

October 1, 2015

To: Honorable Judge Paul M. Haakenson  
From: Jean Berensmeier, Lagunitas, California  
Re:: The People of the State of California, et al. V. David Hoffman, et al  
Marin County Superior Court case # DIV1502647

Dear Honorable Judge Haakenson,  
This case is not about me but in many ways it is all about me and you. I am 83 years old and have lived in Lagunitas, 4 houses away from my good friend David Hoffman, for over 40 years.

I am proud that my 53 years of community activism resulted in acquiring from zero to 2600 acres of public open space; saved an old school building from being demolished that now serves as a thriving Community Center for the entire San Geronimo Valley and founded the SGV Planning Group which helped foil a plan, adopted in 1961, that would have created a Valley of 25, 000 people and 5000 homes rather than the modest population of 4000 people that we have today. I believe and abide by the law and work to change it when needed to help my community or the environment.

But I don't have the vision, the genius, foresight, fortitude or courage to do what David Hoffman has done and so he represents me. His ongoing efforts over the past 40 years have been to show how we must work in harmony with the earth to meet our needs – sustainably – now, and in the future. He has broken the law in order to explore how best to use the "tools" (old, new and invented) needed to meet the challenges of these perilous times. We need to make room in our lives and laws for this kind of creativity and caring.

And so, I hope that you, in your wisdom, can see your way to support these unique efforts and urge the county to find a resolution that will preserve as much of the property as possible as an historical landmark and allow David to live on the land.

Sincerely,  
Jean Berensmeier  
Lagunitas, California

cc: Supervisor Steve Kinsey and The Last Resort

To Marin County Supervisor Steve Kinsey:

Sir, it is with a heavy heart that I email you today.

David Lee Hoffman is not only a citizen of Marin, or of California, or even of the United States, but rather, as so many of us should be in practice; David is a global citizen.

The property he has worked on for some forty years now is not just a home, it is a sacred place to many...his house represents the best of California, of Marin, of what it means to be a free thinker railing against a ever-conforming world.

His home and business should be considered a historic place, a place of pilgrimage, and not some collected violation of building codes. This isn't just some gathering of crazy hippies trying to rally around some futile cause...if you've spent any time with David or his friends and family, I'm sure you already know that.

Consider your role in this decision, and consider how you want to be remembered in the context of California's history; as just one more cog in a bureaucratic wheel or as someone who took a stand and did something to preserve what's left of authentic craft, culture and America's spirit of resourcefulness.

With all due respect,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be 'JCB' with a stylized flourish extending to the right.

J.C. Bouvier

—

Principal  
Bouvier Consulting  
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Supervisor Steve Kinsey  
Marin County Board of Supervisors. District 4  
Marin County Civic Center. Room 329  
San Rafael, California

I have familiarized myself with the issues surrounding David Lee Hoffman and his property in Lagunitas. I consider the actions taken thus far and the pending actions all a gross miscarriage of justice regardless of the technicalities surrounding County legal requirements for permits. A man who tried to do something innovative for the local ecological environment, a man who someday may be regarded as a martyred pioneer is being financially ruined not to mention the emotional pain he has suffered at the hands of administrators whose officiousness exceeds any sense of compassion let alone considering ameliorating the strict statutes out of respect for one who tried to make a difference in the right direction.

The man who brought Mr. Hoffman's innovations to the attention of the county is a modern Judas for not having the common decency to have at least approached Mr. Hoffman with his concerns about Mr. Hoffman's property before running to the County government. I wonder how these administrators feel about working with such a person.

Sincerely,  
Phil Arnot  
Lagunitas, Ca. 94938

To Mr. Kinsey,

"The feeling I have is one of camaraderie, of alliance, of commitment to David and Bee to find a way to allow for this unique and wonderful expression of life and humanity and respect for nature to carry on, to continue, to remain. That's the most important and fundamental commitment that I want to make."

"I do agree with what you're saying, and that is: 'Don't treat this as: how can we forgive this guy for breaking all the rules? But more about: how can we celebrate what he has brought to the project itself?'"

These are your words during a visit to David's home and life work back in June of 2012, wherein you were gracious enough to spend some time with a large gathering of us on David's behalf (a video copy of this visit is available upon request). As I'm sure many others are doing now, I am writing to ask that you keep your commitment as David's October court hearing approaches. Based on news of what is planned, I'm starting to lose faith in those words.

While I in no way believe you would serve your constituents by turning a blind eye to David's lack of building permits, the planned approach of having a court appointed receiver decide which of David's creations to lay waste to seems extreme by any reckoning. That sounds appropriate for dealing with the safe house of a mafia boss who was leading a sex slave trafficking empire or meth distribution ring, not someone who has succeeded in recycling dirty dishwater and sewage into sustainable farming tools.

You mentioned in your visit that the primary issue facing David's unpermitted construction was the health and safety of the waterways and salmon population. You will **never** in your lifetime meet someone who is more unequivocally dedicated to the health of the Earth than David. The man uses ash as dishsoap and has only a wood burning stove in his kitchen. He has eschewed a garbage disposal in his kitchen sink for a giant worm Palace that eats his food scraps and creates potent, natural fertilizers. He has dedicated his life (and a substantial fortune) to creating ecological systems that put nearly all other "green" movements to utter shame. Do you not think he would be the first to tear down his creations if concrete, verifiable evidence showed they could potentially harm the land he is trying to enhance?

