invariably see a dramatic increase in the spread of highly flammable invasive grasses, like cheatgrass, while the masticated wood chips act like kindling in a wildfire.”

Hanson continued, “Interestingly, study after study also find that dead wood doesn’t increase fire intensity, and may actually reduce it. The reason is that downed logs soak up and retain huge amounts of water, like giant sponges. In fact, even in a drought year,

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Young & Taylor Started Out As Republican Allies Before Becoming Bitter Rivals Battling Over Control Of The West Valley H₂O District

from front page

his election to the West Valley Water position in 2013.

Nine years earlier, in 2004, then-Fifth District San Bernardino County Supervisor Jerry Eaves, the sole Democrat on that panel, was ignominiously forced to resign as both state and federal prosecutors were dueling over which would prosecute him for a long list of violations of the public trust, including fixing government contracts, bribetaking, conflicts of interest on county relationships with vendors, developers, franchise holders and the like. While state charges against Eaves were pending, federal prosecutors filed, repeatedly, political corruption charges against Eaves, only to have them tossed out by Federal Judge Manuel Real, who ruled that the two-tracked state and federal prosecutions of Eaves constituted subjecting Eaves to double jeopardy. The federal prosecutors thereafter would recraft the charges in an effort to avoid cloning the state prosecutorial effort, only to see Real dismiss them once again. Eaves' lawyer timed it so he entered into a plea arrangement with the San Bernardino County District Attorney's Office immediately after Judge Real had made one of his dismissal rulings and before the federal prosecutors had time to react. In that deal, Eaves was to receive no jail time in exchange for resigning from office. Faced with the vacancy on the board, Eaves' erstwhile colleagues voted to appoint the Republican Young to replace him, giving the GOP a five-vote lock on setting county policy. Young became the first African-American to serve on the San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors.

After serving out his appointed term, Young, a PhD, went back to his post in academia, as the

chairman of the School of Public Administration at California State University, San Bernardino.

While Young in his youth had been a Democrat, by the late 1970s he had become a Republican. His devotion to the GOP was such that he did his part, prior to 2009 when registered Republicans in San Bernardino County outnumbered Democrats and from 2009 onward at which point the number of registered Democrats in San Bernardino County eclipsed the number of registered Republicans, to ensure Republican primacy in San Bernardino County. An element of this consisted of his determination to serve as a model for African-Americans locally to demonstrate that they are welcome in the Republican Party and their interests are better served through the Republican approach to governance than that of the Democratic Party. The West Valley Water District fell within the Fifth Supervisorial District, which had and continues to have the heaviest concentration of Democrats in the county. Nevertheless, the Republicans in San Bernardino County have a far more energetic and efficient political machine than their Democratic rivals. Young personally participated in keeping the Republicans on top.

While local races in California are considered to be nonpartisan, in San Bernardino County all of politics is steeped in partisanship. In the West Valley Water District, Democrats have for more than five decades held a commanding advantage numerically over Republicans. At present, of the district's 48,317 voters, 23,903 or 49.5 percent are Democrats. In this way, they outnumber by a margin of more than two-to-one the district's 10,107 Republicans, who compose 20.9 percent of the district's voters. The 10,859 voters in the West Valley Water District who have no party affiliation outnumber Republicans. Nevertheless, the powerful San Bernardino County Republican political machine has over the last decade worked toward establishing a Republican majority on the

board of the West Valley Water District.

In 2013, at which point the Democrats had asserted themselves to capture control of the West Valley Board, Young inserted himself back into electoral politics, capturing a position on the water board.

Two years later, he supported another Republican, Greg Young, to whom he was not blood related, in getting him elected to the board.

Two years thereafter, in 2017, Clifford Young ran for reelection and supported two other Republicans, Michael Taylor and Kyle Crowther, in their bids for board positions. Taylor was the former police chief of Baldwin Park and, like Young, has a PhD. The younger Crowther likewise was employed in law enforcement, as a Fontana School District police officer. Young was reelected, Taylor was elected to a full four-year term and Crowther succeeded in getting elected to the two-year term for the position he sought, that being to fill out the remainder of the term to which Alan Dyer had been elected in 2015. Dyer resigned from the district post in 2016.

Almost immediately after Taylor and Crowther were sworn in, they joined with Young and Young to suspend or place on administrative leave district general manager Matthew Litchfield; Assistant General Manager Greg Gage; the district's human resources manager, Karen Logue; and the board's secretary, Shanae Smith. They terminated chief financial officer Marie Ricci. That bold action was opposed by the lone Democrat on the board, Don Olinger.

By the end of 2018, however, a rivalry developed between Dr. Clifford Young and Dr. Michael Taylor, who, true to their respective alpha male personalities, sought control of the water district. Greg Young sided with Clifford Young, and Crowther followed Taylor. This put the Democrat Olinger into possession of the board's swing vote. Ultimately, Olinger aligned himself with Taylor and Crowther.

In 2019, at Taylor's behest, the district's general manager, Clarence Mansell, hired Republican political operative and then-Hesperia City Councilman Jeremiah Brosowske into a \$250,000 total annual compensation position as the district's assistant general manager. Brosowske, who had a considerable track record running political campaigns but no experience, expertise, training or licensing relating to water operations, at once went to work on assisting candidates favored by Taylor in the upcoming election.

Also in 2019, with the enmity between Clifford Young and Taylor deepening, Clifford Young joined with West Valley Water District Chief Financial Officer Naisha Davis and West Valley Water District Assistant Board Secretary Patricia Romero in filing a whistleblower lawsuit in Los Angeles Superior Court naming as defendants Taylor; Crowther; West Valley Water District General Manager Clarence Mansell; West Valley Water District General Counsel Robert Tafoya and his law firm, Tafoya & Garcia; West Valley Water District Special Counsel Clifton Albright and his law firm, Albright Yee & Schmit; West Valley Water District Special Counsel Martin Kaufman and his law firm, the Kaufman Law Firm; and West Valley Water District consultant Robert Katherman. The suit further specified Ricardo Pacheco, who was at that time one of the West Valley Water District's assistant general managers and was also a Baldwin Park city councilman, as a co-conspirator.

The lawsuit alleged that Albright, Kaufman and Katherman and/or their firms were given lucrative contracts with the district in exchange for bribes or hefty political contributions. The suit further propounded that Tafoya, who was Baldwin Park's city attorney, had arranged for Taylor, who had previously retired as police chief in Baldwin Park, to be rehired as Baldwin Park police chief on a contractual basis in exchange for

Tafoya being hired by the West Valley Water District. In tandem with this arrangement, according to the lawsuit, Pacheco as a member of the Baldwin Park City Council had approved his city's contract with Taylor to serve as interim police chief and was rewarded with a \$397,319.60 total annual compensation position as assistant general manager position at West Valley Water District, which was some \$115,000 more than was being paid to the district's general manager.

As the November 2019 election approached, the Taylor and Crowther political team, assisted by Brosowske, put together a strategy intended to neuter Clifford Young politically. They arranged for a young man, Angel Ramirez, who had involved himself in Republican circles and was active in supporting campaigns in his native Fontana, to move into a rental unit in east Bloomington, making him eligible to run against Clifford Young's council ally, Greg Young, in that year's West Valley Division 5 contest. Ramirez jumped into the race and Taylor then utilized \$19,128.04 from his own campaign fund to help Ramirez, by both transferring money directly to Ramirez's campaign or using it to pay for pro-Ramirez materials provided by a third party or independent expenditure committee.

Simultaneously, Taylor endeavored to assist the then-90-year-old Olinger in his reelection campaign against his challenger, another Democrat, Channing Hawkins, in West Valley's Division 4. In support of the effort to keep Hawkins from replacing Olinger, Taylor utilized \$22,620.48 from his own campaign war chest to help the incumbent by either transferring money from his electioneering fund to Olinger's political account or purchasing electioneering materials in the form of ads or mailers for Olinger.

Also running in that year's race was Crowther in the district's Division 1.

Once the dust settled after the November 5,

2019 voting at the polls and the counting of mail-in ballots, Crowther had prevailed with 282 votes or 53.41 percent; Greg Young had held off Ramirez and another challenger by capturing 340 votes or 52.63 percent; and Hawkins had trounced Olinger by capturing 623 votes or 64.83 percent.

In the Division 4 and Division 5 races, Taylor had bet on the wrong horses. In the four weeks and two days between the election and the swearing-in of the three victors, it appeared that a new coalition involving both Youngs and Hawkins was certain to form, resulting in Clifford Young moving into a position of ascendancy over Taylor.

