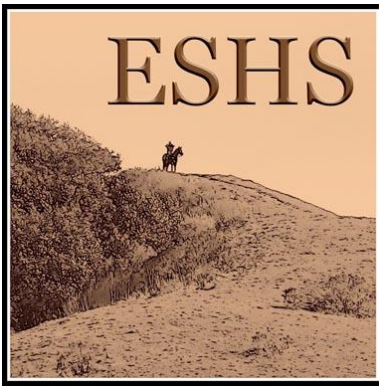




Published by the El Sobrante Historical Society

THE LEFTOVERS

Issue #56

Fall 2025

Do You Remember ELSO Windy?

Donald Bastin

'Windy' New Cartoon Will Be Seen Weekly In HERALD

The wind blows and blows in El Sobrante, California, and if you want visual proof of this we suggest you buy a copy of the El Sobrante Herald and see 'Windy', a cartoon appearing weekly.

The cartoon "ELSO WINDY" was introduced in the El Sobrante Herald dated August 9, 1951. It was one of many cartoons carried by the Herald, but was unique in that it appealed strictly to the inhabitants of our town. If you have lived here for any length of time, you are familiar with our weather patterns, and the windy conditions that are common, particularly during the summer months. Caused by the disparity between the

heat, and consequent low pressure system in the central valley and the high pressure along the cold coast (the wind doesn't blow, the valley sucks) our valley is a natural corridor for the coastal air to move, seeking to balance the disparity in the systems. Those of us who have lived here for any time have adjusted to the wind, and, in fact treat the phenomenon with something akin to affection, just part of the background.

