

City Council
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Opposition Organizes

SC Politics Heating Up

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Another shoe has dropped in Santa Cruz City politics with the formation of a partisan opposition to the current City Council liberal majority.

Calling itself Alert Santa Cruz, the group is made up in part by conservatives who have fought the present liberal council majority in the past. It has been formed to search out candidates and support them in the next city election — in opposition to the liberal majority.

Their target will be to capture three of the four seats that come up for election and it will mean having to unseat socialist Councilmember Bruce Van Allen, who says he'll run again and socialist Mayor Michael Rotkin, who couldn't be contacted this morning.

The new group is made up of six Republicans and one Democrat in a city that has only 31 percent registered Republicans and includes such known council foes as Doug Austin and Manny Shaffer.

Also in the group is Sandra Mock, Timoth Morgan, Jack Chiorini, Katy Sears-Williams (who lost a race this

year for county supervisor) and Joanne Martin, the sole Democrat.

Those who see the formation of the political group as completing a bipartisan system in city politics are not tying it to the mainstream movement of either party.

Morgan explained, "It's party partisan to the degree that it is a response to the left wing of the Democratic Party, but I'd say more exactly that it's partisan more to the degree that it is a response of all the constituent elements that are not part of the liberal wing of the Democrats."

Van Allen sees Alert Santa Cruz as "the fact that right-wing activists are getting organized and taking an aggressive thrust into local politics. I don't consider it a mainstream political thrust."

Alert is saying that the council majority is vulnerable because it has supported a number of actions that have apparently not had support of people in the city.

Those actions were to individually support a rent control referendum that failed by over 2,000 votes, having to rescind a "just eviction ordinance" when an initiative

petition demanded it, and having to remove a street barrier that was opposed by around 80 percent of the people who signed petitions.

Laird says that despite the formation of Alert Santa Cruz to counter the neighborhood and other support that put the present majority into office, next year's politics may be beyond any group to control.

Along with Rotkin's and Van Allen's places on the council, there will be election for the seats held by moderate-conservatives John Mahaney and Joseph Ghio. Those seats will be "open" because Mahaney and Ghio are restricted from running for a third term.

"I welcome the new group," Laird commented, "but it does seem that 90 percent of its people are from one party and many of them have been in city politics all the way along — on just the one side of the issue."

He says he wants to subscribe to the group's newsletter.

Wormhoudt says she also welcomes the group and that "it's healthy for people in the community to organize

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tour also includes stops in New York City, Los Angeles and Honolulu.

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around the issues they care about."

She says she hopes it means that it will be "the issues" that are debated and that there will be no "scare tactics, red-baiting of demeaning other people's intentions in next year's election."

Alert says it wants to educate people on city issues, to promote better government, and that it was formed because people are dissatisfied with the present council majority. Its membership is open to all county residents.