On the evening of December 5, 2019 as the board meeting during which the newly composed board was to be seated commenced, Clifford Young had hopes of being returned to the position of board president before the evening was over. In the early stages of the meeting, however, the chairman's gavel was yet in Dr. Taylor's right hand, and while he held it he made extremely skillful use of it. Following the swearing-in ceremony for the recently elected or re-elected members, the first order of business on the agenda was the reorganization of the board's officers. As soon as the item was taken up, Taylor used his control over the proceedings to avoid the recognition of anyone else and gave expression to his newly informed opinion, based, he said, on his interaction with Hawkins since the election. Praising Hawkins as "a very bright and gifted person who has an amazing degree of maturity for a person of his age," Taylor nominated Hawkins to the position of board president. In making the nomination, Taylor ignored the district's long tradition of conferring the board presidency upon a member who has accumulated at least two years and more often four years or more tenure on the board.

Without hesitation and not waiting for Crowther to second the nomination, Hawkins himself voiced

Continued on Page 6

Ecologist Says The Best Forest Fire Preventative Strategy Consists Of Leaving The Forest In Its Natural State While Creating Defensive Space Around Homes *from page 2*

downed logs can hold 25 times more water per cubic area than the surrounding soil.”

Additionally, Hanson said, “The current science is also telling us that the only effective way to protect homes is to help homeowners conduct ‘home hardening,’ by which homes are made more fire-resistant by installing ember-proof exterior vents, rain gutter guards, and sweeping needles and leaves off of roofs, as well as by creating ‘defensible space,’ which entails pruning within 100 feet around homes. This includes removing lower limbs, seedlings, dry grasses and accumulations of dry leaves and needles immediately adjacent to homes. Beyond 100 feet from homes, there is no additional benefit to vegetation management in terms of home protection. In fact, we are now seeing many cases where, unfortunately, thinning and mastication in wildlands beyond 100 feet from homes have been associated with faster and hotter wildfires that have burned down communities, such as the Camp Fire of 2018, the Dixie Fire of 2021, the Caldor Fire of 2021, and of course the Grass Valley Fire of 2007, which rapidly burned through a large ‘thinning’ area west of Lake Arrowhead and burned down 199 homes. So, we know that the tree cutting approach that CalFire is implementing right now in the Upper Little Bear area is a proven failure, and actually increases the threat of wildfire to communities. The vast majority of the acreage that they are cutting is more than 100 feet from homes, and doing that won’t protect homes from fire – it will make things worse.”

Steve Loe was for 30 years employed by the federal government as a biologist with the U.S. Forest Service, in which capacity he was assigned to the San Bernardino National Forest.

“During my time on the forest, I tried to work

with San Bernardino County and local residents to manage the National Forest lands and private land in such a manner that the mountains would continue to support healthy populations of plants and animals,” Loe said.

The situation in Upper

from an ecological standpoint, different parts of the parcel should be treated differently. Areas adjacent to Arrowhead Ridge preserved lands should be treated differently than the forest stands next to the houses. Research has shown that the way to keep houses from burning is to treat the area around homes and the homes themselves really well so fire and burning ash and embers do not get to houses and catch them

Loe noted, “Many of the animals that come through those corridors feed on rodents and other small animals that live in and feed on the shrubs. Rubber boas also need cover from down logs and piles of vegetation. Cleaning up all of woody debris on the forest floor will adversely affect the boa. They do not need a ‘clean park’ setting. We need the right kind of prescription that takes care of the animals while

ment. We need to leave the forest as natural as we can while protecting the homes. It can be done.”

Hugh Bialecki is the president of the *Save Our Forest Association*. He told the *Sentinel*, “What’s unfortunate here, from my perspective, is you have a homeowners’ association board looking out for the property owners that has invited CalFire in to do a well-meaning fire hazard reduction program, and CalFire

is a difference of opinion between the biological experts and the people on the ground carrying out this action. It is difficult because since the homeowners’ association voted to go ahead with this and many of the homeowners are on board with what the board decided to do and they are not willing to do something different or change what they are asking CalFire to do, there is not much in the way of recourse.”

There is a clear divide among the residents of the Upper Little Bear district, Bialecki said.

“I have talked with some of the other homeowners who feel like this is more than they realized what is going to be happening, but they are going along with it because the homeowners’ association board has to be responsible for the 40 plus acres of that small community, and all things being considered, the program is probably the right thing to do,” Bialecki said. “Others feel it is too much to be taking down trees that are up to or more than 12 inches in diameter.”

With regard to the number of and size of trees being cut down, Bialecki said, “I have had conversations with CalFire personnel, whom I respect. Their attitude is ‘We think something needs to be done and the homeowners’ board agrees with us.’”

Nevertheless, Bialecki said, there are those with expertise in the realm of forest management who do not accept that the CalFire’s strategy is the only or even the best method of reducing the fire hazard in wildland urban interface areas such as Upper Little Bear. He contrasted CalFire’s approach with that of Southern California Edison, which has a project nearby. Edison, he said, is being far more conservative in its alteration of the forest, and is consulting with biologists and foresters prior to any of the ground cover or tree removals it engages in.

“There is a lot of valuable wildlife habitat there,” Bialecki said. “I believe that with regard to its bush clearing

Feds & State Commit \$637.6 Billion To Combat Wildfires

Federal and state officials today sojourned to San Bernardino to announce their dual intentions of augmenting efforts to prevent future wildfires and recover from conflagrations that have plagued California in recent years.

Vice President Kamala Harris and California Governor Gavin Newsom along with U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack were among the dignitaries at the U.S. Forest Service’s Del Rosa Fire Station located near the doorstep to the San Bernardino National Forest who heralded the federal government’s plans use \$600 billion to refurbish communities and

land devastated by a rash of fires, including ones in the Golden State that burned just under seven million acres in the last two years, money which is to be matched by \$37.6 billion from Sacramento, according to Newsom.

Officials said \$3.2 billion of the federal dollars will be used over the next five years for wildfire prevention, \$2.4 million for hazardous fuels management and wildfire response planning, \$1 billion for wildfire defense grants, \$600 million to fix wildfire damage, another \$600 million for increasing federal firefighters’ salaries and unspecified amounts for create drought-resistant

landscaping, enhancing wildlife habitat and establishing early wildfire detection systems.

Harris referenced California’s firefighters as “heroes,” saying they “serve... with incredible courage and commitment.”

Since the turn of the Third Millennium in 2000, the frequency and intensity of fires in California have escalated on a nearly geometric scale, exacerbated by droughts running from 1999 until 2004, 2006 until 2010, 2011 until 2017, in 2018 and in 2020. According to the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, 18 of the 20 largest and most intense

fires in California’s history occurred between 2000 and 2021, with nine of those in 2020 and 2021.

The selection of Harris to make the announcement of the federal fire relief funding, which is contained within the recently passed \$1 trillion-plus infrastructure bill put forth by the Joseph Biden Administration, was an outgrowth of her being a native daughter of California, having previously served in the roles of U.S. Senator and California Attorney General. Vilsack’s Agriculture Department oversees the U.S. Forest Service.

-M.G.

Little Bear was brought to his attention recently he said.

“I met with representatives of the homeowners’ association and walked the site, which is an important wildlife corridor that extends from the north side of the San Bernardino Mountains to the south side. There are fox, bobcat, coyote, mule deer, black bear, spotted owl – a sensitive species – and other owls, all types of birds and a lot of hawks crossing through the area where development has happened to much of the natural habitat. It is an important corridor and connects to the Protected Arrowhead Ridge Preserve. It is habitat for the southern rubber boa, another threatened species. All of these species and the ecological function of the area are affected by what is being done to the forest in that spot, in my opinion. I sent a letter to CalFire, telling them that they are treating the area all the same way, when

on fire. You do not need to treat an area that is a quarter of a mile away from where the homes are the same way you treat the areas right up next to the houses.”

Loe continued, “I told them how important it was not to use the same prescription in the entire forest. Areas with a lot of invasive grasses should not be opened too much or invasive grasses will increase, making the fuels more flashy. Areas away from homes in the drainages should be left denser to protect the soil and avoid erosion. Other small islands with less treatment should be left away from homes. Leaving shrubs in these islands will provide food and cover for the rodents and their predators and deer, as well as providing hiding areas for wildlife living in and moving through the wildlife corridor that is shared with the *San Bernardino Mountains Land Trust* on Arrowhead Ridge.”

protecting the homes. I intend to ask CalFire to hold a meeting and have workshop to look at the treatment prescription and see if it can be modified to meet both objectives.”

A more nuanced approach to the overall situation and the objections that concerned residents are expressing about the Upper Little Bear Homeowners’ Association Board’s embrace of the CalFire fuel reduction strategy is called for, Loe said.