ELSO WINDY

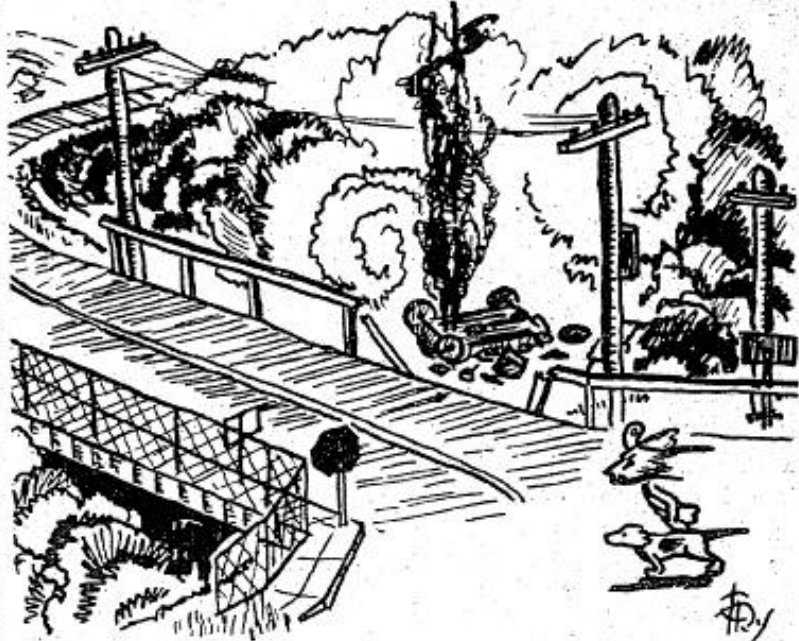
By CARL CHRISTIANSON



HI FOLKS I'M
ELSO WINDY
I'LL SEE YOU AGAIN SOON

ELSO WINDY

By CARL CHRISTIANSON



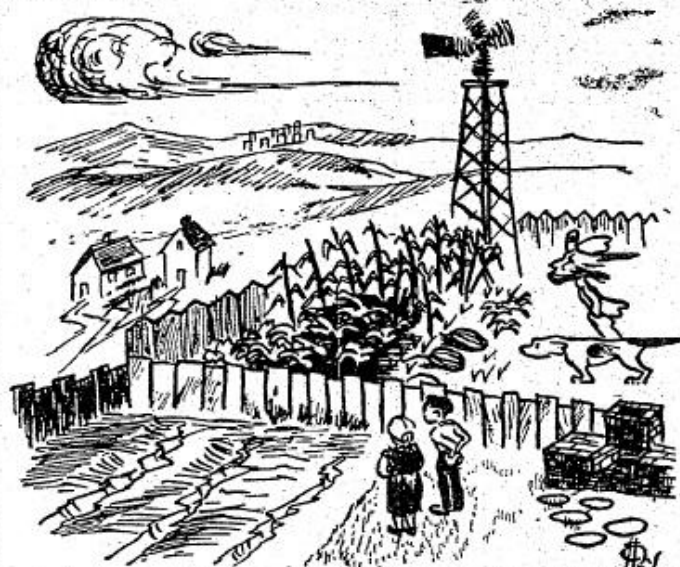
HE SHOULD HAVE REMEMBERED:
"ROAD 20
IS A STREET ON WHICH
HE SHOULD HAVE
DROVE 20"

Like many of our citizens at the time, Carl A. Christianson was a World War II veteran, having served aboard a bomber as a gunner and radio operator in the Burma-China theater. He was a graduate of the California College of Arts and Crafts, and taught arts and crafts in the Richmond school system.

In this cartoon, we see Road 20 (now El Portal) and the bridge which spanned San Pablo Creek. The freeway would not cover the site until 5 years later.

ELSO WINDY

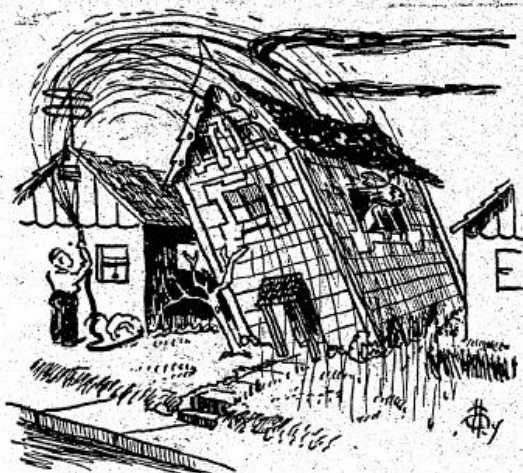
By CARL CHRISTIANSON



YOU'LL HAVE TO PLANT THE SEEDS
DEEPER NEXT TIME DEAR, THEY
BLEW OVER THE FENCE AGAIN.

ELSO WINDY

By CARL CHRISTIANSON

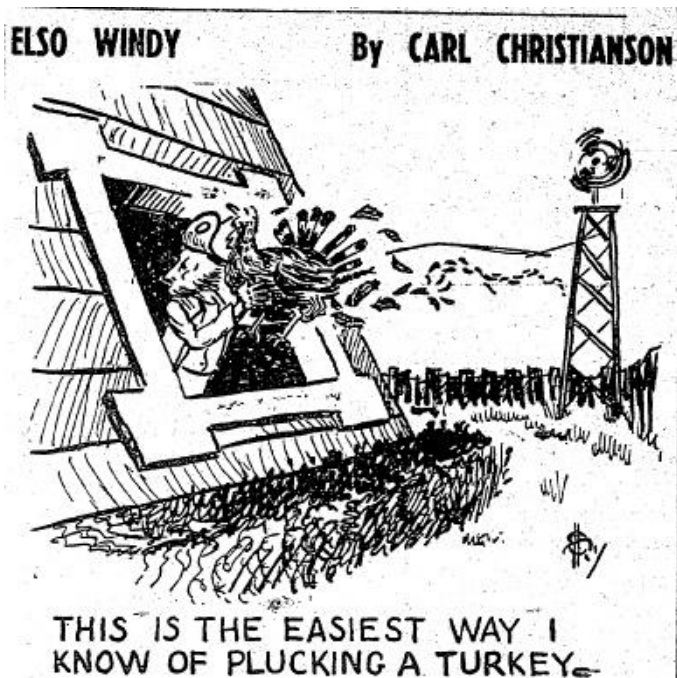


IT'S EITHER RAINING OR ELSE
SOMEBODY IS WASHING THEIR
TELEVISION ANTENNA.

