

Handwriting provided link to cards

By MARIA GAURA
Sentinel staff writer

RICHMOND — If Mo Reich had typed the address on his valentine greeting to the mayor of Scotts Valley, he might still be on the Santa Cruz City Council.

Instead, Reich's distinctive penmanship spelled out his downfall and led to the councilman's resignation from office Friday. Reich admitted to mailing an anonymous, obscene valentine card to Scotts Valley Mayor Glennon Culwell after initially denying he had done so.

Reich, along with Santa Cruz City Council members Don Lane and Jane Yokoyama, had earlier given a similar — signed — valentine to political gadfly Steve Hartman, who is organizing a recall campaign against them and Santa Cruz Mayor Mardi Wormhoudt.

Though the card sent to Culwell was anonymous, its envelope was addressed by hand, and two independent handwriting analysts have concluded that the address was written by the same person who filled out a legal document signed by Reich. Reich Friday admitted sending the card to Culwell.

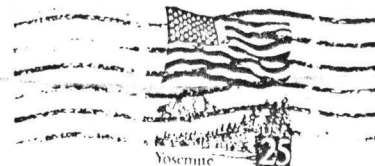
According to criminalist Peter D. Barnett, a prominent handwriting expert retained by the Sentinel, Reich's idiosyncratic handwriting was pretty easy to identify.

"Basically, what I do is start with the first letter of the alphabet and go right through," said Barnett. "Some of the letters are very individualistic, and vary in an idiosyncratic way

from the way people are taught to write."

In Reich's case, "The most interesting example of that is the lower right side of the letter O, it flattens out in that portion of the letter. The combination of C and A was very distinctive too ... (also) the connection of A and T to the other letters."

Barnett was careful not to say that the handwriting was Reich's, just that the writing was



2-26-89

City Council

MAYOR GLENN CULWELL
5000 GRANITE RIDGE DR.
SCOTTS VALLEY, CA 95066

CERTIFICATE OF CIRCULATOR

I, MO REICH, circulator of this petition, certify under penalty of perjury that the following statements are true and correct: That I personally circulated this petition;

That all the sponsors' signatures of this petition were made in my presence, and that to the best of my knowledge and belief each signature is the genuine signature of the person whose name it purports to be;

That all said signatures were affixed to this document between 07/25, 19 88, and 08/03, 19 88;

That my residential voting address is 526 MAR 40 SEASIDE ST. SANTA CRUZ, CA 95060
Executed this 12th day of AUGUST, 19 88; by [Signature] (Circulator)
at SANTA CRUZ, California.

WARNING: Every person acting on behalf of a candidate is guilty of a misdemeanor who deliberately fails to file at the proper time and in the proper place any nomination paper in his possession which is entitled to be filed under the provisions of the Elections Code. (Elections Code Section 20202)

Handwriting on envelope, top, was compared to Mo Reich's candidate statement, bottom.

done by the same person.

"You can't assume that the documents are in fact what they are claimed to be," he said. "You can do strange and wonderful things with copy machines these days, and I have to be on guard against the possibility of someone setting this up ... or that the person who filled out the form was not the person who signed it."

According to Barnett, even

using a typewriter is not a foolproof way to hide a writer's identity. While a message written on a newer model typewriter or word processor would be difficult to trace, it would not be impossible. But a missive written on an older model machine would be more easily identifiable.

But even if a specific machine was located, the identity of the typist could remain a mystery.