“In Upper Little Bear, the residents did not know permission had been granted by the homeowners’ association to CalFire for this plan,” Loe said. “The only way to get out of that is to consider new prescriptions which are not intended to open the land up so much that it looks and acts like a park. You can do that. What is called for is a prescription – a treatment – that varies with the conditions and need for treat-

has a one-size-fits-all prescription for how it is going to protect those homes. This means they are removing trees with a diameter of 12 inches at chest level, which means that some of the trees coming out range from 15-to-25 years old. Climate change is changing things, and as the ground becomes more dry, trees are growing more slowly.”

In addition to the forest’s flora, Bialecki said, consideration needs to be given to its fauna.

“In addition, that is an area where there is a wildlife corridor,” he said. “The determination should come down to ‘What is the best balance between public safety and environmental protection? How do we protect people and their homes and the wildlife going through the corridor?’ Some believe CalFire is way too aggressive in what is being carried out, and that there are alternatives. In particular, there

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Republicans Looking To Keep Second District Supervisorial Seat, Even If It Means Ruthlessly Cutting Some Of Their Own Party's Hopefuls Off At The Knees *from front page*

44,166 votes or 51.81 percent to Biane's 41,086 votes or 48.19 percent.

The following year, Biane's already declining political capital plunged even further when Bill Postmus, his erstwhile ally on the board of supervisors, pleaded guilty to criminal charges that had been lodged against him, turned state's evidence and then testified before a grand jury, implicating Biane in an extortion and bribery scheme related to a vote Postmus and Biane had made along with Supervisor Gary Ovitt in November 2006 that conferred a \$102 million settlement on the Colonies Partners to bring a lawsuit that development consortium had filed against the county over flood control issues at the Colonies at San Antonio residential and Colonies Crossroads commercial subdivisions in Upland. Following the \$102 million settlement vote, the Colonies Partners' principals had made political contributions totaling \$100,000 each to both Postmus and Biane. In April 2011, Postmus's testified before a grand jury and in May 2011, Biane was indicted along with one of the managing directors of the Colonies Partners and other public officials who had likewise received \$100,000 contributions from that development company in the aftermath of the \$102 million legal settlement.

Biane remained in limbo for nearly six years until the matter went to trial in January 2017, proceedings for which lasted for more than seven months, at which time he was acquitted.

Meanwhile, Rutherford flourished politically, and was reelected in 2014 and 2018. Having at this point served nearly two months into her fourth year of her third term, she is not eligible to remain as Second District supervisor after her current term concludes in December, which is a

direct result of the term limits put into the county charter as the result of a measure sponsored by Biane in 2006.

Rutherford, recognizing that she would need to depart as supervisor later this year, shortly after her 2018 election began casting about for a way to extend her political career. Word was that she had closed a deal with San Bernardino County Assessor/Recorder/County Clerk Bob Dutton by which he would vie this year to succeed her as Second District supervisor with her endorsement and she would simultaneously run, with his endorsement, for assessor/recorder/county clerk. That deal included, it was said, an agreement that the employees in each of their offices would retain their positions once both were elected. As it turned out, however, Dutton, a one-time Rancho Cucamonga councilman, assemblyman and state senator, opted against running for supervisor. He now appears intent on seeking reelection as assessor/recorder/county clerk, in which he is able to delegate virtually all of the responsibility for running his office, which provides him with \$385,325.21 in total pay and benefits annually, to his underlings.

Rutherford has since endorsed Cucamonga Valley Water District Board Member Luis Cetina to succeed her, closing a deal with him in doing so that will guarantee that Cetina will retain most of her staff if he is elected supervisor. She also was instrumental in arranging for something on the order of \$80,000 in donations toward his supervisorial election effort.

Late last year, in a rare circumstance in which Rutherford dissented in a decision made by the majority of her colleagues on the board of supervisors, a new district map for the county

was accepted as part of the redistricting that takes place every ten years, this time in accordance with the population numbers in the 2020 Census. Previously, the Second District covered north Upland, Rancho Cucamonga, the roughly westernmost two-thirds of the City of Fontana and its unincorporated sphere, Mount Baldy, San Antonio Heights and the San Bernardino Mountain communities of Crestline, Cedarpines Park, Lake Gregory, Blue Jay, Lake Arrowhead, Twin Peaks, Valley of Enchantment and Cedar Glen. With the redistricting that will go into effect with this year's election, the Second District is losing the San Bernardino Mountain communities but extending its border eastward in the Central Valley to encompass all of Fontana.

As a consequence of that redistricting, Jesse Armendarez, who was formerly a city councilman in Fontana and ran in 2020 for Fifth District county supervisor as an eastside Fontana resident, now lives in the Second District. He has declared his intention of running to succeed Rutherford this year. Armendarez's move precluded the rumored ambition of Fontana Mayor Acquanetta Warren, who previously counted Armendarez as an ally and a member of her ruling coalition on the Fontana City Council. Armendarez was elected to the council in 2016 with Warren's support, and he proved a reliable vote in support of virtually every element of Warren's agenda while he remained on the council for four years. In running for Fifth District supervisor two years ago, however, Armendarez, defied Warren, who was leaning toward supporting then-West Valley Water District Board Member Clifford Young in his contemplated bid for supervisor. It appeared that Armendarez's ambition may have breached the once steadfast connection he had with Warren, who nonetheless came around to support Arm-

endarez in his ultimately failed Fifth District supervisorial bid.

Armendarez was the only Republican vying in that contest, which featured two relatively well-funded Democrats – then-Rialto Councilman Joe Baca, Jr. and Colton Joint Unified School District Board Member Dan Flores, who was also then-Fifth District Supervisor Josie Gonzales's chief of staff. Baca won the 2020 contest, despite Armendarez's determination, which was demonstrated by his having loaned his campaign over \$90,000.

Previously, DeJonaé Shaw of Upland, a licensed vocational nurse currently employed with Kaiser Permanente Southern California, declared her candidacy in the Second District.

Of note is the degree to which partisanship is a major factor in San Bernardino County's local races and supervisorial contests in particular.

This is because of the intensity and degree of efficiency with which the Republican Party functions in San Bernardino County.

California is a Democratic state. All of its major state political posts – governor, lieutenant governor, attorney general, secretary of state, controller, superintendent of public schools, treasurer, insurance commissioner – are held by Democrats. The Democrats hold supermajorities – meaning they hold more than two-thirds of the seats – in the state legislature, both the upper house state senate and the lower house assembly. Both of the state's U.S. senators are Democrats. Of its current 51 members of the U.S. Congress, 42 are Democrats.

San Bernardino County is among the last bastions of Republicanism in the Golden State. The Republicans have maintained their edge in San Bernardino County despite being at not only a disadvantage but a considerable disadvantage to their Democratic counterparts in terms of voter registration.

Overall in San Ber-

nardino County as of January 16, 470,799 of the county's 1,142,760 voters, or 41.2 percent, are registered Democrats, which is 136,127 more than the county's 334,672 registered Republicans, which represents 29.3 percent of the county's voters. At the same time 247,075 of the county's voters, or 21.6 percent, have no party affiliation. The remaining 7.9 percent of the county's electorate identifies as members of the Libertarian, Green, Peace & Freedom, American Independent or other more obscure parties. The county is divided into five supervisorial districts. In only one of those districts, the Third, do Republicans outnumber Democrats, 88,826 or 37.1 percent to 81,584 or 34 percent. Nevertheless, in all but the Fifth Supervisorial District, where Democrats currently outnumber Republicans by an overwhelming 102,740 or 50.2 percent to 39,812 or 19.5 percent, the incumbent supervisors are Republicans.

By law, local elections are considered non-partisan in nature, such that candidates are not identified by party on the ballot, as are candidates in state or federal races. Nevertheless, in San Bernardino County, party affiliation has everything to do with local electoral contests. While the San Bernardino County Democratic Central Committee has been highly ineffective for more than 40 years and was for the eight years between 2012 and 2020 led by chairman who in his professional capacity as a political consultant worked on behalf of Republicans, the San Bernardino County Republican Central Committee has burnished its reputation as one which is highly coordinated and well-funded, focused and efficient, capable of running aggressive campaigns aimed not just at promoting Republican candidates across the board but using hard hitting tactics in attacking their Democratic opponents.

In the Second Dis-

trict, the Democrats currently hold what appears to be a solid advantage in terms of voter registration numbers, with 108,115 or 43.4 percent of the district's 249,293 voters affiliated with the Democrats and 69,300 voters or 27.8 registered as Republicans.

That is not overly concerning to local Grand Old Party activists, however, as their superior fundraising ability, the general innate tendency of the Democrats to show up at the polls or to use mail ballots to vote with far less frequency or reliability than Republicans, the Republicans' tried and proven methods of appealing to independent voters and their determination to simply outthrustle their Democratic rivals gives them confidence early in this election year that Rutherford, a Republican, will be replaced by a member of her party in December after the current election cycle concludes.

