

Wednesday, December 22, 2004 Last modified: *Tuesday, December 21, 2004 3:29 PM PST*

Retiree brings activist knowledge to action committee

By: *Matthew Self, The Telegraph*

There's something professorial about Dr. John Thomson.

The Bass Lake resident and community activist leaned back in his leather recliner and stroked his chin, perhaps to aid his recollection of two decades of corporate and academic service.

"I used to tell my students, 'I've been in school longer than you've been alive,'" he said, gently mocking his own late start in life.

Thomson attended junior college in his 20s, but didn't pursue education any further until a career revelation as a 30-something: "If I was ever going to get anywhere I would have to go back to school."

His pursuit led to acquiring a doctorate, which led him to work in corporation formation and jobs as the dean of Bay Area schools, such as Heald.

Thomson puts his background in accounting, government experience and education to work these days as the publisher of the Bass Lake Action Committee newsletter (<http://www.basslakeaction.org/>). The newsletter promotes the voice of concerned Bass Lake area residents who feel impinged on by area governments, particularly a proposed 41-acre county park that could put light towers in Thomson's backyard.

Thomson joined the committee just as it was beginning to gain steam in the fall of 2003. His retired status afforded him time others in the community didn't have.

"I'm trying to do this for all the people who have to get up at the crack of dawn and don't have time to go to the CSD meetings. People who do have this time have a civic obligation to do this for their neighbors," he said.

Committee President Kathy Prevost included Thomson among a number of people who bring extensive corporate and organizing skills to group.

"I've been very fortunate in the community, because we have a breadth of experience. John enjoys what he's doing with his knowledge, experience and education. Each person on the committee is that way," she said.

Thomson said he is wholly in favor of parks, just not parks with lighted fields.

"Let's build five of these parks, maybe 10 of them and scatter them (around the county). Then, when the sun goes down, let's go home," he said.

At a recent county hearing on the Bass Lake park, Thomson asked sports groups who have become ardent supporters of the local park to consider what they're bringing to the county.

"I told them, 'You live in a lovely place. But you come here and all the things you moved away from trailside behind you,'" he said.



Dr. John Thomson is the publisher of the Bass Lake Action Committee newsletter. Courtesy Photo

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