

The “yellowdogs” of Nevada County

George Rebane, 24 February 2008

An interesting dust-up occurred in the online *Union* that involved me. My rapid response is contained in the post [‘Beaten About the Head and Shoulders’](#), but upon reflection, a more considered response is due since the county is headed into another season of planning for economic development. The cited piece by Jeff Peline served as a launch point for someone calling himself ‘General J’ who diverted attention from the Peline piece. It is a good thing that this General J doesn’t pretend to be a journalist, for his charged and inaccurate reporting would earn him low marks even in today’s schools of journalism. Nevertheless below we record his comment in its entirety.

The same...

George Rebane that said at the recent county economic meeting in Nevada City that the County should cater to the whims of rich retirees and write everyone else off? If I remember correctly his statement was something like; If you don't do what we(rich retirees)want we'll take our money and move somewhere else and Nevada County can become a backwater foothills community made up of poor and(supposedly) useless people. That's the kind of "community spirit" that makes me proud. Now that was a "Chilling" presentation!

by General J on Sat, 23 Feb 2008 07:49:41 PST

My real intent here is to shine a light on the influence of the county’s “yellowdogs” – see comment from *The Union* below – on the hesitant planning process now getting underway to improve or goad economic development in Nevada County. These yellowdogs (henceforth quotes understood) are ignorant yet passionate folk who mourn a phantom limb more magnificent than the one they once had.

Mr Rebane can hit the road!!

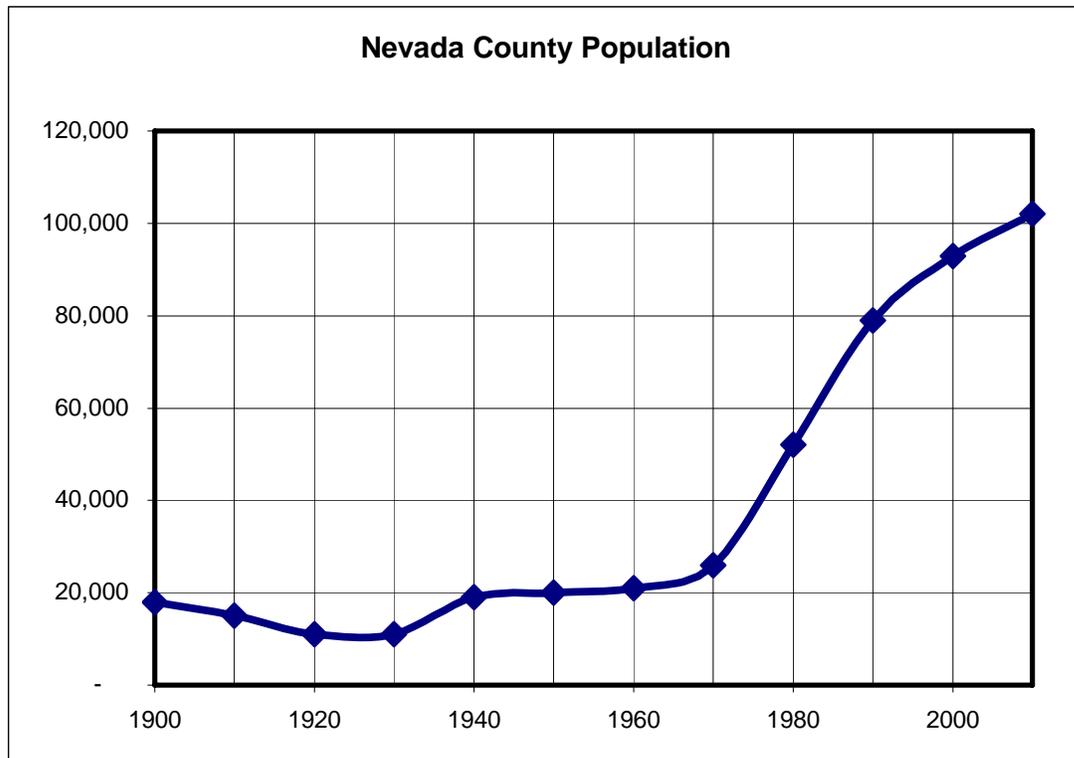
*Backwater my a**, this was a great place to grow up , before the wealthy S. Cal., Bay area retirees came!!We had local businessmen supplying the needs of our community , traffic was nothing, and you knew everybody, especially your neighbors. People you could trust!!Leave your home unlocked , keys in the car in downtown N.C. or G.V. anytime. A great place to raise your family, we HAD volunteer firemen who gave their all without question and would be there to help anybody, anytime! They are all gone , thanks to people like Mr. Rebane!! I'll take the old Nev. County anytime, but it's long gone, and we have really no one to blame but ourselves for letting them come here to begin with!! If the local blood would have stayed in Nevada County politics , instead of letting people like Rebane in, well, the rest is history, we didn't see it coming!!Our family had many generations in Nev. Co. , logging , local shops, volunteer firemen ,graduates of Grass Valley high & Nevada City High, Nevada Union, Football on friday nights,*

we bleed blue & gold, But , they are all leaving because of the attitudes like Rebane, sad day!!

by yellowdog on Sat, 23 Feb 2008 10:11:48 PST

We find from the start that the county’s yellowdogs believe they lived in a ferociously insular region wherein they had fascist-like powers to determine who came and went – “no one to blame but ourselves for letting them come here to begin with!!” I can imagine the distress of having my tires shot out in 2002 as my wife and I crossed the Bear River bridge from the south.