What is less than clear at this point is who will be the GOP's standard bearer in the race.

A recent survey, one that was done either by the party itself, party members or quite possibly by a company with an interest in perpetuating the Republican hold on county government, has been making the rounds in the Second District in recent weeks. There is a question as to whether the poll is a straightforward effort to determine which of a set of potential Republican candidates would do best in the upcoming June primary and perhaps the ultimate November election or whether the poll is the first sally in an electoral effort on behalf of one of those candidates meant to shunt his Republican competitors for the Second District supervisorial post to the side.

One indication that the survey originated with either the Republican Party, some element of the local Republican establishment or perhaps a particular Republican hopeful is that it seeks to map out electability

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While Young & Taylor Were At War With One Another, Hawkins Assumed Control Of The District *from page 3*

the second. The vote was then taken. It passed 4-to-0, with Greg Young abstaining.

On December 12, 2019, a week after Hawkins had replaced Olinger on the board, a letter from all but two of the district's eighteen department managers was delivered to Hawkins and the remainder of the board, pressing them to relieve Clarence Mansell of his position as general manager. Complaining of low morale within the district staff, the letter stated, "General Manager Mansell has alienated employees by removing responsibilities from specific individuals to those who will do his bidding." The letter spoke of "extreme concerns with regards to the executive management and overall unsatisfactory performance of General Manager Clarence Mansell, Jr." and a continuing "lack of transparency, communication, honesty, professionalism and respect for employees of the West Valley Water District" that had led them "to the firm conclusion that the only way to save our water district is to change the leadership of the West Valley Water District."

The board did not comply with the letter's demand or request.

At issue was that the board could not allow itself to be seen as allowing district staff to be setting district policy and making personnel decisions that were the province of the board. Moreover, there was no one on staff in whom the entirety of the board had confidence sufficient to reach a consensus on as a replacement for Mansell. Brosowske, who was receiving a quarter-of-a-million dollars in total annual compensation to serve as assistant general manager, did not have the requisite knowledge or skill to run the district.

2019 had not fully run its course when a threat to the alliance between Taylor and Crowther emerged, growing out of Crowther discovering that month that Taylor

had failed to disclose to him three months earlier that West Valley Water District Human Resources and Risk Manager Deborah Martinez was under investigation for tax evasion.

During the 2019 campaign, Hawkins had been made aware of how Brosowske was being deployed to politic on behalf of Olinger against him. Hawkins at that time indicated that if he were elected over Olinger, Brosowske would become a "dead man walking."

Despite the consideration that from the time he was sworn into office sufficient votes to order Mansell to cashier Brosowske existed – those of Hawkins, Greg Young and Clifford Young – no action to terminate Brosowske was taken for four months.

In April 2020, in a face-saving arrangement for Brosowske, he tendered his resignation, and the district in accepting it conferred upon him a \$154,884.80. severance package.

Mansell, the highest ranking staff member at the West Valley Water District, became a prisoner in his own office, as virtually all of the district's department heads were at some level hostile toward him.

Despite the damage Taylor's withholding of information relating to Martinez and the eventual criminal tax evasion charges that were leveled against her, Crowther remained for the most part closer to Taylor than to either Young or Young. While Taylor had to make some adjustments and accept certain aspects of Hawkins's leadership and decision-making he was less than fully comfortable with, he managed to stay in step with Hawkins, more so than Young or Young. This gave Taylor one up on Clifford Young. With his wife's death, Clifford Young became more and more distracted over the last year, and the rivalry between himself and Taylor less pronounced.

With Mansell still collecting his \$282,014 per

year total employment compensation package but having become virtually non-functional because of the disdain the district's employees had toward him, the district board turned to Shamindra "Rickey" Manbahal, who had been hired as the district's chief financial officer in 2019, to serve as the district's de facto general manager. Manbahal was moved into the full-fledged general manager's post last summer, after Mansell's departure.

The board voted on January 13 to fill the vacancy in its ranks created by Crowther's departure with Angela Garcia. Garcia is employed by the South Coast Air Quality Management District's Environmental Justice Inter-Agency Task Force and as an engineering geologist for the State of California Environmental Protection Agency (Cal EPA) Department of Toxic Substances Control. She has a bachelor's degree in geology from Cal State Fullerton and a master's degree in geology with an emphasis on environmental hydrogeology from Cal State Los Angeles. She is married to Fontana City Councilman Peter Garcia.

"Director Garcia is a highly qualified individual with years of technical, government, and outreach experience," Hawkins said. "We're excited to work with Director Garcia to provide more communities of the Inland Empire with safe, sustainable, affordable and reliable water for decades to come."

Board Member Greg Young said that the district sought applicants to replace Crowther and that upon Garcia's submission of her request to be considered the competition was essentially over.

"She is eminently qualified," Young said. "As someone who is steeped in the technical aspects of water operations myself, I appreciate the opportunity to have someone with her knowledge and understanding on the board."

No others applied for the post.

Greg Young told the *Sentinel* that with the departures of Crowther, who was for the most

part aligned with Taylor, and Clifford Young, taken together with Mansell leaving last year, he sees an opportunity for the district to put aside the hard line personality differences that had bifurcated the board and roiled district staff for so long, such that "We can commit ourselves to doing what is in the best interests of the ratepayers and put political ambition aside."

Asked if he anticipated that the departure of Clifford Young might lead to the substitution, or revival, of a rivalry between Taylor and Hawkins as the two remaining alpha types on the board, Young said, "I hope not."

He said it was in both Hawkins' and Taylor's interest for the district to concentrate on relevant issues. He said there is no evidence of any lingering hostility between the two over Taylor's \$22,620.48 effort in 2019 to torpedo Hawkins' electoral effort.

"They work well together when it comes to the supervision of the district," he said. "By and large, our decisions on the board have been straightforward 5-to-0 votes about 95 percent of the time, with occasional disagreements that are more about governing philosophy. I am trying to work well with all three of my colleagues, and from what I see so far, they are getting along, but sometimes there is disagreement which is more over style and process than what we're trying to accomplish. You will only rarely see issues of substance instead of style when those differences do manifest. Over the last six months, things have been very quiet, particularly as Board Member [Clifford] Young has been struggling in the aftermath of his wife's death. I think we all, Board Member Taylor included, have compassion for what he has experienced and the

pain he is going through. If there are going to be differences in the near term, they will probably come down to a fight over the upcoming budget process. I believe we are all on the same page with President Hawkins, who wants us to develop a five-year strategic plan to lay out what we want to accomplish in the district in the foreseeable future. For the most part, the disagreements you are likely to see at this point are not black and white but more over shades of gray."

Young said that in the upcoming board effort to find a replacement for Clifford Young, he anticipates there will be "more discussion, spirited discussion and even debate" about competing applicants than there was about naming Garcia as Crowther's replacement, which he said was a readily apparent "no-brainer."

-Mark Gutglueck

Save Our Mountain Association President Suggests Compromise Calling For Leaving All Trees With A Diameter Of Eight Inches Or More Standing *from page 4*

and tree cutting, CalFire could have been or still could be less aggressive and should be willing to at least modify the prescription, and tone it down a little bit, based on their own discretion. That may or may not happen in terms of any moderation. I was hoping, before I walked the site, that the level of tree removal was going to be less than what I saw. I think the prescription they are using removes trees that are too large."

Bialecki pointed out that a similar fuel removal program is being carried out by CalFire among coastal redwoods near Santa Cruz, where the regrowth rate is more favorable than in the San Bernardino Mountains, and that the trees removed there are not as large.

"There is a lot more rainfall along the coast," Bialecki said. "We have much drier conditions and here the tree growth is slower. Reseeding other than for cedar trees is not happening to the same degree. There are fewer of the same types of co-

nifers than there were before. With the drought we are in, it is even worse."

Bialecki said he sees room for a compromise that would meet the perceived need for action to limit the fire hazard in the Upper Little Bear area while minimizing damage to the forest. He recommended that CalFire consider limiting tree removals in Upper Little Bear to "what was being done previously, which was six-to-eight inches at breast height. CalFire in Santa Cruz is using an eight inches-and-under standard. If CalFire stays with the 12 inches, they are going to continue to be taking trees that took 25 years to grow. You are not going to get that kind of regrowth for 25 years or more. The prescription they are working under is 12 inches or less. We question the removal of trees of that size. You can back off of that somewhat and use a standard that is more conservative, I believe."

With what would be a minimal degree of focus by responsible parties within CalFire's admin-

istration on crucial distinctions and particulars, Bialecki said, some elements of the Upper Little Bear controversy can be resolved.

