



BY OLIVIA DE HAULLEVILLE

Having been very impressed by attending the CALAWARE Govt. Workshop (explaining how the Brown Act can empower the public to keep local governments honest), organized by the Homestead Valley Community Council in Yucca Valley, January 27, I decided to interview the President of the HVCC - Jim Harvey. I was hoping to get some information about himself, but so enthusiastically ebullient was he about his projects—particularly Assembly Bill AB-811 and the importance of bringing it to the attention of the locals—that I realized I had “bitten off more than I could chew!” Attempting to thank him for this workshop, he erased himself completely, saying thanks were entirely due to all the work done by the members of HVCC.

Originally from New York, in 2000 Jim happened to discover the Morongo Basin on a trip to visit a friend living in Johnson Valley. What happened next can best be described as: Veni Vidi Vici - he came, he saw and he was conquered... by the beauty and the vastness of that area along Old Woman Springs road. As a website designer (www.ICandyExperts.com) he could afford to spend time at home... without the need of leaving at 6 O'clock in the morning, returning exhausted in the evening to the comfort of TV, a bottle of beer and bed. Instead, he spent time listening to the mountains, to his neighbors and thereby became a member of the HVCC.

In June 2009, Jim was elected President of the HVCC which originally had been called the Tri Valley Community Council, organized for the purpose of linking remote unincorporated communities, specifically: Johnson Valley, Flamingo Heights and Landers, under the auspices of Supervisor Hansberger. Why the change of name? Because In 1997, Yucca Mesa— disappointed by the lack of attendance to their MAC— requested to join. Since the name “Homestead Valley” was already applied to that whole area, this name was used for HVCC that now includes Yucca Mesa as well.

Harvey's decision to live in Johnson Valley—a town so remote it is invisible to speeders on the Highway... even if they DON'T blink an eye—automatically directed him into cooperation with neighbors and nature alike, giving rise in 2008 to the formation of AREP www.ProtectOurLands.com. (continued)

Jim is fervently devoted to the education needed regarding the diametrically opposed configurations of utility-owned “centralized” energy, i.e. energy created at one source and transmitted to many (presently the case), to the more truly “Green” concept: point-of-use energy (a good example: the solar panels supplying energy to the Yucca Valley Town Hall)!

Jim explains that the detrimental ecological impact, let alone the vision of windmills on the horizon and interference with homes near the mountains in Yucca Mesa and outlying areas, is a nightmare that can best be averted through AB-811. A workshop called “They're NOT Green” is presently being planned by the HVCC so that all locals can be made aware of this incumbent danger.

For your information, offered below are links to an article and audio interview by High Country News with Jim Harvey RE viable renewable energy obtained in a responsible manner, eliminating the need of disrupting native land with long-distance transportation.

Hear him explain this in his own words:

- <http://www.hcn.org/issues/41.8/high-noon>
- <http://www.hcn.org/articles/jim-harvey-vs.-big-solar>

In spite of Harvey’s passionate focus on saving the desert, still he finds time to plant strawberries, peppers, and tomatoes his garden along with pomegranate, peach and pistachio trees at his home in J.V.... situated in heart of the desert expansion flanking Hwy. 247. Asking Jim why he is going to all this trouble his answer is simple: “Because it's the right thing to do!” He is extremely confident that solutions can be developed to any problem... “It’s not difficult to find a way to solve unique issues when we decide to fight and protect our rural living... because we wish to live here, not because we have to.”

For more info. check out: WWW.HVCCSITE.ORG