Above, we are reminded that, at the time, television reception was unreliable, depending largely on antenna placement and, apparently, cleanliness.

Gardening has always been an important activity for residents of El Sobrante.

The cartoons below are selected examples of the cartoonist's work.



The cartoon series ended with the June 26, 1952 issue of the Herald. No explanation was given. This was not unusual for the Herald. Many cartoons came and went over the 25+ years of the paper's life.



Johnson Estate - 1 Los Arboles

Have you ever noticed the “compound” at the top of the ridge at the end of La Crescenta Road in the El Sobrante hills? The road leading into the property is now called Los Arboles, and it's gated. For years many locals speculated as to what was up there and who the owners were. Mostly because they would see exotic animals roaming around; a zebra, a llama and more. Both the zebra and llama once got loose but were later captured. They also had a pet pig of about 600lbs that sometimes came into the house. This was the Ralph W. Johnson estate built in 1963. At the time, Mr. Johnson owned about 100 acres of the El Sobrante ridge, which allowed him to have a variety of animals roaming around his

property. Many of which probably came with him upon moving to the new place from his former Spanish-style El Sobrante home on May Road, which had the added attraction of a large barnyard for his cows, chickens and other animals.

A 1965 Oakland Tribune article described the home designed and built by Mr. Johnson as “an expanse of glass, redwood and stones sitting high on a hill above El Sobrante must surely fit the requirements of a “man’s castle” for its owner.” The area that the house sits on is more of a gentle slope than most of the surrounding area, and the address was originally listed as 1 Magnolia Lane. It was later changed to 1 Los Arboles to reflect the many trees planted by Mr. Johnson over the many years he lived there. On the property are also 2 large ponds; one with swans, and another with large Koi. There are so many other features on the property, too numerous to mention here. You can find most online real estate agencies have a link to the property with more details, and one in particular has a virtual tour of the interior of this vast estate. Google: 1 Los Arboles, El Sobrante and you see all the possible choices. It’s even listed under the [Eichler Network: Amazing Home of the Year?](#) because of its Mid-Century Modern (MCM) Eichler-style architecture.



Entryway - 1 Los Arboles



Ralph William Johnson was an entrepreneur and businessman. He was also a pilot in World War II and bought surplus planes to start the international moving company Van Pac carriers based in Richmond. It is said, he used to fly low over El Sobrante in an old bomber and rattle windows. Through the years he owned and operated many other businesses, including Richmond Transfer and Storage (which his father, John started in 1921), American Rock and Asphalt (with operations in Richmond, Petaluma, Brisbane, Hayward and Middletown), Compass Container and Rep Air, an airplane repair and maintenance company. He was involved in various community groups and was co-founder of the American Air Museum at the Oakland Airport and was past president of the Richmond Boys Club.

In 1997, Ralph decided to move to Napa (although he also lived part-time at his ranch in Middletown), and retired physician, Alan Rosenberg, M.D. bought the 59.15 acres from the Johnsons for a cool million. This was about the same time Rosenberg had retired after 30 years of treating cancer patients as director of radiation therapy and nuclear medicine at nearby Brookside Hospital (which was renamed Doctors Medical Center that same year). Carefully maintained and filled with treasures by the Doctor from his travels all over the world, including adding a few more exotic animals of his own, he is now ready to let someone else take over as he now in his late '80s. Dr. Rosenberg put the estate up for sale in 2021 and sold the property to an undisclosed buyer. He preferred to sell it all as a "life estate" so that he can remain and enjoy the property for the remainder of his life. However, it is said a buyer who currently lives in India has purchased it (for almost \$4M).

Unfortunately, Ralph Johnson passed away in 2002 at his home in Napa. And recently, Dr. Rosenberg has moved to Fairfield with family.