"Much of this directly relates to how the people who are doing the work are being supervised," Bialecki said. "The supervisors of the work crews should be allowed some discretion so that in applying the prescription they err on the conservative side when there is some doubt."

Some residents of the Upper Little Bear Community expressed frustration at the manner by which the board members of the homeowners' association arrived at the decision to invite CalFire to engage in the fuel reduction strategy program. The board members, those residents say, presumed there would be universal support for the tree cutting among the homeowners they represent, and then ignored the protests of those who objected to the plan and have now stubbornly dug in their heels in seeking to maintain the policy in face of burgeoning opposition to it.

Ed Reichardt, the current president of the

Continued on Page 10

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FBN 20220000327 The following person is doing business as: FUTURE ADVANCE 2800 E RIVERSIDE DR #277 ONTARIO, CA 91761 (PRINCIPAL PLACE OF BUSINESS SAN BERNARDINO); REINA ISABEL RIVERA GARCIA 2800 E RIVERSIDE DR 277 ONTARIO, CA 91761; DERVE MELENDEZ GONZALEZ 2800 RIVERSIDE DR 277 ONTARIO, CA 91761 The business is conducted by: A MARRIED COUPLE The registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name or names listed above on: JAN 10, 2022 By signing, I declare that all information in this statement is true and correct. A registrant who declares as true information which he or she knows to be false is guilty of a crime (B&P Code 179130. I am also aware that all information on this statement becomes Public Record upon filing. s/ REINA ISABEL RIVERA GARCIA, WIFE Statement filed with the County Clerk of San Bernardino on: JANUARY 13, 2022

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FBN 20220000157 The following person is doing business as: LOUISIANA FRIED CHICKEN & SEAFOOD 16951 FOOTHILL BLVD SUITE B FONTANA, CA 92335(PRINCIPAL PLACE OF BUSINESS SAN BERNARDINO); LMP INTERNATIONAL GROUP INC. 7048 FREMONTIA AVE FONTANA, CA 92336 The business is conducted by: A CORPORATION The registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name or names listed above on: N/A By signing, I declare that all information in this statement is true and correct. A registrant who declares as true information which he or she knows to be false is guilty of a crime (B&P Code 179130. I am also aware that all information on this statement becomes Public Record upon filing. s/ RAHMAN THOMPSON, PRESIDENT Statement filed with the County Clerk of San Bernardino on: JANUARY 13, 2022 I hereby certify that this copy is a correct copy of the original statement on file in my office San Bernardino County Clerk By:/Deputy Notice-This fictitious name statement expires five years from the date it was filed in the office of the county clerk. A new fictitious business name statement must be filed before that time. The filing of this statement does not of itself authorize the use in this state of a fictitious business name in violation of the rights of another under federal, state, or common law (see Section 14400 et seq., Business and Professions Code). Published in the San Bernardino County Sentinel 01/21/2022, 01/28/2022, 02/04/2022, 02/11/2022 CNB-B3202209CH

FBN 20220000073 The following person is doing business as: 909 AUTO BODY AND PAINT 1875 W. RIALTO AVE SAN BERNARDINO, CA 92410(PRINCIPAL PLACE OF BUSINESS SAN BERNARDINO); DAMIAN LOPEZ 175 E EASTON AVE G66 RIALTO, CA 92376; GUALDUPE GARFIAS 1395 W 8TH ST SANBERNARDINO, CA 92411 The business is conducted by: A GENERAL PARTNERSHIP. The registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name or names listed above on: N/A By signing, I declare that all information

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in this statement is true and correct. A registrant who declares as true information which he or she knows to be false is guilty of a crime (B&P Code 179130. I am also aware that all information on this statement becomes Public Record upon filing. s/ DAMIAN LOPEZ, GENERAL PARTNER Statement filed with the County Clerk of San Bernardino on: JANUARY 11, 2022 I hereby certify that this copy is a correct copy of the original statement on file in my office San Bernardino County Clerk By:/Deputy Notice-This fictitious name statement expires five years from the date it was filed in the office of the county clerk. A new fictitious business name statement must be filed before that time. The filing of this statement does not of itself authorize the use in this state of a fictitious business name in violation of the rights of another under federal, state, or common law (see Section 14400 et seq., Business and Professions Code). Published in the San Bernardino County Sentinel 01/21/2022, 01/28/2022, 02/04/2022, 02/11/2022 CNB-B3202210CH

FBN 20220000140 The following person is doing business as: BOSS'D UP BARBER & BEAUTY SALON 7251 BOULDER AVE SUITE A-5 HIGHLAND, CA 92346(PRINCIPAL PLACE OF BUSINESS SAN BERNARDINO); JEFFREY L THOMAS 7251 BOULDER AVE SUITE A-5 HIGHLAND, CA 92346 The business is conducted by: AN INDIVIDUAL. The registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name or names listed above on: N/A By signing, I declare that all information in this statement is true and correct. A registrant who declares as true information which he or she knows to be false is guilty of a crime (B&P Code 179130. I am also aware that all information on this statement becomes Public Record upon filing. s/ JEFFREY L. THOMAS, OWNER Statement filed with the County Clerk of San Bernardino on: JANUARY 13, 2022 I hereby certify that this copy is a correct copy of the original statement on file in my office San Bernardino County Clerk By:/Deputy Notice-This fictitious name statement expires five years from the date it was filed in the office of the county clerk. A new fictitious business name statement must be filed before that time. The filing of this statement does not of itself authorize the use in this state of a fictitious business name in violation of the rights of another under federal, state, or common law (see Section 14400 et seq., Business and Professions Code). Published in the San Bernardino County Sentinel 01/21/2022, 01/28/2022, 02/04/2022, 02/11/2022 CNB-BB3202211MT

FBN 20220000092 The following person is doing business as: ABRAHAM LINCOLMETAX & NOTARY PUBLIC 1498 N. MT VERNON AVE. SUITE #105 COLTON, CA 92324 (PRINCIPAL PLACE OF BUSINESS SAN BERNARDINO); ALEX

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O ASENCIO 1498 N. MT VERNON AVE. SUITE #105 COLTON, CA 92324 The business is conducted by: AN INDIVIDUAL. The registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name or names listed above on: JAN 04, 2002 By signing, I declare that all information in this statement is true and correct. A registrant who declares as true information which he or she knows to be false is guilty of a crime (B&P Code 179130. I am also aware that all information on this statement becomes Public Record upon filing. s/ ALEX O. ASENCIO, OWNER Statement filed with the County Clerk of San Bernardino on: JANUARY 11, 2022 I hereby certify that this copy is a correct copy of the original statement on file in my office San Bernardino County Clerk By:/Deputy Notice-This fictitious name statement expires five years from the date it was filed in the office of the county clerk. A new fictitious business name statement must be filed before that time. The filing of this statement does not of itself authorize the use in this state of a fictitious business name in violation of the rights of another under federal, state, or common law (see Section 14400 et seq., Business and Professions Code). Published in the San Bernardino County Sentinel 01/21/2022, 01/28/2022, 02/04/2022, 02/11/2022 CNB-B3202212IR

FBN 20220000178 The following person is doing business as: MASEDUCACTIONSOLUTIONS 25590 PROSPECT AVE. UNIT14C LOMA LINDA, CA 92354 (PRINCIPAL PLACE OF BUSINESS SAN BERNARDINO); HILDA M MATIAS 25590 PROSPECT AVE. UNIT 14C LOMALINDA, CA 92354 The business is conducted by: AN INDIVIDUAL. The registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name or names listed above on: N/A By signing, I declare that all information in this statement is true and correct. A registrant who declares as true information which he or she knows to be false is guilty of a crime (B&P Code 179130. I am also aware that all information on this statement becomes Public Record upon filing. s/ HILDA M. MATIAS, OWNER Statement filed with the County Clerk of San Bernardino on: JANUARY 13, 2022 I hereby certify that this copy is a correct copy of the original statement on file in my office San Bernardino County Clerk By:/Deputy Notice-This fictitious name statement expires five years from the date it was filed in the office of the county clerk. A new fictitious business name statement must be filed before that time. The filing of this statement does not of itself authorize the use in this state of a fictitious business name in violation of the rights of another under federal, state, or common law (see Section 14400 et seq., Business and Professions Code). Published in the San Bernardino County Sentinel 01/21/2022, 01/28/2022, 02/04/2022, 02/11/2022 CNB-B3202213IR

