

Supervisor, residents run poker wild in Johnson Valley

By Jutta Biggerstaff
Hi-Desert Star

JOHNSON VALLEY — There were no wild cards, no bluffing and no poker faces Saturday during the Poker Run sponsored by Homestead Valley Community Council.

But there was definitely a full house.

More than 80 participants joined in the old-fashioned community fun as they traveled from Gubler's Orchids to each community center to receive their cards. The run included breakfast and lunch along the way and ended with an ice cream social in Johnson Valley.

The event was also billed as "Meet your Representatives" and was a fundraiser for HVCC, said Jim Harvey, president of the council.

Homestead Valley Community Council is the representative body for Landers, Flamingo Heights, Yucca Mesa and Johnson Valley, all of which are unincorporated communities.

County 3rd District Supervisor Neil Derry and his field representative, Alan Rasmussen, played along throughout the day, meeting and visiting with constituents at each stop.

Harvey said he was pleased the supervisor could take time to spend the whole day at the poker run.

"Derry showed a lot of commitment to the communities, and he talked to a lot of people," he said. "He was the draw that made the event a sell-out."

In fact, the council even had to print extra tickets.

"The poker run absolutely exceeded my expectations," Harvey said, adding that he hoped to make it an annual event.

The money raised will go toward sponsoring community events, like the recent open government workshop the council sponsored and the Christmas party that netted 150 new toys for Tender Lov-



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Supervisor Neil Derry reaches for his final card of the poker run while field representative Alan Rasmussen and Susan Lewis of Johnson Valley look on. Derry wound up with a pair of kings — a decent hand, but not enough to win.

ing Christmas.

The poker run wasn't exactly nail-biting championship play like what is seen on TV, and it wasn't a cut-throat game of Texas Hold'em, but a friendly game of five card stud.

The final hand was drawn in Johnson Valley, where contenders gathered for ice cream and socializing amid lots of laughter and chatter among neighbors. Along with upbeat live piano tunes, a feeling of community pervaded the gaily decorated room.

Ice cream in many flavors and all styles was served, to the enjoyment of players. Derry had a simple scoop (or two) of strawberry, but others licked cones, spooned rootbeer floats or dug into mile-high sundaes or gooey banana splits.

The supervisor was on to Yucaipa for another event soon after the final hand was played.

"It's a great opportunity to



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Roger Taylor is the delighted winner of the \$150 pot.

interact with constituents that's enjoyable and fun for everybody," he said.

He and Rasmussen were available not only to address concerns, but to enjoy the day. Derry said he had a good time playing along and socializing, but didn't expect to win anything with the lousy hand he was dealt, a fact he acknowledged with a good-natured shrug and a wry grin.

His final draw, however, netted him a pair of kings, but

it still wasn't enough to win. And he didn't win an orchid from Gubler's in the raffle as he had hoped, for his wife. Nevertheless, he said the experience was fun.

"I had a great time," he announced.

After the fourth hand, several people were working on straights, many had pairs and one player had three of a kind.

Tension mounted as the final hand was drawn at the Johnson Valley Improvement Association. In the end, there were no sore losers.

"Win a few, lose a few," grinned one player as he picked the final card of a losing hand.

Ray Pessa won the second prize of \$100 and Brett Hodges won the \$50 third prize.

The winning hand of three 9s was drawn by Roger Taylor of Johnson Valley, who was last seen looking for a girl to take to lunch with his \$150 pot.