

# La Selva Beach deprived of its recreational facilities

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La Selva Beach is much quieter since the loss of liability insurance forced its recreation district to shut down last month.

Once the focal point of the neighborhood, the big red clubhouse stands silent. No teen dances, weddings or meetings have been held there since directors locked the doors.

The few children to be found at the David Batchelor Play-

ground next door play under signs warning they are trespassing at their own risk.

Notices that the area is closed are tacked over the wooden sign at the locked gate, and on nearby trees. The merry-go-round is chained up; the swings and the basketball hoops are gone.

The district's other facilities, including Triangle Park and a jogging course near the David Batchelor Playground, have also been shut down — victims of an insurance crisis that offi-

cially say is affecting recreation districts, cities and counties throughout the state and the country.

The Board of Supervisors recently directed the county to provide technical assistance to the La Selva Beach Recreation District, and to other districts having similar problems. However, county Risk Manager Ron Whipp said he's been searching without success for insurance alternatives for the district.

Residents of La Selva Beach,

a community of some 2,000 residents, expressed sadness and a sense of loss at the closing of nearby recreational facilities. They also are angry at the system that makes it impossible for their nearly 30-year-old recreation district and other public agencies to remain insured.

A La Selva Beach resident for seven years, Katherine Tice said she and other local mothers regarded the playground as a safe place to bring their children, and they miss it.

Another mother, 10-year resident Tory Beale, said her children have visited the playground "since they were tiny."

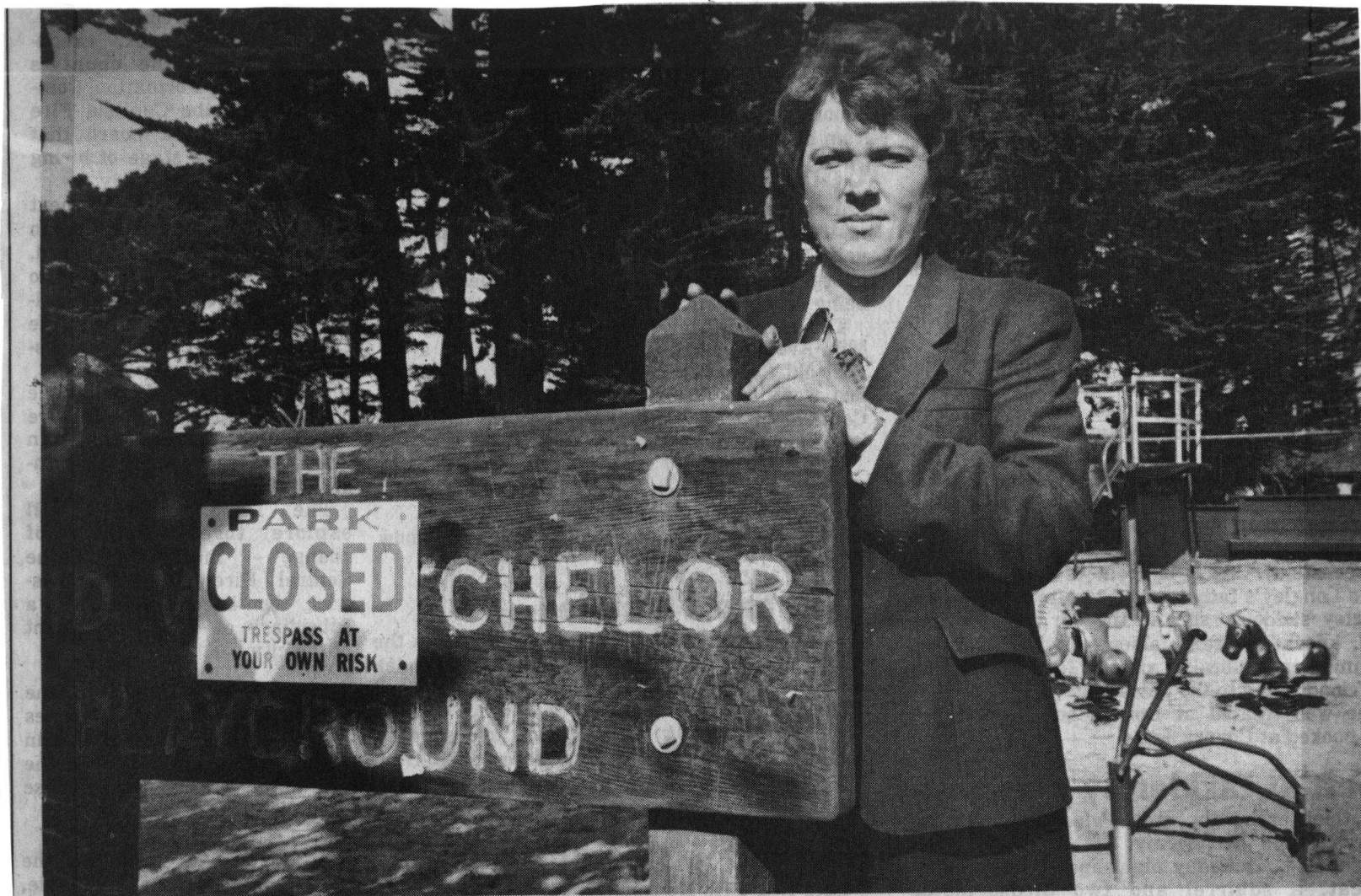
There's not much the district's board of directors can do, Chairman Linda Bourgaize said, except hope their insurance broker will soon be successful in finding a company to insure them.

The district's policy expired Jan. 7 and was not renewed. Without liability insurance, the

directors could be held responsible for any accidents on district land, so they had no choice but to lock the doors.

Now they and other community members are forced to play a waiting game, hoping something will happen soon to give them back their community center.

"That's the hub of the community," director Peter Stanger said of the clubhouse and playground area. The whole community feels the loss, he said.



Jennifer Koss

## No fun or games

La Selva Beach Recreation District Chairman Linda Bourgaize stands in front of the playground the district shut down because it couldn't afford liability insurance. See story page 12.