Wapner & Hagman Sacked The Airport's First General Manager For Not Selling "Surplus Property" To Their Campaign Backers from front page

leagues succeeded, such that in August 2015 Los Angeles agreed to return both ownership and management of the airport to its smaller civic counterpart 35 miles to its east, effective in November 2016. Thereupon, Ontario officials, working through the Ontario International Airport Authority, which had been formed in anticipation of Ontario again assuming control of the airport while the struggle with Los Angeles over its future was yet ongoing, lured Kelly Fredericks, the president and CEO of the Rhode Island Airport Corporation and the de facto executive director of the T.F. Green Airport in Providence, Rhode Island, to sign on as Ontario International Air-

port's executive manager. Fredericks began with Ontario International Airport in March 2016, eight months before Ontario and its airport authority fully established control over aviation operations there. The Ontario International Airport Authority is funded largely, and therefore dominated, by the City of Ontario. Two of the five board positions with the Ontario International Airport Authority were reserved for Ontario City Council members, and Wapner organically moved into one of those positions, acceding immediately to the position of board president. Once in place, Wapner followed his nearly flawless instincts as a politician, and he sought

from his powerful position to facilitate opportunities for his political donors and the donors to the political war chests of the other airport authority board members to enrich themselves at and around the airport, primarily by cashing in on development projects relating to the airport. This was to involve the airport declaring land within its footprint not yet converted to aviation-related use as surplus, and selling it off to developmental interests. Fredericks, however, was dubious about the wisdom of such action. He felt that the airport should hang on to the property it has, giving future generations the option of expanding the airport itself or its aviation-related services and potentially using the land for well-thought-through and planned development of uses that would complement the airport as an economic

engine for the region in the long term, extending to manufacturing, including aeronautical manufacturing if aviation companies show an inclination in that direction. He cautioned against the airport authority and the City of Ontario indiscriminately embracing the first set of proposals made for utilizing that property, ones that would, most certainly, provide an infusion of capital and spur the economy at least temporarily and redound to the benefit of those speculators and businesses willing to invest in the immediate vicinity of the airport, but which would still-the-same commit the city and the property involved to land uses that in the long run might prove less beneficial and wise than if officials were more discerning and patient in their expectations to see development take place. Among those on the

airport authority board with Wapner were his fellow councilman Jim Bowman and San Bernardino County Supervisor Curt Hagman. As highly evolved political animals, Wapner, Bowman and Hagman had no time to shilly-shally around and allow the opportunities that abounded at the airport to elude the movers and shakers who were anxious to pursue them, particularly since those with an inside track on getting down to business in the airport district also happened to be among the trio's most generous campaign donors. Wapner, Hagman and Bowman pressed Fredericks to quit stalling and draw up a roster of airport parcels that could be sold off in the near term. When Fredericks continued to drag his feet, the board cashiered him in July 2017, some 14 months after he had moved into the airport's executive

manager position, and barely eight months after the airport had returned to local control. Fredericks was replaced with Mark Thorpe, who was the airport's chief development officer. Frederick's firing, however, brought unwanted scrutiny to the authority and its board members, in particular their relationships and cavorting with entities, both foreign and domestic, who have an interest in investing in the area around Ontario Airport. In a development noted by many, in 2015 Hagman hired Wapner to serve as his policy advisor in his county supervisor's office. Wapner and Hagman made several trips to China to promote Ontario International Airport as a destination with Chinese airlines. When it was suggested, however, that Hagman's and Wapner's discussions did not

Eliminating “Ladder Fuel” In The Form of Smaller Trees & Vegetation Is A Proven Way Of Warding Off Forest Fires, Upper Little Bear Representatives & CalFire Officials Maintain *from page 4*

board said that the board sought to participate in the fuel reduction program offered by CalFire and then entered into an agreement to allow CalFire to begin the cutting of the trees and curtail the forest undergrowth “because the work is necessary. We made a decision to proceed with the project in accordance with the wishes of a majority of the homeowners. We have a small faction that disagree or want to entertain an alternative approach. They are now at a minority of 3.5-to-one at the last vote. The HOA [homeowners’ association] is bound by the laws of the State of California, and we have to abide by the rules. The membership [of the HOA] favors the approach of using CalFire’s program, which is a tried and true method.”

There is a body of scientific data that justifies engaging in fuel reduction, Reichardt said.

“We have a number of well-established species of trees – pines, conifers, firs – that have been overtaken by cedars and some of the dense undergrowth that takes the nutrients from the soil and competes with those trees and makes them vulnerable to the bark beetle, other pests, disease and fires,” he said. “CalFire has been involved in forest management for decades and decades. There are a minority of foresters that have different opinions and a different way of thinking about how to manage the growth. Their opinions are more applicable and appropriate to large forests and not urban forests. Some of those voices have been brought to the attention of our community and we have listened. We are incorporating their principles wherever it makes sense.”

Reichardt said, “There is also an instigator in our community that’s done a lot to bring the press into the discussion and a lot of misleading and outright false information has been published. This is a manipulation by a small

minority of seasonal residents and even one person who has no financial interest whatsoever in our community.”

In the face of that, Reichardt said, “Regardless, we listen. We have had on-site meetings with their expert, Dr. Chad Hanson, and we considered a lot of what he said and rationalized it with what CalFire has said on [the same issues] and have adopted the position that mechanical mastication is not necessary on our project. There have been concerns raised by members about the rubber boya, and that has been addressed by communication between CalFire and the California Department of Wildlife.”

Reichardt said, “The homeowners’ association is entertaining hiring a biologist to assess the risks on our property. That will be predicated on a number of factors. We are willing to take up the study as we are listening to everyone, even though they are a minority. Our determinations are made in compliance with the Davis Sterling Act, the law in California that governs condominium, cooperative, and planned unit development communities.”

Of those who are objecting to the homeowners’ association arrangement with CalFire, Reichardt said, “A lot of things are being exaggerated. We have bent over backwards to hear their input and that has been put into our plan. There is a small handful of about ten percent of the homeowners or less that have raised concerns about CalFire’s approach, and we have tried to implement the input we have received from their expert. That has been missing from previous reports about this. The board is deciding what is best to be carried out on behalf of the community. We are trying to work toward mutually acceptable solutions by factoring in all the information to make the best decision in terms of mitigating the fire haz-

ards and ensuring safety. We are trying to take the most responsible approach possible.”

“Reichardt noted, “This work has been under way for more than five years. There has been a delay because they [CalFire] were busy fighting fires in other parts of the state. We received a grant from CalFire to do this work that would be hard for a community like ours to [defray]. They have been working on it recently, which is of benefit to us as well as for the surrounding mostly developed and more urbanized areas of Blue Jay and Lake Arrowhead.”

The application with CalFire for the fuel reduction program to be applied in Upper Little Bear was made prior to Reichardt becoming president. The previous president, Bill Reeves, was a prime mover in getting CalFire to include Upper Little Bear in its statewide effort to reduce fuel on 500,000 acres of forest land.

“We are not thinning the trees,” Reeves asserted. “We are removing brush and trees that are under a certain diameter, some of the smallest trees that are less than ten inches in diameter measured at the four-foot level, which is the standard way of measuring trees. Most of the trees we are taking down are under two feet tall. There is a group of up to five people who are opposed to that practice, some of who say we should not cut down any trees, no matter how big or small they are. They have a different philosophy. The majority of us believe in proceeding with what we have done for many many years. This is not the first time we have done this. This is what we have done about every ten years or so. All of these people are new to the area. I can’t say exactly, but most have moved to [Upper Little Bear] within the last six or seven years. They are the newest owners in the community.”

Asked if he could speak to the logic of those, such as Hanson, who reason that clearing the forest of smaller trees and natural undergrowth reduces shade, exposes trees to evaporation along with wind and therefore abun-

dant oxygen, and introduces invasive non-native grasses that upon drying convert into ready-made kindling, Reeves said, “I can’t help you with the reason for why they believe that. We are not saying that the approach others like Dr. Hanson are advocating is necessarily wrong. They would just let every tree grow. If you were to do that, in my opinion and in the opinion of others, the forest would not be as healthy and there would be more ladder fuel to burn the tall trees that are 100 feet tall. What we are doing is cutting the lower branches of trees and removing the chaparral. They are cutting a few trees, but they are under ten inches in diameter.”

Reeves said, “This land we’re on where we are doing this was originally Forest Service land. We are doing exactly what the Forest Service did. We did not have this problem until the bark beetle came in 2003. It killed 1,300 trees which had previously shaded the forest. Before that, we did not have as many of these little trees because of the canopy the larger trees provided and we did not have that much sun on the ground, if you follow me. When the bark beetle came, it immediately changed the forest because so many of these tall trees were cut down and left open space between the remaining trees. Deerbrush, buckthorn, manzanita rapidly grew because they were getting so much light and water. That underbrush rapidly grew. My family has had a cabin in this area since 1933. I have never seen that much growth there before. That growth represents a lot more danger. It is called ladder fuel. That brush in some places is ten or fifteen feet high and is very flammable. When our land was a forest, the Forest Service came through just about every ten years and removed a lot of the trees that were diseased or dying or too close together. That happened time after time again. When the homeowners traded other land for the land we’re on, we continued to do that, which was considered a best practice.”

