



Grey Bears — 'It's a people thing'

Twenty-three tons of potatoes came rolling into Santa Cruz Monday from the state of Washington, the gift of a grower who had heard about the California Grey Bears and what they are doing to help feed the needy elderly.

Washington potato grower Herman Fielding read a recent story about the Grey Bears in the Wall Street Journal, and he was so impressed by what he read that he thought he would contribute to the cause. He did — 23 tons worth, and several seniors around the county will eat better as a result.

The California Grey Bears — now 1,000 strong in Santa Cruz County — is different than most other senior organizations. It is dedicated to collecting all the surplus food it can and seeing that it gets into the hands of the elderly. Everyone who works for the Grey Bears is a volunteer.

They collect the food — sometimes even going out into the fields to pick it — bring it to the collection point, bag it and then distribute it from the eight centers around the county.

On Monday 600 bags of food were prepared for distribution, and in them were generous portions of the just - arrived Washington potatoes. They've been doing this — it's called Operation Brown Bag — since January. This week's bag also contained some lettuce picked by the volunteers, plums, three bananas and some frozen potatoes — all donated to the program by food growers, processors and even some home gardeners.

To get the lettuce some of the members went into the fields in Watsonville Friday to pick it — "and some of them were in their 80s," a Grey Bears spokesman said.

Although Grey Bears has been selected for a \$50,000 revenue sharing grant from the county, so far it hasn't received any of the money — "not a 10-cent stamp." It's squeaked by on the funds raised by the \$1 a year membership fee and whatever money the volunteers can chip in. (For that \$1 membership fee, the member gets a gold card which he need only show — if he's over 60 — to get one of the food bags.)

Pat Carr, a retired school teacher who works in the Grey Bears office, calls it "a people operation." It's the fourth volunteer organization she's worked for and she says "I'm happy to have found Grey Bears."

She admires the spirit of the people who pitch in to help — whether it's to pick lettuce, bag groceries or donate a couple of scarce dollars. "It's all I can

afford," an elderly donor will say, "but I want to stay independent," and Grey Bears help them do that.

Just how much food is distributed depends entirely upon how much is donated, Mrs. Carr explains. "For awhile there the bags were pretty skinny."

The 23 tons of potatoes were a real windfall, not only for themselves but because the surplus can be traded for other commodities in surplus in some other county where the Grey Bears are working.

Mrs. Carr said home gardeners can help out, too, by giving the Grey Bears any surplus they might have from their gardens. Some have done so already, she said. Recently they were given a sack of beets and a sack of chard. "We want whatever we can scrounge," Mrs. Carr said.

A unique donation came from John Friesell, a wholesale florist

in Watsonville. He gave bunches of carnations to the Grey Bears, which were immediately distributed to 30 of the Brown Bag recipients who cannot leave their homes. The rest of the flowers went to patients in convalescent homes.

Mrs. Carr had high praise for Friesell for his thoughtful gift, saying it was acts such as his that made the Grey Bears "a real people to people program. We have lots of hopes for Grey Bears," she said.

How many volunteers help out? "Gosh, I can't say... we have all kinds of talent... people give a day a week... maybe there are 50 who do all kinds of things," she said.

As for herself, she works in the office, but, she admonishes, "there a many others... don't single me out."

Her admiration of Grey Bears is boundless. "This is for real," she declared.

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Supervisors vs. supervisors in LAFCO suit tangle?

By BOB LEVY

It's not often you have one branch of county suing another. It's probably even less often that two members of the board that is considering filing suit are also members of the board that may be sued.

The incredible political hassle that has developed over who's going to get its hands on the lucrative tax revenues of the

It is not only the revenue potential of the shopping center that is at the center of this battle, incidentally; the center's very life is at stake because the county has indicated it will not approve the center as Sutter Hill wants to build it, while Capitola is expected to look favorably at Sutter Hill's proposal.

record in favor of delay of any annexation in that area until the completion of the county general plan for Live Oak. The reason for this is clear. This annexation severely limits the future possibilities for orderly development in Live Oak.

Supervisors' chairman Dan Forbus, who has favored the annexation, reluctantly agreed

he has consistently voted in favor of the annexation (and against Patton).

Another question was raised Tuesday. Does supervisor Dale Dawson have a conflict of interest on the issue because his law partner, Roland Hall, is Capitola city attorney? Supervisors agreed a legal opinion on the question is needed and that a

spilled out Tuesday when Forbus tossed out an observation that Dawson does, indeed, have a conflict and should disqualify himself. (If Dawson does have to sit this one out, the board is likely to lock up at 2-2, with Smith and Forbus voting against a lawsuit, and Patton and Ed Borovatz voting for one.)

Dawson responded to Forbus

Grey Bear co-founder Gary Denny checks out grower's generous gift.

'Final' school budget