

Pin-Pointing SC's Traffic Perils

By **BILL NEUBAUER**
Sentinel Staff Writer

Day after day throughout the year a frightening kind of map is kept up-to-date by Lt. McKinley Reed and other officers at Santa Cruz police headquarters.

The map includes every inch of the city's approximately 135 miles of streets.

Into that map, on an average of 100 times a month, a pin is stuck to mark the location of a vehicular accident.

There were 1,203 such pins stuck into the 1971 traffic accident map, according to Walter Keller, the city's traffic engineer.

The 1972 map will bristle with at least as many pins, judging from the number which have been stuck into it thus far to keep it up to date.

Keller concedes the map will frighten any layperson who discerns in each of the pins a human being who has suffered physical and-or mental anguish, or even death.

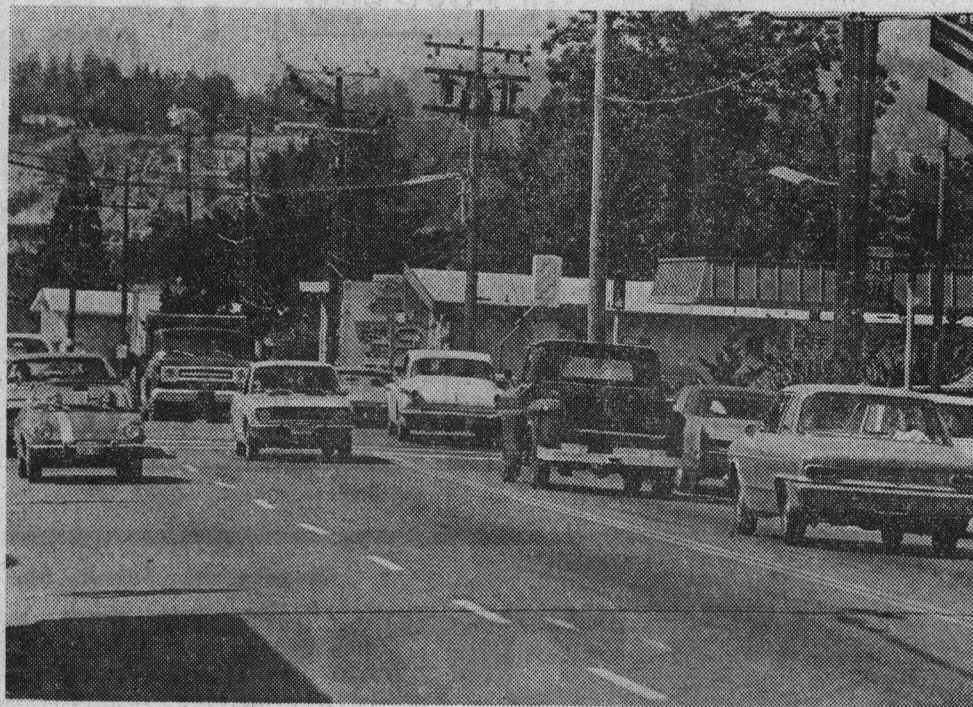
But like the police officers who visit the accident scenes and make out the reports and keep the map, Keller is a pro in his specialty.

"The map is a valuable tool in the city efforts to do everything it can to reduce the number of vehicular accidents," Keller said.

"We use the map, for example, to locate intersections which have a high accident rate. The bulk of city accidents are at intersections.

"The map pinpoints danger spots that ought to be looked at and analyzed. Over the years, the maps give us a good record of just about all points in the city. Unless conditions change at any one of these points, the history of each point is extremely valuable.

"After the map tells us where to look, we study accident reports and attempt to reconstruct each accident to



Santa Cruz' most dangerous intersection — Ocean Street and Soquel Avenue.

determine what caused it and what, if anything, we can do to prevent another at that point."

Keller said bluntly, however, that 95 per cent or so of the vehicular accidents in the city, state and nation cannot be prevented by government action.

"Only about 5 per cent of the accidents are susceptible to elimination through government action," Keller said. "The rest are caused by driver problems."

Keller's statement is borne

out by a new accident reporting system which was adopted this year statewide. In a quarterly report for the city on the Primary Collision Factor, the California Highway Patrol noted that of 294 accidents in that quarter only 16 were caused by other than the drivers.

The state report provides a wealth of detail on each accident, Keller said, including such matters as the time of its occurrence, the light conditions, the road conditions.

All this information is used to do whatever the city can do to eliminate undesirable street conditions and to help the driver escape some of the penalties for his own poor judgment or carelessness.

"Driver inattention is a major problem," Keller said.

The city currently is having a study made of the 40 worst accident locations pinpointed by the frightening maps over the years. Under a state and federal grant of \$19,850, the study by

Faustman-McCandless & Co. is identifying the specific problems, analyzing their causes and recommending means to eliminate them.

The study includes taking aerial photographs, checking up on driver stress factors through traffic volume and turning counts in key places, and through diagram of each collision recorded.

"Many factors have to be considered in easing problems," Keller said. "Sometimes a signal light will hurt, rather than improve a situation. We find solutions in many ways, ranging from restriping of traffic lanes to major construction."

The city's most dangerous intersection is Ocean Street and Soquel Avenue, Keller said, with four lanes obviously needed. There were 38 accidents at this intersection last year.

The city has a number of improvements in progress, according to Richard McKinney, associated civil engineer in the public works department. These include the Water Street bridge and road widening work, and revision of the Capitola Road - Soquel Avenue and the Morrissy Boulevard-Soquel Avenue intersections. Recently, the state has let a contract for signals at the Chestnut and Union street intersections with Mission Street.

But the real problem in the city is caused by the driver. In a recent quarter in Santa Cruz, drivers found 13 different ways to cause accidents. Yes, 13 was an unlucky number for them.

Ben Lomond Rec District Embroiled Again

By **PAUL BEATTY**
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Ben Lomond Recreation District, continuing a tradition of controversy and polarization,

will go to the polls Nov. 7 to chose two directors from a slate of candidates two of whom are split on whether the district should continue or be dissolved.

Two candidates have filed nomination papers, incumbent Mrs. Leslie Robinson and Peter Chesebrough, and a third person, incumbent Charles Scott

has taken out nomination papers and stated Wednesday he will run. Nominations close Sept. 5.

Scott had declared he would not seek election to the seat he holds by appointment following a heated meeting this month