

# Our Choices: Move Forward or Stagnate

By John Rico

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WAITING FOR THE TKO - Having been a resident of Vacaville for the past 64 years, and a "fixture" on Main Street for 57 years, it has been my privilege to watch the heartbeat of the community throughout the years.

There seems to be manifesting that same lackadaisical atmosphere prevailing here today which preceded the events which brought on the big depression about a half century ago.

People will defend the community's position in the economic scene; they will say we have built thousands of homes here; we have built this and that; have done this and that. But with our greatest challenges ahead, and perhaps the most opportune times in the offing, there is reluctance to accept creeping stagnation.

Let me make some observations that cannot be challenged:

Why is it necessary to have the community embroiled in controversy? We recently went through the process of recall of several school trustees, and many people have accepted the position that the trustees who were victims of the recall deserved the punishment and embarrassment.

We now have an irritating feud between the Vacaville and Elmira Fire Departments. A half century of cooperation between men serving the departments now seems to have come to an end. History tells us of the feud between the McCoys and the Hatfields, Now, modern history will record the dissension between the fire departments of Elmira and Vacaville.

This latest agitation with the firemen of the small community of Elmira, compounds an already existing cancerous condition which resulted when the city of Vacaville built a sewer plant in Elmira's backyard. At the time, council members were cautioned that this ill-advised proposal would alienate Elmira from the Vacaville business community. But no one could induce the city council of Vacaville to place the sewer plant a few miles distant from its present location.

There are eight separate rural fire districts in Solano County, all operating on their own budgets with fund realized through taxation on properties within those districts. Each of the seven incorporated cities within the county also have fire departments. The Elmira

Rural Fire District was formed in 1928, and in 1946 the Vacaville rural district was organized.

Although each fire district has its boundary lines on the county map, throughout the years a mutual assistance agreement has practically erased these fixed boundaries.

When the late Charles (Chuck) Green was Solano County fire warden, it was his desire that the entire rural area of Solano County be incorporated into one single fire unit. He discovered that pride in the individual departments by volunteer firemen was difficult to overcome. He, more than any other individual in the history of the county, was responsible for cooperation between the eight rural departments. The mutual aid fire agreement in Solano County drew praise from many points throughout the state.

Now, with home and industrial activity accelerated in the rural areas of the county, the need for a close-knit mutual agreement is a necessity.

Today it is vitally important that there be no friction among the men in these departments. Frankly, the Vacaville Rural Fire Protection District needs the continued assistance from neighboring Elmira and Dixon. There is no way that the Vacaville district can operated without this assured assistance.

Although we live in the most affluent nation on the face of the earth, there begins to appear weak spots indicating the loss of pride in our abilities to continue moving ahead. President Ronald Reagan is attempting to immediately reverse our lifestyles which have been generating for over half a century. He needs to be offered praise for his intentions; he needs to be criticized for what he constantly refers to as "an emergency."

President Reagan has the personal charisma to instill into the American people that confidence which is needed more today than at any other time in our long history.

But it is going to be impossible for Reagan to point to our deteriorating cities, our dirty weed-strewn streets and alleys. Success along these lines can only be accomplished by muscle and determination.

Right here in Vacaville we constantly hear suggestions for redevelopment of deteriorating sections of the city. This has been a lullaby sung to a complacent segment of our population for at least 30 years.

While the thought of redevelopment has merits, economics tells us a grim story of lack of funds. But, there are smaller projects within the city which can be accomplished, and energy should be exerted to that end.

Today the hue and cry is: "We are short of money." That may be true, but tomorrow we are going to be shorter, and as the years roll on we will be shorter, shorter, shorter.

In the final analysis the directions in which we go from here on out depends on cooperation. Arguing and feuding with our neighbors is not the answer.

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