So, do you have any stories of this place? We'd love to hear them! Post your comments and thoughts on our [FB Group Page](#).

"Little Herk" was a regular comic strip which enjoyed a brief run in the Herald for a few months in 1949



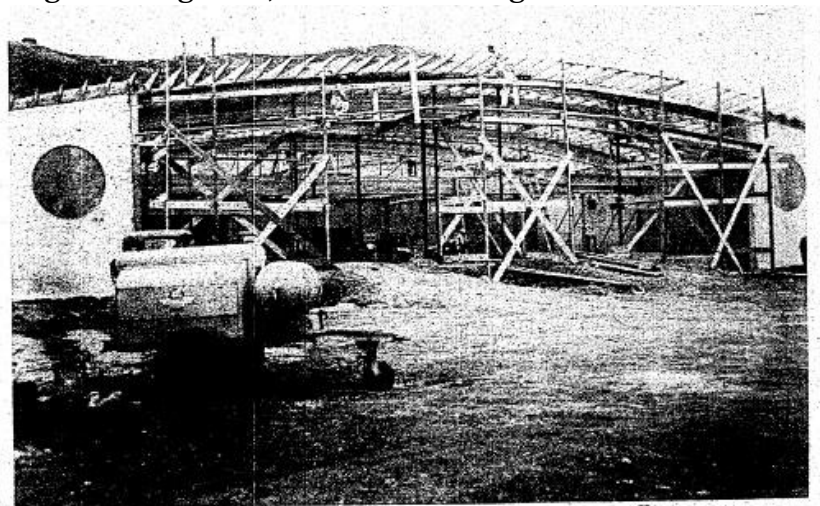


OPEN FOR BUSINESS is the new \$125,000 Safeway supermarket pictured above which opened Wednesday at San Pablo Dam Road and Road 20. The modern store which contains over 16,000 feet of floor space, has seven of the latest type checking stands and parking area to accommodate approximately 125 cars. (More Photos on Page 3) Photo by Castillo.

If this building looks somewhat familiar, you may recognize it as the current Walgreens pharmacy, just opposite the intersection of the Dam Road and El Portal. Construction of the Safeway store began early in 1958, which was a boom time in downtown El Sobrante. In a short time, our town would boast of having no fewer than 6 large grocery outlets within its borders, including Lucky, 7-Oaks, LoRay (formerly Louis Store), Fry's, and Calico (now Central Market). But the Safeway store was likely the largest of these stores, incorporating over 16,000 square feet of floor space, and parking space to accommodate up to 125 cars.

The design was apparently something new, described as "tilt-up," which may refer to the construction, rather than the design. Tilt-up construction, the process of creating whole wall sections horizontally on site, and then "tilting" them up and fastening them together, is the current rage in warehouse construction. But it was not unknown as early as the 1950s, and even before. The design, with lots of glass, a curved roof, and generous lighting, was fairly typical of large grocery operations of the time.

By the middle of June, construction was moving along, as can be seen in this picture, though initial construction had been delayed by heavy rains in the Spring. The opening date was now scheduled for late September. In fact, the store opened on October 15, and was accompanied by a significant amount of fanfare.



EL SOBRANTE PROGRESS is becoming more pronounced each day as construction on the Safeway Supermarket at 3630 Dam Road shows signs of early completion. The new store, which is of the new tilt-up design will contain some 16,000 square feet of floor space including lobby space. The parking area which will be in front of the store will accommodate approximately 125 cars. Completion is scheduled for September 1. —Photo by Castillo

at your big new El Sobrante Safeway!