It’s hard to know where to start on the concerns of our county’s yellowdogs. Maybe we start where the gentleman compares the notion that this county was a backwater with his butt – probably a close fit as any. The dictionary says that a backwater is – “a place or state of stagnant backwardness: *This area of the country is a backwater that continues to resist progress; an isolated, peaceful place.*” (dictionary.com) And I meant the use of that word exactly as defined. The yellowdogs confuse a kid’s perception of growing up in a backwater with its suitability as a place for adults who want to better their lives. I did a good part of my growing up in a post-war backwater displaced persons camp in Germany called Geislingen. I thought it was a blast (after the war ended we kids thought everything was a blast), but our parents had other ideas. For a kid, this county as a backwater had to be at least as good as Geislingen. But now it’s time to take another look at Nevada County as an educated adult.



To get the full impact of what kind of a backwater this place was for at least the first six decades of the 20th century, one needs only to look at the nearby chart. The best thing that happened to this county in that interval was during the Great Depression when the feds were pouring money into public works projects all over the country and the mines were still operating. For sixty years the population of Nevada County struggled to stay even while the rest of California was soaring and showing the world what progress looked like in everything that humans put their hand to. Not knowing any of this tells us that maybe this yellowdog remembered those local high school graduations only from a seat in the audience.

More specifically, newspapers from those days reported people and businesses moving out, storefronts on Main, Mill, and Broad Streets boarded up, tourist trade struggling, and departing high school graduates leaving behind plenty of ‘affordable housing’. Yes indeed, those were the days still yearned for by those who forget or never knew.

Then in the sixties something started happening besides the Bay Area’s flower children migrating to a safer place to smoke grass. What really saved this backwater were not outsiders, but locals with a vision who lobbied for improved roads (access) and who made cheap land available for businesses and developers who were willing to risk building something new here that would bring people and money to the area. In the sixties the county started growing again while yellowdog memories started to selectively fade.

However, with growth came the notoriety that brought in the low-lifes from the big cities and central valley, places where living was becoming harder for the non-working class. These people didn’t bring jobs but mostly their liking for drugs and crime. Those “rich retirees” had yet to make their dreaded entrance.

Fortunately for the community, the locally grown leaders were able to attract enough retirees and entice the return of the tourists so that growth resumed by the end of the sixties. With solid growth in the seventies came even better roads and the community’s private freeway – from nowhere to nowhere, but we quickly began applauding its obvious foresight. Meanwhile, in the background there arose a community of self-appointed social engineers (today living on grant monies and transfer payments) who saw an idyllic never-was form of life fading. They formed a natural alliance with the distressed yellowdogs of the county, those for whom the fruits of modern life were a retreating promise that would never be fulfilled. Now in their educational ‘workshops’ and in their public statements this alliance would claim an endorsement to beat the band – these guys could even pretend to be the reincarnated spirits of the Maidu.

From those days in the seventies - the yellowdogs were by then mobilized – they had their marching orders strapped on their hips which they could fast draw at the first sound of an SDA or variance from the General Plan. To these people the engines that keep a community vibrant and prosperous do make a strange and unwanted sound. In the morning they awaken from their dreams of ‘smart communities’ and seeing nothing they like, they spend their days grousing and growling at whatever is new. It is clear these yellowdogs are not descended from the pioneers who laid bare these mountains while building

the towns, mines, and machines which brought into the county the first families who intended to stay.

The retirees, who finally began arriving during the eighties in significant numbers, imported mounds of cash that was generated elsewhere and spent here – talk about a clean industry. They also made a market for the long-term locals who were thankful that they could now seek other horizons. And with these arrivals, the yellowdogs in their besotted wisdom began to blame these retirees for doing away with everything from high school sports, volunteer fire departments, and local shops. The retirees are now even accused of promoting the pilfering of vehicles on local streets that in a bygone and kinder day could be left unlocked.

To me this shows that the vantage and vision of the yellowdogs is so shrouded that they are blind to the social engineering that has swept the country in the last decades, hamstringing local police in their ability to even stop the punks from watering down shop doorways on Broad Street. We remember that these unemployed migrants are not those new arrivals who enable the locals to move out by creating a market for their lifetime investments, paying top dollar for their real estate, and then staying to pay higher property taxes forever. And still the yellowdogs keep growling and pining for their neverland utopias. It is these same people who now stand in the way of new wealth generating businesses and harangue the county's cash cows who live quietly on our hillsides.

In the end all of us must realize that there never was a Mayberry past, and most certainly no such place to which we could return. Now we either find a way to grow so that the trees don't again disappear while the trash piles high, or else we become part of San Fernando Valley del Norte that is rushing up the I-80 corridor to overwhelm us.

Today we can still take advantage of our location and natural beauty (here even before the yellowdogs) and put a deserving price tag on it, or we can be swamped by politically engineered "smart growth" and government mandated "affordable housing" with all of its long-touted and never-seen benefits. Delaying the choice does nothing but opts for the latter. Then there will be neither the money nor the will to put this place back together again after it is ravaged by the balanced-community types.

You see gentle Reader, for a number of reasons I can say all these things that other well-meaning folks who want to but somehow can't or won't bring these politically incorrect issues into the public debate. Perhaps one reason is because they fear the wrath of the yellowdogs and their handlers. But I don't need your vote nor seek your business. I and others like me came here to make a home and give not take. But your good will is needed to help put us all on a path that will keep Nevada County as one of the most desirable places to live in the country. And for those yellowdogs who still can't tell what that looks like, please pay attention. The only way you can know for sure, if this or anyplace else is a good place to live, is to count the people who live here voluntarily. When the volunteers start leaving, we're all in trouble. In my lights this should be one of the main objectives, guiding principles, and visible standards of all community planning which most certainly includes promoting its economic development.