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**To: County of Riverside Grand Jury
From: Sandra P. Totten,
citizen of Banning, CA for 20 + Years**

Dear Sirs and Madams,

Yesterday, March 9, the Banning Woman's Club held its monthly meeting. As a member of the Club for 15+ years. I am not the longest time member, but with our attrition rate am getting closer each year. When I started I was the youngest in age but shortest in length of membership. I have been an officer in the past. In 1999 I was awarded the Woman of the Year for help to not only the Woman's Club but several other agencies in our town. I write the above not for credit, but to explain my interest in fair dealings of any organization I know about.

When I went to the meeting I had no intention of writing you. I always go early to set up a few things I do monthly for our Club. For the first time in many months, I needed to use the restroom. As I walked in, not knowing that anything had been done, I said out loud, "WOW!" The rest rooms, both men's and women's, had been completely redone. I especially went into the men's to see if it too had been redone.

As has been known for months, that the garden area has been completely redone also, the kitchen has been update with a new stove, new wall mounted ovens, a new dishwasher, a microwave own has also been added. All these items were badly needed.

We need new air conditioning, heating, a new roof, and a few structural improvements. As I stated, the rest rooms were completely redone. The carpeting in the main room needed replacing. As a result, all the carpeting has been removed. The grand piano badly needed tuned and has been. Let us quickly review.

- 1. 2 Bathrooms completely redone.**
- 2. New air conditioning put in.**
- 3. New Heating put in.**

- 4. Garden and landscape redone.**
- 5. The kitchen added many devise that needed replaced.**
- 6. New roof. (I think, but will check with the woman who helped create the contract.)**
- 7. Structural improvement done.**
- 8. Piano tuned**

So we have had at least 6 needed updates to the actual building, 1 to completely redo the garden area, 1 to tune the piano: which the Club uses as needed, specifically every Christmas and occasionally by the program givers at the monthly meetings. We have a fairly large stage and the Alliance uses it to put on plays and demonstrations that help the community.

All this work was done by the Banning Cultural Alliance. The Woman's Club entered into contract with the Alliance several years ago with our deeding the Club house to the Alliance for \$1.00 a year with the provisions that the Banning Woman's Club would have permanent usage of the Club house to meet and put on our extra curricula events. In exchange the Alliance would do ALL maintenance and upkeep of our Club House. They check with our membership before doing much at all.

Why did we do this, because our membership had dwindled and those who remained members were getting older and unable to carry out money making events to pay for the upkeep.

As per the contract, the Alliance has kept its end and although we have little to do per the contract the Woman's Club has helped the Alliance as we can by putting on Lunches for the Alliance workers on various events for the community. We have also donated what money we can to the Alliance in helping a little on their wonderful events.

As to the Redevelopment Committees criteria as you can see by my explanation, the Alliance has more than fulfilled the criteria for funds to redevelop a major building in our town.

The Banning Woman's Club building was recognized as a our club house was recognized as a Riverside County Historic Landmark, followed by designation as a State Point of Historic Interest on November 3, 1989. These honors due in part to the unusual architecture, but more to the role it played in the early life of Banning.

In the year 2004, The Banning Woman's Club celebrated a major milestone. The club celebrated our 100th Birthday.

I would like to extend an invitation to the members of the Grand Jury to attend a Club meeting and view the improvements themselves. I have not discussed this invitation with our president, but I have no doubts the Club would approve. We meet every 2nd Tuesday of each month at 1.30 PM until May, From June until Oct. we are dark, but have events scheduled in late May, on the 22nd we are having a luncheon and fashion show (a yearly event), The Women of the Grand Jury are more than welcome to attend this, men also but only Women's clothing are shown, usually modeled by members of our Club. If you want to attend either the Fashion show or our opening meeting on Oct. it would prove beneficial if you could let us know in advance so we can add you to the list of attendees the catered meal. All meetings with luncheons are held at 12.00 PM. We would welcome all or any of the Grand Jury to come and see the vast number of improvements. Unfortunately, not even thinking of such an investigation being done, we did not take any pictures of the before improvement facilities. However, I, as semi official photographer of the Club, when seeing our rest rooms modified, took pictures of them and decided to take pictures of the many other updates and modifications to send to you so that you could see that not all the information concerning the Alliance, according to the article in the Press Enterprise, which did not say this, but I am saying it to you.

I am probably, missing some items, and if so the fault is all mine. I have not discussed this with any Alliance member, other than to point out to Carol Newkirk of the Alliance, who is now also a member of the Banning Woman's Club, "that because of all the improvements to the Woman's Club Clubhouse that they certainly qualify for the grant from the Redevelopment Agency." I had said, "If they did any work on their museum' on San Gorgonio Blvd. they would also qualify." Carol's only remark to me was, "we have not done, nor plan to do anything with that building now." We did not even discuss my taking pictures of the improvements. I had to excuse myself to do some other work for the Club. If granting money to the movie theatre in Banning, a for profit business, is correct then granting money to the Alliance, one who has established themselves as a nonprofit organization, aiding another nonprofit agency, Also the granting of money by Riverside to upgrade the Fox theatre in Riverside would not qualify for a grant if the Banning Alliance is not qualified. I implore you to retract your 'advise' to the city of Banning after learning these new developments which I am sorry to have to state that the Grand Jury obviously did not do a thorough investigation into the Alliance's use of the grant.

This is entirely my observation after reading the article in the Press Enterprise in which the Banning Woman's Club was never mentioned and definitely should have been looked at. Feel free to address any of these points. Both my home address and my e-mail address are on the top of page 1.

Thank you very much for reading this explanation. I am not a member of the Alliance. I am only a member of the Banning Woman's Club who writes a Newsletter monthly and told of the contract we had signed of which I wrote in a newsletter. I neglected to say earlier that I am also deaf. Therefore in phoning me for any reason, please use the full phone numbers I have written on page 1. For connivance, I will include our presidents phone number, she is a hearing lady. Her name and phone number is Florence Antrim at 951-849-6565.

Now as they say "a picture is worth a thousand words", I enclose scans of the pictures I took yesterday at the end of this writing, which is now.

Sincerely and with thanks of the many other items you have ruled on,

Sandra (Sandee) Totten

First a long go taken picture of the front of the Banning Woman's Club.



The next set shows the new rest rooms



These two show the new disabled woman's stall



These show the new appliances in our kitchen-dishwasher ready to wash after our March 9 meeting



Kitchen



New fireplace mantle



New Speaking system



**New storage shed for the Alliance,
Woman's Club has a room in the building**



**View close off area and
gate for unsightly items
such as trash, etc.**



The Riverside Plaque for our Club House declared as a Riverside County Historic Landmark



Tables and benches which were brought with the Club house waiting to be moved to a better site



All in the yards (sculptures and benches, etc.) provided by the Alliance. They rotate them at different times

Two waterfall exhibits





2 stone work places at each side of of the front gate doors



Two large trees have benches around them now



Pictures taken at the Woman's Club where we have a High Tea after the meeting each month



I hope these show you some of the vast improvements the Alliance has done for the Woman's Club building and grounds. I realize you will have to take my word as to there being replacements and renovations, please do as they are very true.

The work they have already done will not only aid the Woman's Club, but all of Banning in many ways.

**Sandee Totten,
a happy member of the Banning Woman's Club since 1995.**