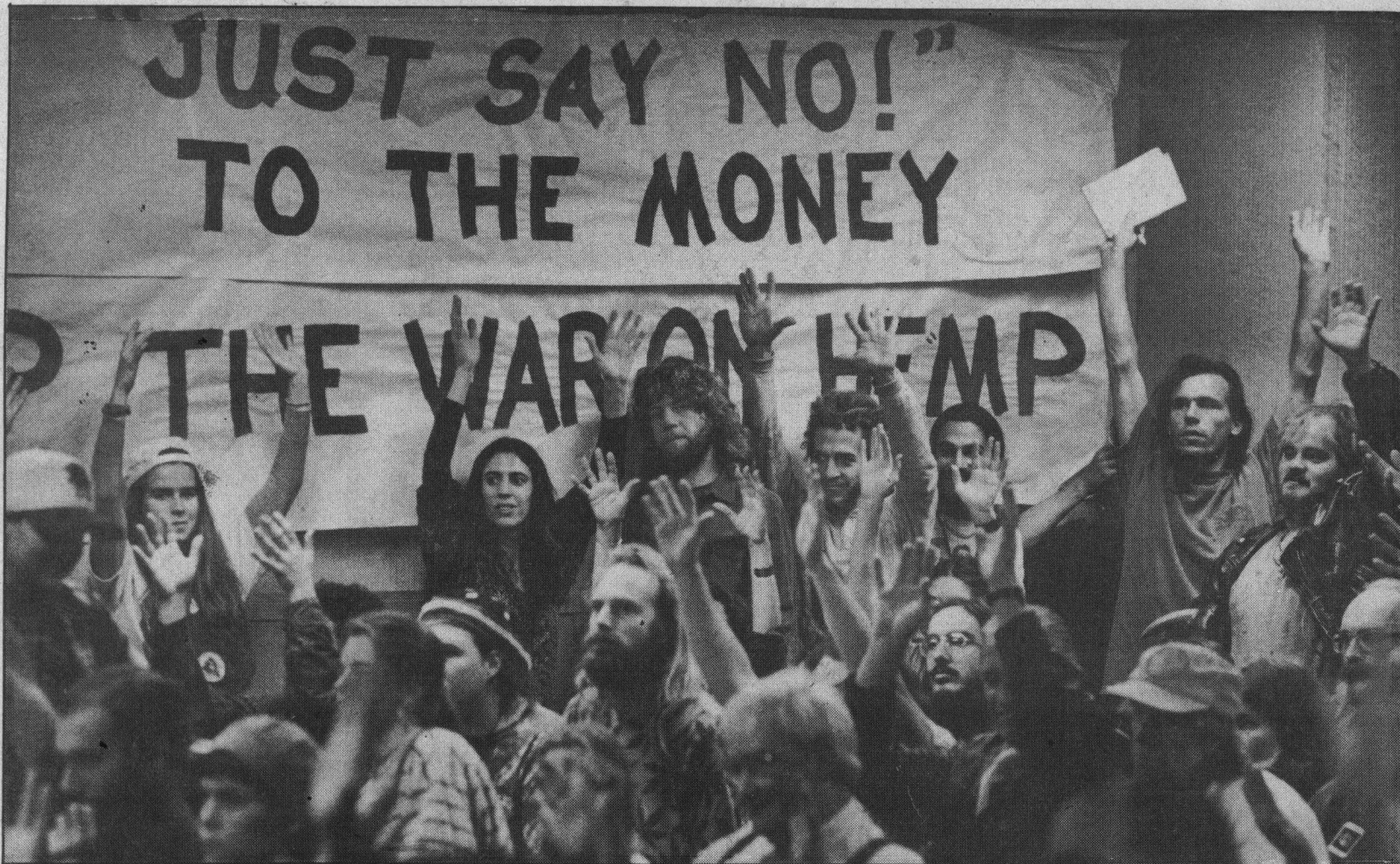


VCF Drugs



Photos by Kurt Ellison

A large crowd of pro-marijuana people made their views known to supervisors yesterday.

Pro-pot crowd sways supervisors

By LANE WALLACE
STAFF WRITER

They came more than 200 strong, carrying everything from placards to hemp ice cream, booing the sheriff and cheering every statement for decriminalizing marijuana.

The crowd didn't get what it wanted from Santa Cruz County supervisors yesterday, but it did get a compromise on the county's acceptance of a \$240,000 state grant for the Campaign Against Marijuana Planting.

The vote was 3-2 to accept the grant, but four votes are required to spend the money now, in the middle of the fiscal year.