He and the members of the homeowners’ association board have not suddenly taken it upon themselves to alter policy and destroy the forest, Reeves said.

“In 2010, we did exactly what we are doing now except San Bernardino County did a majority of the work,” he related. “We also did some work through a project called Forest Care, where we applied for a grant. The federal government paid for 75 percent and we paid 25 percent. All of the work was done by certified contractors approved by the federal government.”

Dr. JoAnna Schilling, who is a member of the homeowners’ association’s forest committee, told the *Sentinel*, “The majority of the membership supports the CalFire project and we have received regular updates on the project from Bill Reeves since he first started exploring the grant funding with CalFire. We held an informal vote at the last membership meeting and the project was overwhelmingly supported.”

Of the work CalFire is doing, Schilling insisted, “It is not a ‘mastication’ project. It is a fuel treatment or fuel reduction project. That’s the correct language. Note that while the official project proposal includes reference to mastication, that is only so that CalFire has the capacity to use all available tools as needed. However, no mastication has been done, and as of today, use of mastication is not anticipated.”

Schilling said, “Dr. Hanson, who is the only scientist that a small number of our community has relied on for a dissenting opinion, frequently conflates fuel reduction treatments with logging, which is not accurate. The most important distinction between the two is that logging removes the largest, oldest and most valuable trees from the landscape while thinning removes small trees and shrubs and leaves older mature trees standing. Also note there’s little to no commercial value for the smaller trees and shrubs. This is not a profit-driven endeavor. I agree with many of Dr. Hanson’s points, includ-

ing the detrimental effects of logging and how that has contributed to the catastrophic state fires in the northern portion of our state, especially the Camp Fire, and also think his ideas of home hardening are very sound and should be implemented in our community. I just don’t believe it makes sense to only conduct home hardening, and leave the forest to burn. This doesn’t seem the right way to protect our wildlife and natural resources.”

Schilling took issue with the concept of allowing the forest to grow in accordance with its natural progression, unhindered by human efforts to alter its concentration.

“There’s really no dispute among any credible scientists that the current density of our forests is way outside the norms for the last 10,000 years due to 100-plus years of fire suppression,” she said. “The overwhelming consensus among forest ecologists and fire scientists is that fuel reduction treatments work, whether mechanical and/or via prescribed fire. Dr. Hanson’s claim that reductions in forest canopy lead to hotter, drier forests have not been proven by his peers. In fact, breaks in forest canopy lead to greater species diversity. For example, shade tolerant trees such as cedars dominate in dense forests. Also, his theory that catastrophic fire is wind-driven rather than fuel-driven is widely refuted. The reality is much more complex and they are intertwined. One cannot be separated from the other.”

Some of those determined to force a reappraisal of the fuel reduction approach who hoped to stop it from proceeding beyond the roughly three weeks of clearing that took place in November and the first part of December hoped that they had been granted a grace period by the snow that halted the project in December. They were further banking on the prospect that CalFire would desist from tree cuttings and undergrowth eradication long enough to reach the bird breeding period that will kick off in March and last through

Continued on Page 12

Pay Reduction Will Test Whether Valdivia Is Willing To Remain As Mayor from front page

reestablish the mayor's administrative primacy, forming alliances with five of the council's seven members and using intrigue to fire the city manager and promote the assistant city manager to city manager in what he hoped would be a quid pro quo arrangement that would allow him to dictate municipal policy. Ultimately, however, as Valdivia sought to consolidate power, he burned bridge after bridge with the council members he needed to remain allied with to achieve his objectives. These faux pas were exacerbated by revelations about corrupt activity he was engaged in, which included his manipulation of council votes in exchange for money, including political donations and bribes.

Embattled though he was and is, Valdivia appears poised to maintain a vice-grip on the mayoralty, due to his intensive fundraising efforts, which left him with, as of June 30, 2021, \$394,622.54 in his campaign war chest. He has bragged openly since then that he has received another \$200,000 in donations in the intervening six-plus months, meaning he has approaching \$600,000 to use in his reelection campaign.

Six of his council colleagues, believing that his actions and reputation for taking bribes and manipulating public policy in favor of himself, his political backers, business associates and cronies or attempts to do so have given the city a black eye, have formed a consensus that he should be removed from office. He remains on good terms with only one of the council's members, Juan Figueroa, whose electoral efforts were in

large measure supported by disbursements from Valdivia's electioneering fund.

The council, however, does not have the authority to remove him as mayor. Nor is the prospect that he can be defeated at the polls certain, given the overwhelming financial advantage he possesses in the way of available campaign funds that are eight to twelve times as large as his best-financed potential competitors. Meanwhile, Valdivia scoffs at suggestions that he might be held responsible for his bribetaking or the pay-to-play politics he engages in, maintaining he is impervious to prosecution by the San Bernardino County District Attorney's Office.

The strategy the council has come up with, though its actual intent remains unacknowledged, is to remove as best as its members can Valdivia's incentive for remaining as mayor, one of which is the financial benefit he

enjoys in that capacity aside from the cornucopia of bribes and kickbacks available to him, consisting of his remuneration, a paycheck of \$2,053.71 weekly before taxes are taken out.

In 2020, Valdivia was paid \$106,793 in salary as mayor, another \$8,768 in stipends for attending meetings of regional boards, joint powers authorities and other governmental entities and committees such as the San Bernardino International Airport Authority and San Bernardino County Transportation Agency boards, in which capacities he serves as a representative of the city, along with medical, dental and other benefits such as a car and travel allowance totaling \$24,665, and retirement benefits of \$29,322.40, for a total taxpayer-defrayed compensation of \$169,548.40 annually.

By significantly reducing the mayor's \$106,793 salary, members of the

council hope Valdivia might be persuaded to forsake running for that office and perhaps use the money he has accumulated in electioneering funds to run for state or federal office, which would provide him with higher compensation.

Reasoning that the 2016 charter change relieved the mayor of administrative responsibility, the council asked City Manager Robert Field to do a survey of mayoral salaries in the local area involving charter cities rather than California's more numerous general law cities. Field said that the mayors of Riverside, San Bernardino, Palm Springs, Adelanto and Needles averaged \$50,040 in annual salary. Five members of the council - Theodore Sanchez, Fred Shorett, Ben Reynoso, Kimberly Calvin and Damon Alexander - voted in favor of dropping the mayor's salary to \$50,000.

Councilwoman San-

dra Ibarra wanted Field to carry out an even wider survey of cities that function under the council-manager form of government, which includes general law cities, where mayors make far less, usually an amount comparable to what other members of the city council make, in the rough range of \$500 to \$1,500 per month, or approximately \$6,000 to \$18,000 per year. Both Ibarra and Figueroa voted against reducing the mayor's salary to \$50,000 per year.

Figueroa justified his opposition by saying the council should simultaneously reduce city council members' \$14,000 per year salaries.

San Bernardino's mayor hereafter will make \$50,000 in salary, and roughly \$9,000 in other governmental entity stipends, \$25,000 in benefits and receive a \$30,000 retirement contribution, for an annual total compensation of about \$114,000.

-Mark Gutglueck

Wapner & Hagman Again Cashiered Airport Manager As Timing Suggests He May Have Tarried On Land Transference That Will Let Their Political Patrons Profit from page 9

confine themselves to meetings with airline executives but that they were actively recruiting Chinese Communist capitalists to make investments in property around the airport, concerns about the wisdom of allowing China to take a lead in developing and thereafter controlling assets that are key to the region's economy resulted in a years-long paralysis with regard to development in the district around the airport.

Last month, that apparent extended period of malaise came to an end when on December 23 the Ontario International Airport Authority unanimously approved a 55-year lease with CanAm Ontario LLC, a joint venture between the McDonald Property Group of Newport Beach and USAA Real Estate Co. of San Antonio, Texas for 197.85 of 216 acres the Ontario International Airport Authority owns east of

Haven Avenue south of Airport Drive and north of Jurupa Avenue and west of Carnegie Avenue.

CanAm Ontario was chosen from among what the authority said were more than 4,800 potential bidders on the property.

In securing the exclusive ground lease right, CanAm agreed to make a non-refundable \$10 million deposit, and is to pay the airport authority roughly \$625 million between 2021 and 2086, with \$275 million being paid over the first decade of the lease, through December 2031. Airport officials celebrated that aspect of the lease, indicating that not only will the currently fallow acreage between Airport Drive and Jurupa Avenue be transformed into industrial concerns including factories, warehousing, distribution facilities and other logistics elements, but the airport through the

authority will directly receive millions of dollars to defray the cost of further airport improvements and underwrite the cost of operations.

