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## Interview with Judy Drake

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Judy Drake

## INTERVIEW WITH JUDY DRAKE

### Access Services Team Leader

Judy Drake is the Access Services Team Leader in the Robert E. Kennedy Library. She has been very active in the Los Osos community over the years.

*Moebius: How long have you been a resident of Los Osos?*

*JD:* I moved back to California in 1984, and instead of living in San Luis Obispo, I moved out to Los Osos, where I could raise my son.

*Moebius: Do you consider the current sewer problem in Los Osos something that could have been averted? Do you consider it a man-made disaster?*

*JD:* When we moved to Los Osos in 1984, the sewer was an issue. I don't know how long it had been an issue, but it's something that should have been taken care of back then. It's hard to say whether or not it was a man-made disaster. It would depend on how you look at it. I recollect that at some point in time the state was willing to pay for half of the sewer, but those in control didn't go for it, I guess.

*Moebius: There's a lot of finger-pointing. In your opinion, who's the cause of the current stalemate: the old CSD, or the new CSD?*

*JD:* It's hard to say who's to blame. It's hard to pinpoint. There are those who have owned homes out there for a long period of time, or whatever...I've been sitting on the fence. At this point, the finger shouldn't be pointed at anyone. The community as a whole and the CSD need to come together, air out their differences, stop wasting people's time, and move on.

*Moebius: Could anyone have done it better? Is it an impossible situation?*

*JD:* The right mix of people need to get together. It's not an impossible situation. I think it depends on dollars. I do know that as a renter, I have to worry about whether I will be able to continue living in Los Osos, based on how much my rent would be increased. My salary doesn't keep up with the cost of living. I like living out in Los Osos because it's peaceful, and I would like it to be kept that way, but we do need to build a sewer. If not, young couples raising families and retirees will lose money on their homes.

Houses wouldn't sell because of the sewer. I can foresee Los Osos becoming a ghost town, not literally or in the Western sense, but as a community.

*Moebius: Do you live in the prohibition zone?*

*JD: Yes, although I haven't been served papers yet.*

*Moebius: What do you think of the Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board staff recommendation requiring individual homeowners in the prohibition zone to pump their septic tanks every two months?*

*JD: I think that's scary. There's no way, I mean there is no way that if that was attached to my rent that I could continue to live in Los Osos. To me it smacks of retaliation because Los Osos as a community, or our leaders, didn't move fast enough for the Regional Water Quality Control Board. That's retaliation! Who in their right mind is going to pay \$400 every time their septic tank is pumped.*

*Moebius: I've heard some say that big government cares nothing for the poor people. They compare the Los Osos sewer dilemma with Hurricane Katrina in that government doesn't solve the problem, but has only makes the situation worse. What do you think?*

*JD: I'm not certain that the sewer problem can be compared to Katrina. However, the sewer dilemma and Katrina could be linked by health issues. All levels of government need to be concerned about our wellbeing. I think that a poor person has a difficult time trusting government because elected officials renege on the promises they made to get into office, often serving constituencies that supported them during the election.*

*Moebius: In the end, will the rich be the only ones able to live in Los Osos because of the sewer?*

*JD: I think that's possible, but on the flip side, I believe that there are those who consider themselves middle class who will make an effort to remain in Los Osos because of its country-like atmosphere. Los Osos may not have everything, but it has a calming effect on me. Working in San Luis Obispo, where I jump-start every day to a 24/7 hectic pace, it's nice going home to where everything is serene. Everybody who chooses to live in Los Osos should start working together as a community to achieve those things which will make Los Osos a success. There shouldn't be so many factions.*

*Moebius: Should the sewer be at the TR-W site or out of town?*

*JD: Maybe it should be where the old landfill was, I don't know, but it shouldn't be smack-dab in the middle of town.*

*Moebius: What should be done with the current site?*

*JD: I would like to see a place for the young people. The youth in Los Osos, pre-school*

on up to high school, need a place to go. We should have a site. We have baseball fields and we have the middle school, but in the past, for example, when my son was playing youth sports, the people who live near Monarch Grove complained about the Little League users. Why not build a centralized park that has baseball fields, that has a swimming pool? As we get older, we forget that we were once young ourselves. We must support and guide our children and make certain that they have a future in Los Osos.

*Moebius: Should the CSD sell the TR-W site?*

*JD:* If they sold the site, would the money be used toward building a sewer? Would it pay the fines that have been levied? Whatever they do, it seems to me that the whole process will be started all over again. Six to ten years from now, when I retire, the sewer will probably still be an issue.

*Moebius: Are the current CSD Board's lawyers a help or a hindrance? Are they protecting Los Osos residents?*

*JD:* I don't have an answer to that one.

*Moebius: Measure B won by a very small majority. Do you consider Measure B legal?*

*JD:* I don't really have an opinion on that issue. If I was a landowner, I think that I would have been at the late-night CSD meetings voicing my opinions and concerns. Using hindsight, even as a renter I should have attended meetings when I could.

*Moebius: Would you sign a petition to dissolve the CSD?*

*JD:* I would have to weigh the pros and cons. I do know that the two factions, eight months to a year ago, were warring. I know some of the people who get up and speak at the podium.

*Moebius: Are the members of the CSD doing their job, considering the pressure they're under, or are they incompetent?*

*JD:* Here again, I don't really have an opinion one way or the other. One would have to applaud those who have picked up the gauntlet and give them kudos for what they are doing.

*Moebius: Do you watch what some call the "sewer soaps" on television?*

*JD:* On occasion, when I've been cruising the channels to find something to watch, I have. I've noticed that there are some very boisterous people stressing their concerns, and I do vaguely remember that there was one group—I don't know if it was the old CSD group or not—that made me wonder. Were they property owners? Were they owners of more than one property? It's hard to say because you don't know what their true issues are. It's like "Pappa Government." Who are they really out to support? It seems to

me—right now—that in Los Osos there are a lot of retirees and a lot of blue collar workers, and a lot of young families. I decided to live in Los Osos because I felt it was the right place to raise my child without the hustle and bustle of San Luis Obispo proper. 

*Interview on behalf of Moebius conducted by Ken Kenyon, Winter, 2006.*