

In Spite Of Danger, Girls Still Hitchhike

By DON WILSON
Staff Writer

SANTA CRUZ — For more than a week now, grisly stories have been appearing about the death of Cynthia Ann Schall — the 19-year-old girl who left for class at Cabrillo College two weeks ago and never arrived.

She had planned to hitchhike to class from her Santa Cruz residence.

The stories about Miss Schall, however, or about other young women who have started out hitchhiking and ended up dead, are apparently failing to impress other would-be hitchhikers.

A dozen places at the edges of the city

Thursday, girls were hitchhiking.

Meanwhile, at the city police department, Juvenile Officer Cherrie Billingsley was glancing over notes for a talk to teen-age youngsters on the dangers of hitchhiking.

And over at the sheriff's office, Det. Lt. Kenneth Pittenger was putting together a set of statistics about crimes involving hitchhikers (rapes, assaults, kidnappings, indecent exposures, sex perversions).

Why, as the statistics grow and the dangers become more apparent, do girls continue to hitchhike?

Carol braced her back pack against one leg and tossed her head so her long blonde hair swirled around her head.

"Freedom!" she said. "You can't know how free you can be until you put a pack on your back and just start out, heading for anywhere you want to go. No restraints, not even the restraint of having to take care of your own car."

Jolynn viewed it differently.

"It's a test," she said. "You can't know if you are really you until you take off all by yourself, with nobody to lean on, nobody to turn to, and you get there all by yourself."

"How do you know, for instance, that you could make it by yourself, alone at night in the woods at Big Sur, unless you go there? And how could you take the test if you were tied down to a car?"

"You have to hitch a ride to make the test a valid one."

With Sue, there was another angle: "It's cheap."

"You start out with \$5 in your pocket," she said, "and you don't dig blowing it all on gas for a car. So you hitch."

How about danger?

"You just learn how to size up a guy when he offers you a ride," said Sue. "Me, I always team up with a guy when I'm going a long way, sort of sign him up as a bodyguard, you know. We hitch together and anybody who picks us up knows he's with me, so nobody tries anything."

"But the best way to make it safe is to just ride with freaks. They may kid you a lot, like saying they're going to drag us back into the back of a van, but they're just kidding and they always treat you nice."

Lorrie said: "I've had a few bad things happen, but mostly you have to use your instinct and get out if something starts to happen."

Sue said: "I always check the door before I sit down, you know, look for the door knob and know how you're gonna get out if anything starts."

Tasha just smiled softly. "I have two daughters who hitchhike," she said, "and I used to object to this rather vigorously. Then my son got a job and he needed the car for transportation, so I started hitchhiking too."

"Now I go everywhere by thumb and I have never had any kind of trouble."

"Often, my daughters and I hitchhike together."

Danger?

"Ten rapes, eight assaults with intent to commit rape, three incidents of indecent exposure, two kidnappings and one incident of sex perversion," said Lt. Pittenger. "That's 24 cases in 1972 in the unincorporated area of Santa Cruz County — all connected with hitchhiking."

He added that these figures don't include such cases as that of Mary Ann Pesce,



Two young women, oblivious to danger, look for ride on a Santa Cruz street.

—Staff Photo

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Big Slice Of County Getting Tax Break

By TAC BOWE
Staff Writer

— Owners of 60 per cent of the property in Monterey County are getting a property tax break which some- 60 per cent of the property owners, them ranch- have placed that is known preserves."

ing to retain agricultural s, the prop- e receiving ch would be small prop-

In general, parcels must be 100 acres or more in size.

Supervisors have decided, however, that the parcels may be smaller providing the agriculture in a particular area generally is conducted on parcels which are less than the 100-acre minimum.

Supervisors have set another rule. The property owner's land must produce a minimum of \$8,000-a-year in agricultural products.

Thus, a property owner who leases his 500-acres for \$10 an acre, or \$5,000 a year, still can qualify providing his tenant produces agricultural products worth a minimum of \$8,000.

Property owners must sign a contract agreeing to keep their land in agricultural production for at least 20 years. This doesn't mean they have to raise only crops. They can use it as grazing land.

Certain development of the land is permitted providing it is compatible with crops or livestock raised on it.

Thus a drying yard or packing shed which handles only produce raised on the land is acceptable. So is a landing strip providing it is necessary for production of the agricultural products.