S&W FINE FOODS

Red Kidney Beans	17-oz. Can	15¢
Barbecue Beans	In Sauce—15-oz. Can	21¢
Oven Baked Beans	With Pork—28-oz. Can	30¢
Brown Bread	1-lb. Can	27¢
Medium Size Peas	17-oz. Can	23¢

SAFEGWAY DAIRY FAVORITES

Lucerne Cottage Cheese	First Carton	29¢
Lucerne Half & Half	First Carton	30¢
Nonfat Skim Milk	Lucerne—1/2 Gallon Ctn.	35¢
Lucerne Sour Cream	1/2 Pint Carton	29¢
Lucerne Buttermilk	1/2 Gallon Carton	35¢



YOUR NEW EL SOBRANTE SAFEGWAY

Located at 3630 SAN PABLO DAM ROAD
(Near Road Number 20)

MARGARINE **COLDBROOK** 2 for 29¢
Colored Cubes—1-lb. Carton

HOUSEHOLD NEEDS

IVORY SOAP	Large Bar	2 for 33¢
IVORY SOAP	Medium Bar	3 for 31¢
GENTLE IVORY-FLAKES	12-oz. Pkg.	37¢
CAMAY BATH SOAP	Bar	2 for 31¢
CAMAY TOILET SOAP	Regular Bar	3 for 31¢
ZEST TOILET SOAP	Regular Bar	2 for 31¢
ZEST BATH SOAP	Bar	2 for 43¢
LAVA HAND SOAP	Medium Bar	2 for 27¢
DREFT PINK DETERGENT	10-oz. Package	35¢
CASCADE DETERGENT	For Automatic Dishwashers—20-oz. Pkg.	49¢
GENTLE IVORY SNOW	(10¢ coupon deal)	85¢
OXYDOL with Oxygen Bleach	29-oz. Pkg.	37¢
SPIC & SPAN CLEANER	1-lb. Package	31¢
CHEER DETERGENT	New Improved Box	35¢
DASH DETERGENT	For Automatic Dishwashers—20-oz. Pkg.	45¢
COMET CLEANSER	21.3-oz. Can	2 for 49¢
PERSONAL IVORY SOAP	Bar	4 for 27¢
JOY LIQUID DETERGENT	12-oz. Can	43¢
IVORY LIQUID DETERGENT	12-oz. Can	43¢

TIDE 59¢
All-Purpose, New Improved Detergent
49 1/4-oz. Package

MISCELLANEOUS VALUES

Ginger Snaps	Nabisco—Old-Fashioned 16-oz. Package	39¢
Instant Potatoes	Fluffy—Schilling's—8 1/2-oz. Pkg.	29¢
Hunt's Tomato Paste	4-oz. Can	3 for 29¢
Chili Pepper Catsup	Soldier's 14-oz. Bottle	2 for 33¢
Ajax Cleanser	21-oz. Can	2 for 49¢
Zee Lunch Bags	Kraft—20-Count Package	2 for 23¢
Dinner Napkins	Scotchies—50 Count Package	27¢
Purr Tuna Cat Food	4-oz. Can	2 for 27¢
Parade Detergent	49 1/2-oz. Package	49¢

ALBUM No. 5

"The World's Greatest Music"
SYMPHONIC MASTERPIECES
HIGH FIDELITY 12-INCH
LONG PLAYING RECORDINGS BY
WORLD FAMOUS ORCHESTRAS
AND CONDUCTORS!
NOW ON SALE! \$1.37 with any purchase!

COFFEE BUYS!

HILLS	Regular or Drip 1-lb. Can	60¢
FOLGER'S	Regular or Drip 1-lb. Can	60¢
EDWARDS	Regular or Drip 1-lb. Can	58¢
NOB HILL	Whole Roast 1-lb. Bag	56¢
AIRWAY	Whole Roast 1-lb. Bag	54¢

FROZEN FOOD BUYS!