What's the worst that could happen should the next big one hit Marin County? His solar powered shower tower crashes down and leaves a mess of wood and stone on a hillside? His water collection basin cracks and rainwater enters the local (dry) stream? His worm palace disintegrates



and legions of earthworms escape into the dirt? His tea cave collapses and floods, and what little water escapes his property gets the local wetland wildlife a little too caffeinated? Or perhaps the more pertinent question: do you think destroying The Last Resort will prove a point, that publicly knocking down David's opus will ensure others comply with your building permit process?

I am not a politician, so I won't pretend I know what pressures you're dealing with. That said, I have to believe that as an elected official your sworn duty is to act in the best interests of the people that elected you. Part of that duty must entail setting aside emotions, personal loyalties, and anything wholly subjective, and rather act based on empiracle evidence and facts. I ask you to consider what FACTS you are using to justify bulldozing a man's home and life's work. What PROOF do you have that undeniably shows David's property poses greater risks than the potential rewards it may yield? What damage to the salmon population has been PROVEN will happen should the worst case scenario play out?

Sincerely,

Ryan Beavers  
Walnut Creek, CA

P.S

"The world is changing a lot faster than we know, and sooner than not more independent, more self reliant, and more locally based technologies are going to prevail."

-Steve Kinsey, 2012

To the Hon. Judge Paul M. Haakenson, Marin County Superior Court

Dear Sir,

I am writing in support of David Lee Hoffman. He has spent his life working on his Lagunitas home. It is no cookie-cutter house to be sure but is an amazing work of art and environmental investigation. David has worked hard to find the most environmentally friendly way to deal with issues of water, waste, compost and energy consumption. None of this conforms with building code but all of it is designed to be earth friendly and some of it is cutting edge and could lead the way for homes of the future. Beyond all of that, it is truly a work of art informed by David's travels in Asia and elsewhere. It would be a huge loss to the community and the world, not just David, for this to be destroyed. Some things are not strictly legal but deserve legal protections nonetheless. The future can only be improved by people willing to innovate and try new things to improve the world. I hope that it will be possible to give David an avenue to legalize his home by conducting tests that prove that the environment is not being harmed by his home systems. These tests would likely confirm that the environment is being improved rather than harmed. Some flexibility should also be granted on the basis of artistic merit as the whole property is a work of art. Currently I am reading a history of the city of Amsterdam that illustrates how their policy of *gedogen*, which means not legal but allowed, gave the city a vibrancy and tolerance of diverse people and new ideas that led to the flowering of the Dutch Golden Age in the sixteenth century. This in turn influenced the flowering of democracy and religious freedom that was the basis of the founding of this country as well. I think we would all benefit by granting some leeway to David. Anyone who has visited his home has had an eye-opening experience and been inspired by his vision. That deserves to be preserved.

Sincerely,  
Anne McClain  
Forest Knolls, CA



Mr. Kinsey

David Hoffman has been a friend and great neighbor on Cintura Ave in Lagunitas since 1975 . I have witnessed up close the evolution of his property. I have seen him pour heart, sweat and hard earned resources into the passionate manifestation of his vision.

And what was the vision?

From the beginning, I have watched him attempt to create a sort of "sustainable village" in the context of unique physical beauty . And a peaceful place where others could come, have a cup of tea and be inspired to bring forth their imaginative and practical best. And now 40 years later, red tags aside, I along with countless others, say 'bravo!'....

Far more than just a wild artist expressing himself, he has truly attempted and succeeded in conjuring positive environmental solutions that may benefit the planet and us all. In the midst of the unique structures and intricate designs that color the land is what I term a 'living eco-friendly laboratory' --to develop and test safe, effective and non-polluting water and waste recycling systems, as well as vermiculture , permaculture and soil innovations.. Some have already shown merit and have been recognized internationally for their positive contributions. Please remember that the the sustainability issues that are emerging so crucial now were not so obvious when David began his journey in the 1970's. He was just so passionate about it then and few of us (including myself) understood the urgency of his experiments and the model he was attempting to create. Yes, he may seem to be a living remnant of that free spirited era ---but please Mr. Kinsey, never doubt his purposeful commitment to seeking some positive solutions.

I believe that Benjamin Franklin flying his kite in the lightning and those young rascals Steve Jobs and the Woz would nod their heads approvingly at David's motivations and go-for-it spirit.

I understand there are rules of the road and David will have to pay some. That said, I profoundly believe his place should be preserved as a historic landmark and acknowledged for positive innovative contributions to sustainable living . Will our grandchildren really benefit from the onslaught of the wrecking ball here? Or will they be able to perhaps look back with wonder at a time where an individual might create something that lights their imaginative fire?.

Mr. Kinsey, I so hope you will support a fair and considerate negotiated settlement.

Thank you for your time,  
Robbie Long  
Lagunitas, CA