

Of bankers, optimism and friendly folks



Bettie Urbina

It was festive, optimistic and downright satisfying one evening last month to hear reports from the officers of the board of directors of the Edwards Federal Credit Union (EFCU).

The occasion was the 48th annual meeting of the local banking institution and it brought out many seniors.

It stands to reason that while there was a sprinkling of younger members

at the tables in the Cascades Restaurant main dining room, they were mainly peopled by seniors, who make up the bulk of the membership and have been socking their moolah away for many years now.

According to many who are supposed to know all about banking institutions, credit unions are said to be the safest place to stash any extra money you happen to have lying around.

That solves the question about what to do with all that cash under the mattress. I mean, who wants to trust a bank with your lottery winnings? And some bankers? Humph! They'd probably call it a bonus and go south with it. My ex-banker husband excluded, of course ... although ... ? If the take were big enough, I might even join him in a flight to Barbados or wherever there's no extradition.

Anyway, I digress. Let me get back to the annual meeting.

President and CEO Stan Turner kept the meeting running smoothly. He's a handsome dude, which would normally be very distracting, but he focused everybody's attention on the business at hand as he, for the most part, let other board members carry the information baton.

The really pertinent financial and investment data came from Board Chairman Ron Dovino, Treasurer Bob Large and Kim Dunham, head of the supervisory committee.

If anyone doubted the words of the first two, who were cautiously optimistic in their reports, it was comforting to know there's a supervisory board keeping an eye on all the financial wheeling and dealing going on with our meager monetary assets ... speaking personally, of course.

There was plenty of affluence at the tables all around the room. Those who have plenty and don't have to suffer too much over minor losses were the ones listening closest to the reports. They wore pretty serious expressions as they drank in every word.

Please notice here that we're not snobbish. Carlos and I hobnob with everybody, even those who could easily buy and sell us. Believe it or not, those people are notably among the most friendly and gracious.

Chairman Dovino was meticulously precise in his report. He said that there has been an increase in marketing this year over last "and the picture this year shows us in a positive situation."

Treasurer Bob Large was a little more definitive with facts and figures but just as optimistic.

He explained that EFCU is solid even though it has been hit by economic downtrends just like all of the other financial institutions.

Asked what changes have been made to assure the continued balance of the organization, Large stated that steps have been taken to cut back on expenditures.

"We've eliminated the positions of three vice presidents and more changes are being made as the need arises," he said. "We are seeing a more positive economic climate and



Edwards Federal Credit Union President and CEO Stan Turner talks at the 48th annual meeting of the banking institution for officers and members held at Cascades Restaurant in Palmdale.

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we are sound. You've trusted us and those of us on the staff remember that."

Stan Turner, member of the supervisory committee, took notice of the EFCU staff.

"They're the ones who have made things work," he said.

He went on to talk about all the good things happening around the Valley: The projected arrival of the F-35, the beauty of the poppy fields and the new hospital in Palmdale.

"I don't know about you but I feel a lot better seeing all of these things. They're all positive and we care about that."

Continuing he complimented and thanked all the volunteers who work for EFCU.

"We are the largest financial institution in the Antelope Valley," he said. "And we take pride in the fact that credit unions care about their members. Our personal attention to our membership is very important to us. It's what we do."

He took questions from the floor:

Q: When is the percentage rate on certificates going to go up?

A: As soon as we possibly can raise them.

Q: What steps has EFCU taken to protect us from identity theft?

A: We make everyone identify themselves. Your mailbox is probably less secure than your identity is with us. If you ever do have identity theft get hold of us immediately and we'll do all we can to help you.

We were surprised to see so many of our friends there. Randy and Tracy Harris with Tracy's parents, Francis and Georgia Woodland, were at a table looking out on the Cascades outdoor waterfall.

Our seats were closer to the front and the head table. Lois and Jack Wilk were the only ones seated with us that we knew at first, but

we soon got acquainted with Vernon and Norma Fierrer, who are comparative newcomers to the Valley; and Gail and Martin Lofgahl, longtime residents. Gail teaches at Antelope Valley College and Martin is a member of the EFCU board as is Lora Counts, another friend, who along with Martin, sat at the head table for the business discussion.

I've always felt that meetings such as this was, were to be tolerated as a work experience for me, but this was different. Most of the time I don't have any personal interest in what's going on with these boards and their business workings, I'm merely there to take notes and pictures.

This time we were definitely involved. It was interesting because Carlos and I have at least \$600 invested in an EFCU savings account. We'd have more but we keep going on trips.

We definitely wanted to make sure that every last penny is safe and we went away pleasantly tummy full from the good food and comfortably confident that our cash will be there whenever we need it.

Now that's a good feeling!