

End of the line for La Selva cabooses

Owner loses battle to keep disputed cars

By DONNA KIMURA
Sentinel staff writer

LA SELVA BEACH — It is farewell to the controversial cabooses of La Selva Beach.

After losing a court battle to keep the railroad cars on her beachfront property, Julie King said she has sold one caboose at a loss and is looking to sell the other two.

"It's over," she said. "I hope to sell them and that's it."

She has until June 1 for the cabooses to vamoose from her land, according to Santa Cruz County Counsel Dwight Herr.

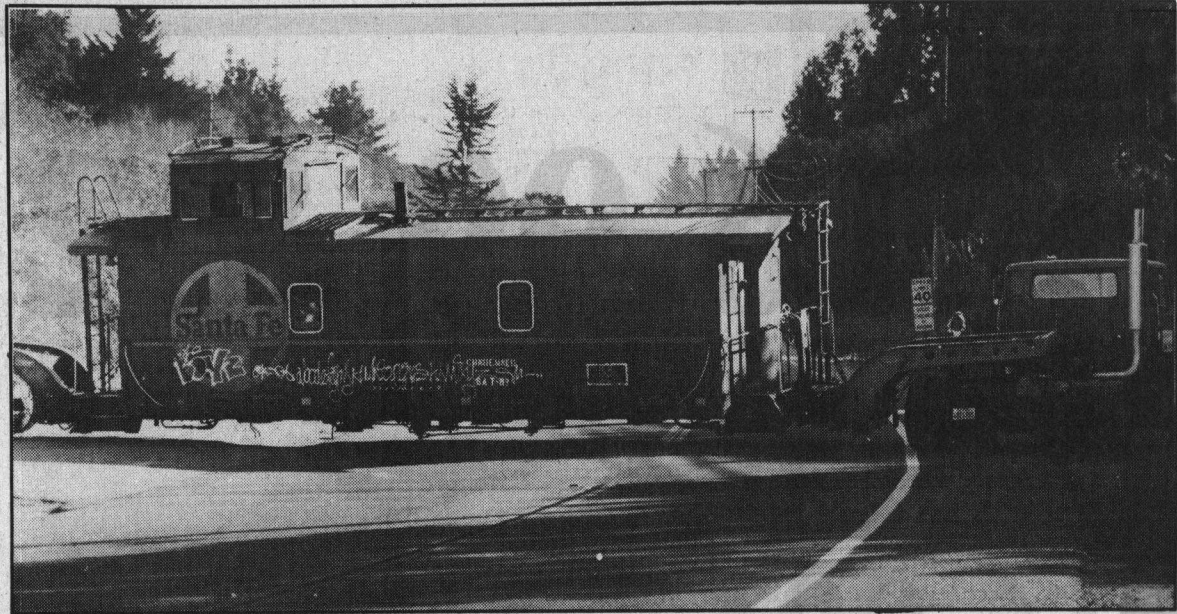
King and her husband, Dr. John King, installed the first of the historic Santa Fe cabooses on their property in 1990. County officials quickly "red-tagged" it as an illegal structure.

In addition to the county's concerns that the cabooses were in the coastal zone, a neighbor objected to the unusual addition to the scenic neighborhood.

The Kings fought to keep their railroad cars.

"I wanted them so people like my grandchildren could see cabooses, see what a real caboose looks like" Julie King said.

Since buying the cabooses for about \$3,500 each and moving



Dan Coyro/Sentinel file

The cabooses were installed, and red-tagged as illegal by the county, in 1990.

two of them to her land, King was denied a permit by the Zoning Administrator and the county Planning Commission.

The county Board of Supervisors refused to hear an appeal of those decisions.

The case then headed to court. The county had sued to have the cabooses removed, and the Kings counter-sued, Herr said Monday.

Santa Cruz County Superior Court Judge Tom Black ruled in 1992 that the Kings had to remove the cabooses, but would not have to pay any penalties for

moving them onto her property without the necessary permits.

Black said the Kings had acted in good faith. Local attorney Marilyn Liddicoat, a former supervisor, had checked with Dan Forbus, her former colleague on the board of supervisors, in 1988 on whether the Kings would need a permit to move the cabooses to their property. Forbus had his aide check, Liddicoat told the court, and said that no permit was required.

In the latest chapter, the Kings recently lost in state appeals

court.

"It's over," said their attorney, Gerald Bowden.

The next step would be to petition the state Supreme Court to hear the case.

"It's doesn't look like it is a type of case that the Supreme Court will take," he said, explaining that the higher courts takes few land dispute matters.

King sums up the whole long battle as being on the wrong political side of the tracks.

"You better be on the right political side," she said.