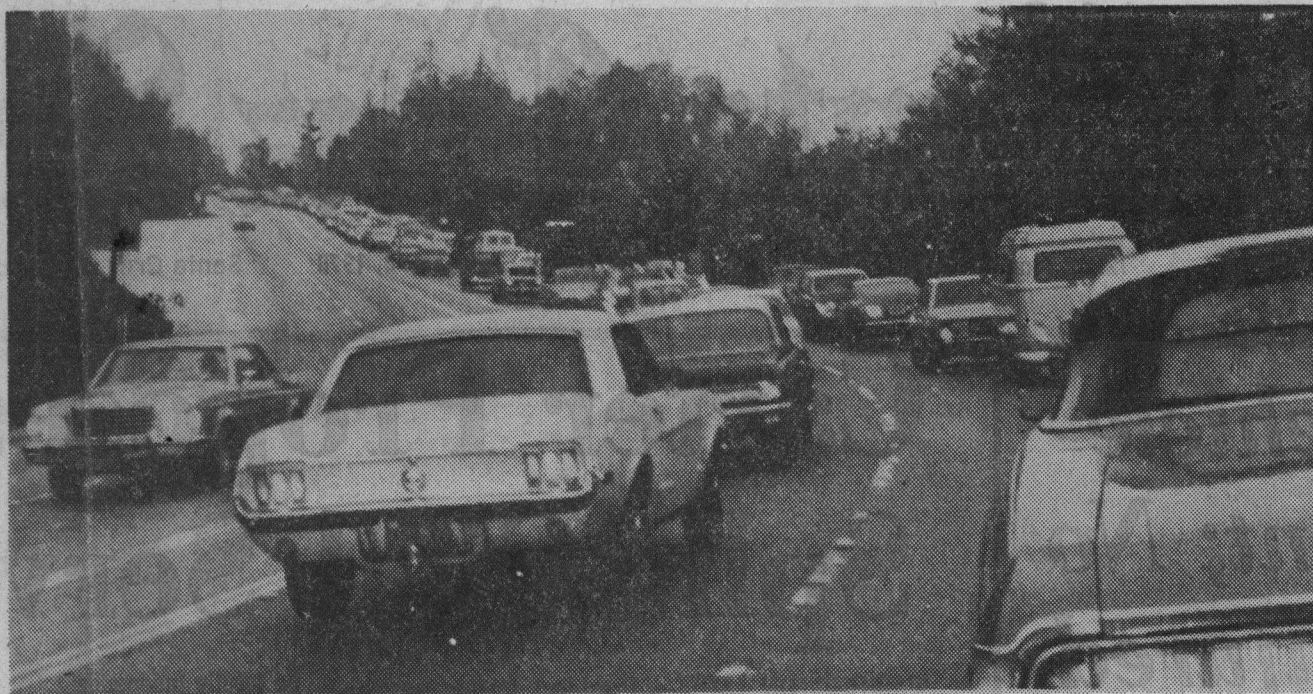


Ben Lomond



## Highway 17 Traffic Tied Up

Traffic was backed up for miles and Highway 17 was closed for over an hour

early today when a three-car collision started a chain reaction which ended in a 22-car pile-up on the Santa Clara County

side of Highway 17. Nobody was hurt in the crash. (See story on Page 1.)

## New Life At Blake Hammond

By DENISE SIEBENTHAL  
Sentinel Staff Writer

The Blake Hammond Manor in Ben Lomond has a new name — The Four Winds Ranch — and a new life with its four dormitory buildings planned for renovation into single family homes.

The impressive manor house has been purchased and is occupied by Roger and Pat Wilder, formerly of Santa Cruz, while about 40 acres of the surrounding property has been bought by four families for \$300,000.

Jerry Walker, a 29-year-old teacher from Hawaii, was the moving force behind the purchase of the acreage. Once renovated, the former dormitories will be occupied by Walker's family, his mother, other relatives and friends.

Unlike past groups interested in the property, Walker said he had an easy time getting necessary county approvals. He has received a boundary adjustment creating four separate parcels, a septic permit and a electrical work permit.

Walker, represented by Realtor Eric Schwarzbach, also received separate water meters for each of the four future homes from the San Lorenzo Valley County Water District.

Despite its two-year moratorium on meter hook-ups, the district's board agreed recently this did not constitute new connections. The manor property had been served by one large meter and now will be served by several smaller meters.

Former Water District Director George Spiegelberg challenged the board's decision, saying there would be an increased use of water since the manor property has not been in extensive use since 1969.

In 1969, the manor closed after being used for 21 years as a home for retarded children. Its use has been a complicated and sometimes controversial subject since its closure.

It's been complicated because of sewage disposal problems on the property which runs along both sides of the San Lorenzo River.

The Drug Abuse Prevention Center's bid to use the property in 1974 reportedly was turned down because of these sewage disposal problems, although some believe it was refused because center houses former drug users.

Controversy erupted almost immediately when the center announced it had purchased the

land for \$270,000. Some San Lorenzo Valley residents protested, contending the center would bring drug users into The Valley.

Despite the uproar, the center won a use permit from the county Planning Commission, only to lose it a year later from the board of supervisors.

Supervisors agreed to hear an appeal of the permit after it was charged that the planning commission didn't look closely at potential sewage and traffic problems.

The project was declared dead after supervisors failed to take action on the appeal.

Blake Hammond regained some life in Sept., 1976 when the Tender Loving Care rest home received a use permit to use the land for 110 aged patients.

Controversy erupted again and cries of foul play were made by the Drug Abuse Pre-

vention Center after it was revealed the rest home received its permit using the same environmental impact report as the center.

Dave Quinton, of the county Environmental Health Department, said the county granted the permit on the basis of a geologist's report which found an area of the manor acreage where a leach field would be acceptable because ground water would not rise enough to affect sewage disposal.

For unreported reasons, the rest home dropped its plans to buy the property and the new owners, Quinton said, will put in leach fields in this acceptable area.

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