

Bonny Doon 9-19-94 SJMN

# Mountain residents feud over project

Is a community center inappropriate or not?

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Special to the Mercury News

Bonny Doon residents have asked Supervisor Gary Patton to referee a battle over park funds that has divided their rural community.

Since 1985, a portion of fees assessed for building permits within Bonny Doon has gone into a fund to provide recreational services for the unincorporated community in the Santa Cruz Mountains.

Some residents want that fund, which now holds nearly \$115,000, to be used to help build a community center and athletic field in Bonny Doon. Others, including many members of the Rural Bonny Doon Association, argue a community center is inappropriate in a rural area and would increase traffic. They would rather the money be spent to improve Bonny Doon Union Elementary School, which residents use now for community meetings and sports.

The nine-acre campus on Pine Flat Road includes two playground areas, a small baseball field and a multipurpose room, which are used regularly by the community when classes are not in session.

"It's a civil war for us," said Bruce Bratton, past president of the Rural Bonny Doon Association. "Half of the people here want a community center and half don't."

Both sides claim support from a majority of Bonny Doon's 2,000 to 3,000 residents. Unable to re-

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# Bonny Doon residents split on rec center

## ■ PARK

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solve the conflict, they asked Patton to survey the community and help determine which option Bonny Doon residents preferred.

Patton and his aides are preparing a community ballot, to be mailed out before the end of October.

"Before we spend a lot of effort to develop something, let's find out if people really want it," Patton said.

Members of the Bonny Doon Community Center Committee say residents need a park.

"The only place we have to meet is the school," said Bob Sturtevant, chair of the community center committee.

The campus can't be used when

school is in session, he notes, and the playing fields are inadequate.

The local fire station was built for \$12,000 by volunteers on a donated parcel, Sturtevant said. He thinks a community center could be built in a similar fashion with the park development funds.

Paul Hostetter, president of the Rural Bonny Doon Association, doesn't think such a project is feasible, especially since the community center committee has yet to find an adequate site owned by a willing property donor.

"Our cost analysis shows the simplest community center would be in excess of \$1.3 million," Hostetter said. "The money in the park development funds would pay for the environmental impact report."