

Hippie-EOC: Confusion, Controversy

Hippies

The hippie-EOC situation simmered down last night to a series of statements by the factions involved—and how these factions inter-relate seemed to be the nub of the current controversy.

The burr under the bronc's saddle is a proposal born several months ago to establish an Economic Opportunities Commission service center in Ben Lomond. Similar area service centers now operate in Santa Cruz and Watsonville.

These centers are set up to advise the poor (families with annual incomes of \$4000 or less) on job and educational opportunities and to refer them to appropriate welfare agencies for assistance. According to the EOC, there are 1038 families in the San Lorenzo Valley which qualify for such services.

Five persons currently are meeting with Andy Dieppa, executive director of the county EOC, discussing establishment of such a center.

They are Sharah Eichorn, an artist of Boulder Creek; Dominic Croce, a Lockheed employee, of Ben Lomond; Ralph Kolin, of Ben Lomond; George Rogers, a carpenter of Ben Lomond, and Dan Crismon, a guitarist, of Boulder Creek.

Before such a center could be financed by the EOC, it would have to be approved by the EOC program review committee, then by the full county commission. Then, if over \$200 is needed, it would have to be approved to the regional EOC in San Francisco, Dieppa said.

Mrs. Eichorn, spokesman for the group, said its proposal involved an "informal community center to increase interest and responsibility of citizens in our valley in local issues."

Services, she said, would include (1) classes in arts, crafts and music for the unskilled or handicapped; (2) lectures or get-togethers of various age groups, from teenagers to mothers, say, with retarded children; (3) baby-sitting service for working mothers and job referrals.

"We are our own group and not now dependent on EOC, but we are seeking its financial aid and most of us are on the poverty level," said Mrs. Eichorn.

"We propose that the center serve San Lorenzo Valley residents, whatever their income bracket," she said. "The culturally deprived are not always the poor. I imagine the center would be a bit different from that in Santa Cruz. We hope to become self-supporting."

This plan became a public controversy when a report in another newspaper linked the so-called "hippie" element with the proposed EOC center in Ben Lomond.

A series of meetings have been held at the Barn in Scotts Valley. These meetings, according to a Santa Cruz attorney, were information forums on civil rights pertaining to search and seizure by police looking for marijuana, and other topics concerning the drug.

Two representatives of the EOC were reported at various meetings and reportedly discussed the Ben Lomond center.

Robert Solodow, director of the EOC's Santa Cruz Area Service Center, said last night he

attended four meetings "as an interested party and not a representative for EOC."

"None of the staff people can speak for EOC," he said.

"The way this tie-in came about, I think, is this: Some of the people at the Barn meetings heard about the proposed center in Ben Lomond and discussed it. Then there was a separate topic discussed at last Wednesday night's meeting about a buying club, where a number of people put in money and food is purchased wholesale and then distributed to the members.

"I did not discuss the proposed center at any of the meetings I attended," said Solodow.

The original news report said there was general discussion about using the center as a "food drop" and to improve the "hippie" image. There was also talk of renting a house in the valley for the locals and their visiting friends.

Dieppa, in a statement yesterday, said the whole center situation was premature, as far as the EOC's participation was concerned.

"The EOC has no control over the hippies and at no time will it provide any incentive for them to come into the community."

He said there was another misconception going around—that the EOC was providing food and cash to people. (Some government surplus food was found in recent marijuana raids.)

"We give no food or cash. We refer persons to other welfare agencies, and if they want to help that's that," he said.

A spokesman for the residents of Ben Lomond wants neither the hippies or an EOC center.

Edwin Peterson, president of the Ben Lomond Business association, said last night, "Ben Lomond is not seeking to gain prominence as a mecca for this type of individual."

"This area is primarily used by families and retired people who come here for its wholesome atmosphere.

"These hippies have attempted to introduce certain youths to their type of living and the use of illicit drugs. The majority of the community is against these people coming here.

"I've been in business as a contractor here for 20 years and as far as jobs are concerned, it's difficult to find anyone to dig a ditch or take care of a yard or do manual labor.

"We are not in favor of the EOC establishing a center here. This is nothing against the poor. It's because of what such a center would bring about.

"I think there is a definite link between the hippies and the proposed center," said Peterson. "We don't want them here."

Governor Adke