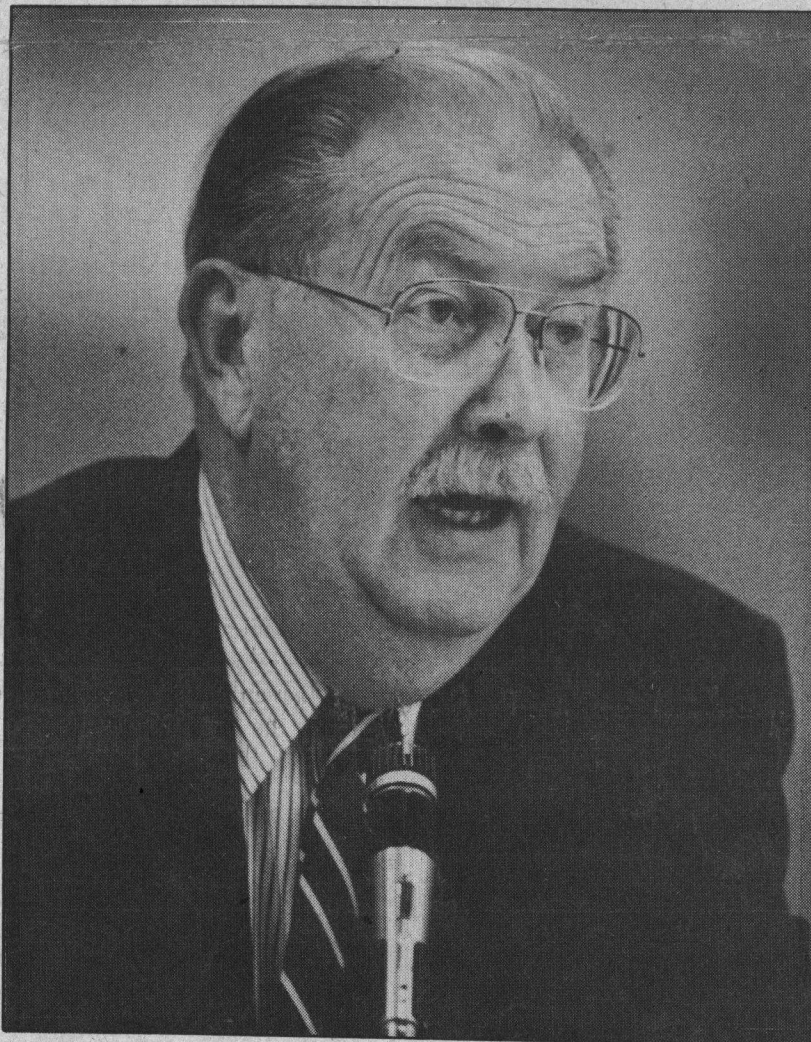
Even if supervisors eventually don't accept the grant, the annual anti-marijuana campaign will continue, Sheriff Al Noren said, although it might mean some equipment won't be purchased or replaced and an extra prosecutor wouldn't be hired.

With supervisors Fred Keeley and Gary Patton opposed to accepting the grant, Supervisor Jan Beautz suggested supervisors go back to the state and see if the grant can be restructured. That passed on a 3-2 vote.

Beautz said she has problems with certain parts of the county's marijuana-suppression program, such as the proposed use of an infrared heat-detecting device and the use of helicopters to spot marijuana plants. She suggested other parts of the grant might be accepted.

That vote came after one of the liveliest supervisors' meetings in recent years, with an overflow crowd putting on what amounted to a pep rally for decriminalizing marijuana.

While catcalls came from a few in the back of the overflow crowd, other marijuana advocates in the crowd continually urged them to be quiet. One woman urged people to cheer silently, and from then on most of the "cheering" was done



Sheriff Al Noren

marijuana to alleviate pain.

"It works," said one woman who uses the drug when she gets migraine headaches.

Keeley and Patton, the two liberals on the board, questioned whether the CAMP program is properly targeting the large growers.

"Discretion comes into it," Keeley said, referring to an advisory measure endorsed by county voters last year that calls for decriminalizing medical use of marijuana.

"You're so long-winded," Noren said. "What you're saying is that

by a raising of arms and wiggling of fingers.

The marijuana issue was thrust into the spotlight in September by the arrest of Valerie Corral, the Davenport woman who says she uses marijuana as medicine for seizures. Corral was arrested a year ago, and the charges were eventually dismissed. Prosecutors haven't yet decided whether to proceed with charges this time.

"Making patients into criminals is an absurdity," Corral told supervisors before introducing several women who said they use mar-

we should only enforce the law against certain people."

Keeley pointed to statistics that showed a number of the CAMP raids resulted in seizures of small numbers of plants.

Noren said the main goal is to find the large growers, but deputies don't ignore the small marijuana gardens they come across.

There have been incidents over the years, Noren said, where people have been murdered in local marijuana-theft cases. CAMP raids, he said, have discouraged large growers.

"Think about tracking down single plants by helicopter," said Patton, who said he's received a number of complaints about the annual aerial surveillance.

Noren said after the meeting that he still intends to go ahead with the annual CAMP effort, which culminates during the late-summer harvest.

Much of the CAMP operation is done by state officers, Noren said, with one local deputy assigned to the team. Local deputies assist in the raids.

"We (the Sheriff's Office) don't pay for the CAMP helicopter," Noren said.

"What bothers me is that they (supervisors) are going to pick and choose" parts of the grant. "Is that appropriate?"

The CAMP grant, which has been approved by the state, would cover the infrared device, two trucks, a computer, 6 radios, \$20,000 for overtime pay for deputies, and \$68,000 for an assistant district attorney to concentrate on marijuana cases.

Theodora Kerry, of the Santa Cruz Hemp Council, said after the meeting that "on some levels I'm encouraged. There's two (Keeley and Patton) who clearly see it's time for change."

A report on how the grant will be structured will be made Dec. 14.