No sooner had the lease been signed, however, than a collection of environmentalists, including those in the Pomona Valley Audubon Society, took note that the lease site, east of the runway, is habitat to rare small nesting burrowing owls.

As the birds are thriving on the property and their habitat elsewhere is dwindling, the activists resolved to undertake an effort to protect the owls.

That action came in the form of a lawsuit filed by a group calling itself *Inland Valley Advocates for the Environment* aimed at overturning the action taken on December 23 by the Ontario International Airport Authority.

The lawsuit names both the Ontario International Airport Authority as a defendant and respondent and CanAm Ontario LLC as a defendant and real party in interest.

The petition's cause of action consists of an

assertion that the development of the property as proposed by CanAm violates the California Environmental Quality Act, and that the airport authority's effort to apply a categorical California Environmental Quality Act exemption to the leasing and development of the property was improperly made. Furthermore, according to the suit, the lease and development of the property "has the potential to cause significant direct, indirect, or cumulative adverse impacts on the environment, including but not limited to parking and traffic problems, noise problems, and biological/wildlife impacts. These significant direct, indirect, or cumulative adverse environmental impacts give rise to defendants/respondents' legal obligation to subject the project to California Environmental Quality Act review. The defendants/respondents' refusal to apply the California Environmental Quality Act to the project and subject it to environmental review constitutes a violation of the California Environmental Quality Act."

Repeated efforts to obtain Wapner's reaction to the suit were unsuccessful at press time.

The *Sentinel* is informed that those in opposition to the lease and the projects that are anticipated to come about as its consequence have further concerns which were not explicitly outlined in the legal action, filed by attorney Cory Briggs, which include:

* Trepidation about the burrowing owl and what some believe will be a substantial adverse effect on that species' habitat;

* An apparent plan by the Ontario International Airport Authority to move the burrowing owl to another area, which the petitioners maintain is unsatisfactory as a mitigation measure;

* The lack of public hearing access virtually or by phone for the December 23 airport authority meeting, such that comments on the lease could only be made by email or in person during the COVID-19 pandemic, which some elements of the community maintain violated the Brown Act;

* The lack of consul-

tation ahead of time with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife and U.S. Department of Fish and Wildlife;

* An alleged lack of compliance with the Surplus Lands Act in the authority's disposal of surplus government property;

* The non-existence of a master plan for the airport, which some community members say is needed to identify and avoid or reduce impacts of potential future development; and

* The inadequate definition of the projects that Can Am is purposed to undertake.

Word has now come that Mark Thorpe has been ousted as the airport's chief executive officer. Officials were unwilling to disclose whether Thorpe's exit was based on the same reluctance of his predecessor, Fredericks, to allow development to occur on airport property which board members consider to be surplus but which others maintain could be crucial to the future expansion of aviation-related activities at the aerodrome.

-Mark Gutglueck

Grace Bernal's

California Style Cozy-Fit

I haven't hit the streets much lately and dressing for the occasion was lacking in motivation for a good moment. However, dressing up is important no matter what the occasion is. This past year I realized that you could be working from home or traveling and look good whether it's a simple or outrageous



outfit. With that said, I've seen some of the coziest fits out and about. The look itself is about having fun. And let's face it: there's no such thing as too much fun! What isn't

fun about thick combat boots, trench coats, and puffy jackets? Depending on your mood, that is how you are going to feel about your cozy fit. You decide if you are going to take it up a notch or come down to minimal.



Just remember: cozy is cool. I've tried the leggings under skirts and dresses and it makes for a super warm and cozy



look, not to mention it is fun! I think 2022 is off to a good start when it comes to changing up and dressing for the cozy month of January. The chill is here, so gather

your pieces add hats, scarfs and leggings. Don't forget color! Until next time, stay vibrant and get cozy!



"The perfect antidote to dark, cold and creepy is light, warm, and cozy."
-Candice Olson

Survey Questions Seem Angled Toward Rehabilitating Biane While Torpedoing Steinorth *from page 5*

issues pertaining to Republican candidates only.

Despite the consideration that Shaw, a Democrat, declared her candidacy for Second District supervisor months ago, the poll makes no mention of her whatsoever. Rather, the reaction of potential Second District voters is tested only with regard to six current or past Republican officeholders living within the Second District – Rutherford, Biane, Cetina, Armendarez, former Assemblyman/Rancho Cucamonga Councilman Marc Steinorth and former Assemblyman/State Senator Mike Morrell.

Six single pages of the survey are devoted, separately, to Rutherford, Biane, Cetina, Armendarez, Steinorth and Morrell, asking simply what the responder's reaction to each is, with the options listed being strongly favorable, somewhat favorable, somewhat unfavorable, strongly unfavorable, heard of but unsure or never heard of. Insofar as those questions go, the poll comes across as seeking to ascertain who among the five men might

have an edge going into a campaign and whether Rutherford campaigning on behalf of one of those candidates would be a relative plus or minus. There were other questions or elements to the poll that suggest it was not simply an attempt at a scientific determination of popularity or relative popularity among the five ostensible candidates but that it is rather a push poll. A push poll is a questionnaire or set of questions that masquerades as an opinion survey but which has as its true objective swaying or influencing the voters taking the survey using loaded, manipulative or misleading questions. Push poll questions typically contain an assertion of fact or at least a suggestion of fact that is either favorable toward a candidate the sponsors of the poll are trying to get elected or, in the alternative, a premise that contains an insinuation that may or may not be accurate which casts a candidate in a negative light that is intended to convince the person being polled to vote against that candidate.

In this way, at least one of the questions in the poll being circulated in the Second District seems to be aimed at curtailing Steinorth's electoral viability.

"As a state assemblyman, Marc Steinorth voted to extend a greenhouse gas program that permanently imposed up to \$70 billion dollars (sic) in government fees on businesses which are being passed on to California residents in the form of higher prices. Would this make you more inclined to vote for Steinorth, less inclined to vote for Steinorth or would it make no difference in your decision to vote?" the question reads.

Armendarez was a subject of one of the survey questions, one which seemed angled at making a favorable impression on a survey taker who will vote in the upcoming election and who has a favorable impression of law enforcement, although the question did Armendarez the disservice of misspelling his name. That question reads, "Jesse Armendariz is supported by Fontana public safety officers. Would this make you more inclined to vote for Armendariz, less in-

clined to vote for Armendariz or would it make no difference in your decision to vote?"

The survey focuses on Biane, who has now been out of politics for more than eleven years. The substance of the question and the manner in which it is posed makes it difficult to ascertain whether the question is intended to rehabilitate Biane's reputation, which was in some fashion damaged by his indictment, arrest and prosecution, or if it exists as a gesture to rehabilitate him in the public perception and thereby enhance his political prospects. That question reads, "In 2017, Paul Biane was unanimously found not guilty by a local jury on all allegations made against him. In 2018, the district attorney who prosecuted these false charges was removed by San Bernardino County voters because of his wrongful prosecution of Biane and three others. Would this make you more inclined to vote for Biane, less inclined to vote for Biane or would it make no difference in your decision to vote?"

There were no suggestive questions in the survey pertaining to Morrell, Cetina nor

Rutherford.

The survey was conducted by San Diego-based Competitive Edge Research & Communication.

The *Sentinel* made phone calls to Competitive Edge this week in an effort to determine who had commissioned the survey, whether it was intended as a straightforward effort to determine the electability of the five candidates mentioned or if it was designed to enhance the viability of one particular candidate, if it was designed to torpedo Steinorth and why Shaw was omitted from the survey. Ultimately, those inquiries were met by John Nienstedt, Competitive Edge's president.

Nienstedt told the *Sentinel* that the survey was "a confidential poll" and he could not disclose who had commissioned

it nor what its intended purpose was.

Nienstedt has credentials as both a pollster and as a political operative. He is a member of the American Association for Public Opinion Research. He is also a member of the American Association of Political Consultants. He holds both a bachelor's degree and a master's degree in political science, which were earned at San Diego State University.

The *Sentinel* sought to reach Jeff Burum, one of the principals in the Colonies Partners to determine if his company had commissioned the poll and whether he and his company will back Biane in this year's Second District supervisory race. Burum did not respond by press time.

-Mark Gutglueck

Despite Determination Of Some To Force A Reappraisal Of Forest Fuel Reduction Strategy, CalFire Continues To Cut Trees *from page 10*

June, such that anti-fuel reduction program activists could rally local, state and even federal officials at all levels to put a halt to the approach, such that other methods of hardening the existing homes against fire hazards

would take precedence over the practice of artificially thinning the forest. This week, however, the *Sentinel* received a report that a CalFire crew was present in Upper Big Bear, proceeding with the prescription.