There are some exceptions. These include radio antennae and certain sporting uses, such as hunting, which are permitted.

as she hitched a ride in Santa Cruz. Or the case of Mary Guilfoyle, a Cabrillo College coed who started for town one afternoon, hitchhiking, and disappeared.

"We've been fortunate," said Asst. Police Chief Roy Ingersoll in Watsonville. "We've missed most of the problems related to hitchhiking."

There was one girl, who hitchhiked toward her Watsonville home from San Jose one day a year or so ago, and whose body was found alongside the road a few days later.

"Mostly," said Ingersoll, "we don't get many hitchhikers here. It's probably because they go right on past here on the freeway bypass. If they do come through town, my men usually talk to them, try to get as much information from them as they

only that he can't do it in the traveled roadway."

Overton said that an influx of students at the university also has changed the community's attitude about hitchhiking.

"Most of those kids," he said, "don't have any other way to get around. We'd really run into trouble if we tried to stop them from hitching rides."

A couple of years ago, it was suggested that the city build hitchhiking stations at key points in order to cut down on the complaints from shop owners and residents that hitchhikers were cluttering up the sidewalks and curbsides.

"That's not a very good idea," said Juvenile Officer Billingsley. "It just tends to

believed to be headed for, or through Santa Cruz.

A recent study of transient traffic indicated that as many as 1,000 young people go through Santa Cruz County a day. Many are in their own cars, but most are hitchhikers, and the increasing proportion of hitchhikers are girls.

"There are guys," said Miss Billingsley, "who spend their time just cruising around picking up girls. Some of them are pretty dumb."

"We've had girls come in here and tell us about some guy picking them up then trying to rape them, then saying they're sorry, and giving the girl their name and phone number, hoping to get a date with them later."

She looked serious.

"A girl doesn't really

and shuts the door. She can get out before something happens to her."

Miss Billingsley has been appearing before teen-aged groups of girls wherever she's invited. Some of her advice:

- Don't get into a car with two or three guys in it.
- Ride with woman drivers whenever you can.
- Hitch in pairs, not alone.
- Check to see if there are inside door knobs on the car before you get in.
- Take a good look at the car and driver before you get in, so you can identify them later if you need to.
- Be choosy. If there's anything you don't like about the car or the driver, just say "Thanks; I'll wait for another ride."

Over at the County General Hospital, the pathologists were still trying to fit

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He added that these figures don't included such cases as that of Mary Ann Pesce, whose severed head was found near Loma Prieta mountain a few months ago, and who was last seen alive

"we don't get many hitchhikers here. It's probably because they go right on past here on the freeway bypass. If they do come through town, my men usually talk to them, try to get as much information from them as they can — about who they are and where they're from, and then warn them to be careful."

In Santa Cruz it's different. "We've had a problem for about five years," said Police Capt. Richard Overton. "We try really cracking down, but the courts pointed out that you can't tell somebody they can't hitchhike —

down on the complaints from shop owners and residents that hitchhikers were cluttering up the sidewalks and curbsides.

"That's not a very good idea," said Juvenile Officer Billingsley. "It just tends to encourage hitchhiking. And it also tends to collect other kinds of problems. Have you seen the places where hitchhikers gather? They're garbage dumps."

Miss Billingsley said she has always "four or five" reports of runaway girls on her desk at the police station. Most of the girls are hitchhiking somewhere and are

guy picking them up then trying to rape them, then saying they're sorry, and giving the girl their name and phone number, hoping to get a date with them later."

She looked serious. "A girl doesn't really have much of a chance," she said. "If a guy gets a girl into his car, and then tries something, there isn't much of anywhere she can go."

"If a guy wants to overpower a girl, he can."

"The lucky girl is the one who sees the guy exposing himself before she gets in

● Be choosey. If there's anything you don't like about the car or the driver, just say "Thanks; I'll wait for another ride."

Over at the County General Hospital, the pathologists were still trying to fit together the pieces of the legs and arms and human torso found along the Santa Cruz beach.

And around the edges of the city, girls with confidence on their faces were holding up their thumbs for a ride.

Danger? Nothing could happen to THEM — they said.

Measure No Bar To Renewal Plan

MONTEREY — State Atty. Gen. Evelle Younger has ruled Monterey's Custom House urban renewal project

tion Commission as soon as possible.

One other possible delay may affect urban renewal

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