Orange Juice 4 for \$1
Scotch Treat—6-oz. Can

Cut Golden Corn	Bel-air—10-oz. Package	6 for \$1
Green Beans	Bel-air, Cut & French Style 9-oz. Package	6 for \$1
Green Peas	Bel-air—10-oz. Package	6 for \$1
Bel-air Spinach	Leaf & Chopped 12-oz. Package	6 for \$1
French Fried Potatoes	Bel-air 9-oz. Pkg.	6 for \$1
Peas & Carrots	Bel-air—10-oz. Package	6 for \$1



SAFEGWAY

Lucerne Butter
1ST QUALITY
Cubes—1-lb. Carton **69¢**

Cane Sugar
CANDI-CANE
10 Lb. Bag **79¢**

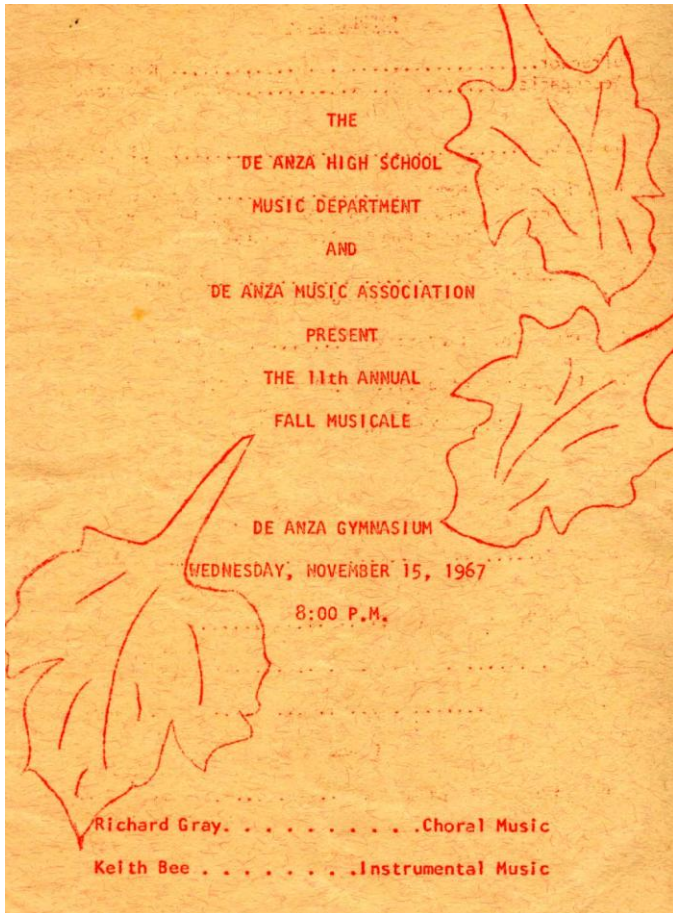
Ice Cream
LUCERNE
PARTY PRIDE
Assorted Flavors
1/2-GALLON **69¢**

The El Sobrante Safeway store continued in operation for around 13 years (the actual closure date is uncertain, but occurred sometime in 1971 or 1972). After that time the building served as a social services office.

Around 2007 (again, the date is uncertain, but between 2006 and 2008), the building was acquired by the Walgreen company, which made substantial changes, creating a "look" more recognizable to patrons of that business.

New Acquisition:

De Anza Music Programs: 1966-1969



We are indebted to De Anza graduate (1969) Patty Burlingame (Bass) for the donation of 5 song and instrumental programs put together by music teachers Keith Bee and Richard Gray in the 1960s. It is rare that this kind of ephemera survives for any length of time and we are fortunate to have them in our collection. Patty is listed in all the programs as a viola player and credits Mr. Bee as being very supportive and encouraging in her art.

Patty reports that she still plays the viola, which had given her much pleasure through the years.

The Leftovers is published quarterly. Articles for publication are encouraged, as are comments. See e-mail address below.

The El Sobrante Historical Society is a formal nonprofit organization, and donations may be tax-deductible. We are dedicated to the preservation and display of the history of the community of El Sobrante. We depend on our members and local residents for the information, artifacts, and photographs that make up the society's collection. Become a member and help out! It's free and simple. Just visit the website, at elsobrantehistoricalsociety.com.

Visit us on **Facebook:**

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/ElSobranteHistoricalSociety/>

Mission: *To promote the awareness and appreciation of El Sobrante Valley history through preservation and education, and chronicling of the community's heritage for current and future gener*

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Questions, Comments, and other communication? Send to:
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