

A Significant Year

First published in December 2000

In early 1973 many Homesteaders sensed that something important could be accomplished. How to preserve open space, prevent further development and maintain the character of Homestead Valley became the focus of attention. After Brown's Hall was sold in 1972, planning was underway to acquire the Hughes Call property next to Homestead School for a community center. County Services Area #14, created in 1968 to serve recreation needs, would facilitate attaining these goals.

Several residents with the expertise needed worked diligently throughout the year. The results were astounding:

- The Homestead Valley Community Association obtained an option to purchase land planned for the Alpine Meadows Subdivision.
- County Services Area #14 passed a \$600,000 bond issue for acquisition of about 80 acres of open space. The vote was 79.3% yes to tax each home \$3.35/month on average, the highest tax of seven Marin bond issues.
- Three Groves was split so that 2 acres could be purchased for a park and 0.6 acres with its historic home could be left in private ownership.
- Weedon Redwoods, 4.4 acres across LaVerne from Stolte Grove, was deeded to the Trust for Public Land in readiness for acquisition by CSA #14.

Stolte Grove was leased for a year, and purchase negotiations begun. In retrospect it is clear that Homestead Valley benefited tremendously from these accomplishments in 1973. Imagine the likely consequences had these efforts failed: houses on Stolte Grove, Three Groves and 80 acres of open space.

Equally amazing from today's perspective is the degree of participation by the residents in community activities. The following highlights were reported at HVCA's annual meeting in January 1974:

- School District candidates night had attracted a large crowd.
- Many new faces were seen at the monthly Stolte Grove picnics. [Tours of the adjacent Three Groves was probably the big attraction.]
- The 4th of July parade to Stolte Grove had many costumed children on decorated tricycles and bicycles. [Probably more than seen recently.]
- About 700 people attended the annual Mozart Festival concert. [Compare this with an average crowd of about 200 in recent concerts.]

About ninety Christmas carolers toured Homestead Valley on December 21, 1973. [What happened to this tradition?]

1973 will long be remembered as a significant year in the history of Homestead Valley.