

INCUMBENT ABBEY ALSO VOTED OUT

Ben Lomond

Alice loses—an era ends

Ben Lomond last week by a strong majority defeated Mrs. Alice Earl Wilder for the office of Recreation District Director, and ended a 22 year tenure of office for the Lady in the Red Hat.

Along with Mrs. Wilder, chairman of the Board Clyde Abbey was defeated in his try for re-election and a board that has been controlled quite firmly by Mrs. Wilder may now seek other directions in the scope of recreation.

The Ben Lomond recreation board has generally split on its decisions, 3 to 2, with directors Mrs. Leslie Robinson and John Zehner usually arguing and/ or voting in tandem against the winning team of Mrs. Wilder, Abbey and Harry Jaye.

Jaye, whose term on the board also expires

this year did not seek re-election.

Elected this year are three newcomers to grass-roots politics, Rusty Eddy, John McGuire, and Scott Ulrich.

Eddy was the top vote getter with 474, followed by McGuire, 434, and Scott Ulrich with 414. Mrs. Wilder received 184 votes and Abbey 157.

Mrs. Wilder is presently serving on the board as secretary, without pay, and this position may become open in next year, as directors, Mrs. Robinson and Zehner have asked recently that the job become a salaried position with someone filling it other than the present secretary.

Mrs. Wilder has been in office the entire life of the recreation district.

Strangely enough, the Ben Lomond Recreation district resulted from a taxpayers suit filed in 1946.

Four men, Everett A. Holman, Rowland Hill, Thomas Hill and A.R. McEwen brought an action to stop the Ben Lomond Fire district from levying a tax rate of \$3.96 for each \$100 of assessed valuation.

The quartet charged the levy was in excess of the legal tax rate, would be used in part to pay for construction of a swimming pool, and there had been no election held to approve the increase in taxes.

Named as defendants in the suit were Earl L. Lyon, Frank Pimentel and F.A. Whitaker, district fire commissioners.

The court was asked to order work on the pool halted and to tell the county not to levy the taxes.

After various legal moves and counter moves attorneys for the fire district commissioners replied to the charges.

They said the fire department had been obtaining water from a reservoir on the San Lorenzo river at Ben Lomond since 1926. The reservoir

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Felton Yule lights to be turned on Nov. 27

The Christmas lights in downtown Felton will be officially set aglow at 5 p.m. on Friday, November 27, the day after Thanksgiving.

The Valley community will shine with Yuletide decorations and multi-colored lights like never before. Reason for this is because of an active campaign led by Christmas Decorations Com-

A short history of BL Rec district

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was needed since there was not always a sufficient supply of water in the water main.

Now, according to the fire commissioners, the reservoir needed repair. In order to make the necessary repairs, it was required that a strip of land be obtained.

The commissioners denied they were, or had ever been, operating a swimming pool.

After more legal maneuvers, the case finally came to trial before Judge James L. Atteridge, sitting without a jury, in June of 1947. During the course of the trial, it was brought out the fire district board had borrowed money from the Bank of America to pay for the improvements to the reservoir. It was also shown Commissioner Lyon had personally advanced \$27,895 for the work with the expectation he would be repaid from district funds.

After two days of hearing testimony, Judge Atteridge ruled the quantity of the water in the reservoir was greatly in excess of what was needed for fire fighting purposes, the note to the bank was invalid and the district commissioners had acted illegally in hiring attorneys with district funds to fight the case.

The judge also ruled Lyon had spent his \$27,895 personally and could not recover it from the district.

The decision was followed

by several years of legal bickering including an appeal to the state court which, in effect, upheld the judge's ruling.

Since the fire district could no longer maintain a swimming pool or other facilities, Ben Lomond residents proceeded to form the recreation and park district which took over the work in 1948.

Its purpose was to maintain the swimming pool, recreation hall and public library which could not be operated by the Ben Lomond Fire Protection district and as proposed it had the same boundaries as the one-time Ben Lomond elementary school district.

Opposition to the district quickly formed with residents of the Brackney area asking that their property be excluded. Also petitions of protest were filed claiming the recreation district was not needed and the money should be used for sewers and schools which were needed at that time also.

Those opposing the district claimed it would benefit only the businessmen and merchants who are located adjacent to the park. One protester said, "a Coney Island will result."

The district backers ran a legal advertisement in the San Lorenzo Valley Press, calling for a hearing before the county supervisors.

Additional support for the district came from the Ben Lomond Citizen's league with

Wilford Lockwood president pointing out the properties were being held in trust, but that there was no way of maintaining them.

Finally, October 7, 1948, the board of supervisors held a public hearing on whether an election should be called.

The board first voted not to call the election, and then went on to other business.

Later in the day, however the board rescinded its earlier action, and voted to hold the election after all.

This brought a sharp note of protest from attorney J. A. Wyckoff of the Santa Cruz Law Firm of Wyckoff, Gardner, Parker and Boyle.

Among those nominated for director were Frank Henfling, Eric Koeing, and Alice Earl Wilder.

The election was held and apparently the district was approved by the voters, although the county records did not give the results of the election or who was chosen as directors.

Records remain rather blank for several years with only notices of appointments and resignations, and lack of candidates.

It appeared from the records that practically all residents of the district must have served as directors at one time or another.

In October of 1955, petitions were circulated to recall directors Lawrence Rawson and

Mrs. Wilder on grounds that they had opposed the acquiring of the dam.

However a recall election was avoided when the then district attorney, Charles L. Moore ruled recalls were not possible under laws governing operation of special districts.

In 1956, district directors wrote a letter to the board of supervisors expressing concern over damage caused by the previous winter floods.

Ray J. Scott, the then district attorney, said that it was legally permissive for the board of supervisors to spend county funds to clear the river, or the district board could spend its own money to clean debris from the river channel.

Again, the years' files showed numerous appointments, resignations, and lack of candidates.

The district was involved in another hassle beginning in 1969 when it attempted to annex additional territory.

This unpopular move by the board, with Zehner and Mrs. Robinson strongly opposing it, attempted to take into the present district the Hihn Road area.

This election was conducted on a split ballot box--one for the present area and a separate box for the Hihn Road area--and residents in the area to be annexed voted 294 to 1 against the issue. Residents in the existing district voted 275 to 109 against the annexation.

Mrs. Wilder leaves an impressive, and at times discordant, record of service with the Ben Lomond Board.

Relying on court records, it becomes apparent that Mrs. Wilder through the years of community apathy towards the recreation district, as shown by the dearth of candidates, may have been the single most important element in holding the district together for 22 years.

Red Cross blood bank Nov 16

There will be a Red Cross blood drawing in Palmer Hall of the First Presbyterian Church, Mission Street at Highland Avenue, in Santa Cruz from 1:30 to 6:30 p.m. on November 16. Persons between the ages of 18 and 66 may be donors if in good health.

Mrs. Hazel Snow, Blood Program Coordinator, has issued an appeal for additional volunteer nurses and donor room aides to assist at the blood drawings. Volunteers who can assist are urged to call 423-3360.