

It was a year of unresolved events

Annual Report

□ The council's year of constancy —

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By PAUL BEATTY

Sentinel Staff Writer

The year 1985 was one of unfinished stories. Offshore oil, a proposed development of pristine coastal land south of Capitola and a bitter labor dispute in Watsonville all remain unresolved issues as the new year gets under way.

The news flowed in 1985, but not in the heavy stream of tragedies of two and three years ago when raging winter floods claimed victims and destroyed communities. Nor was there the horror of mass murders which plagued Santa Cruz County in the early and mid-'70s.

The year's biggest natural disaster was the first big wildland fire in years, which roared up the Santa Cruz Mountains from Lexington Dam. And like most events of 1985, the story hasn't ended yet: Fire-devastated hillsides re-

main in danger of sliding during the winter's rainy months.

Also unresolved was the year's worst crime, the unsolved murder of a respected priest of the Greek Orthodox Church.

It was a year of moderate stories, Santa Cruz-style but toned down. More mid-American now.

On the environmental front, Santa Cruz, as always, was in there fighting.

Still arguing after seven years about a proposed development called Wingspread on the beautiful green heartland acreage south of Cabrillo College.

Fighting the war, but losing battles against offshore oil drilling. A major skirmish was lost when Secretary of the Interior Donald P. Hodel exercised a man's prerogative and changed his mind about an agreement to place vast acreage off-limits to oil exploration. But oil foes vow to keep fighting, both on Capitol Hill and in court.

Environmentalists and the city of Santa

Cruz won a battle against a court suit that secured the "greenbelt" around the city of Santa Cruz while all the while worrying about proposed development of the Pogonip acreage to the north of the city. That land, owned by the Cowell Foundation — philanthropists that gave UCSC its 2,000 acres — is now being sold off by the foundation, possibly to developers.

Felton citizens successfully fought in court to stop the state from spraying their area with carbaryl, an insecticide of unknown impact on people. The state went ahead and helicopter-sprayed the town with another insecticide to kill the stubborn gypsy moth. It was later proved the moth arrived here from Eugene, Ore., riding on some lumber brought in by a contractor working for Caltrans, the state's department of highways.

While toned down, there remained enough Santa Cruz flavor to make us know we were still at home.

Miss California, tired of feminists' protests and in search of a bigger stage, picked up her

62-year-old pageant and moved to San Diego. First, she named Miss San Mateo the reigning queen in June as six activists parading outside the Civic Auditorium in the "Myth California Pageant" were arrested.

The local Boys' Club tried to keep girls away but was integrated by the state Supreme Court. Justices declared that since it charges a small fee, it is therefore "a business" and cannot discriminate against females.

Santa Cruz' VFW Post 5888 (also called the Bill Motto Post in honor of one of its early activist members) was first drummed out of the national VFW organization and then drummed back in. The national leaders were incensed that the local post first came out in support of a "non-interventionist policy in Central America" and then sent a messenger to Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega to tell him about it. An armistice was reached between Post 5888 and the national headquarters in a pre-trial settlement.

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The year 1985

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The Santa Cruz City Council — at least its progressive members — declared Santa Cruz “a free port for Nicaragua” after President Reagan closed U.S. ports to that country. No ships have arrived from Central America.

UCSC students celebrated the 20th anniversary of their campus and in April voted against keeping a supply of suicide pills at the infirmary in case of a nuclear attack.

Local art lovers tried to convince county officials they should mount a huge bust of a supine Indian atop the County Center. The bust measured 25 feet from elbow to elbow and weighed 1,500 pounds. Officials felt it would break the roof and voted it down.

A specialist at Dominican Hospital rescued a calico cat that was in the wings waiting to be used in a demonstration of respiratory techniques for new-born babes. As she ran off with the cat, she cried, “This cat has paid its price to society.”

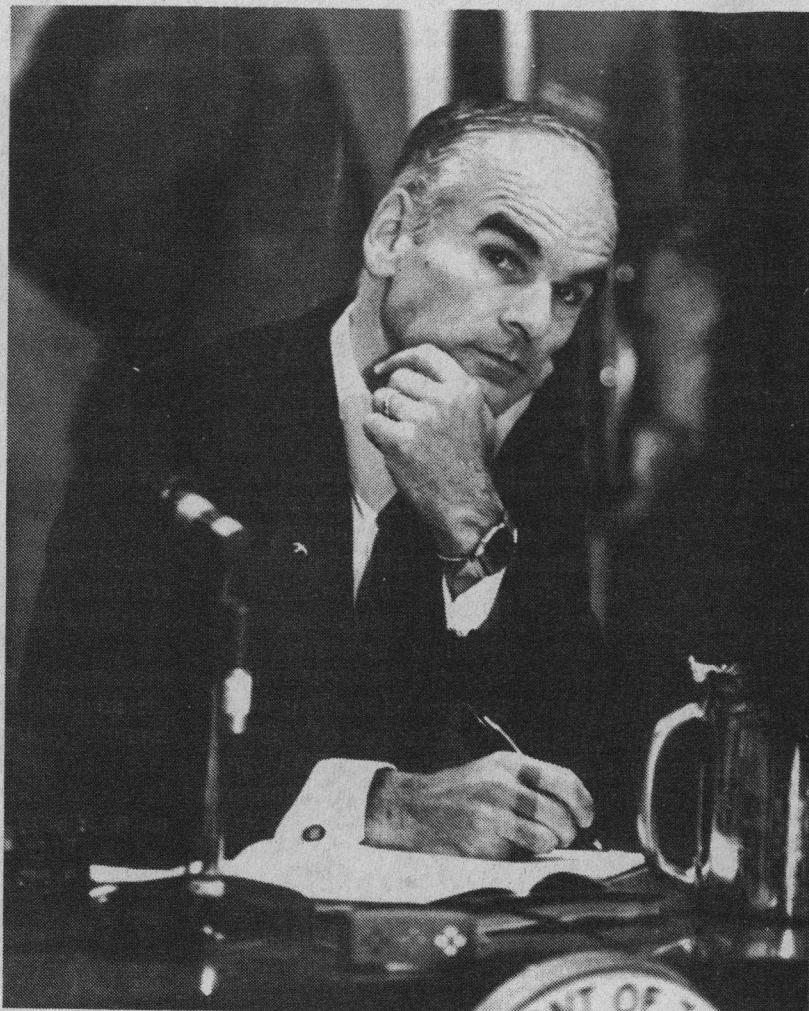
Santa Cruz Police Chief Jack Bassett got bad press when he exiled the department's mascot — a cat named “Sgt. Chumley” — after a second cat moved in.

A scheduled Beach Boys concert on the beach at Santa Cruz over the July 4 weekend never happened. Santa Cruz officials said the Boys would bring crowds beyond our capacity.

A voice out of the past was heard when former Supervisor Pat Liteky, living in Southern California, won \$1,000 a month for life from the Safeway grocery chain. Back in 1973, the liberal Liteky refused to cut the opening-day ribbon for the Felton Faire Safeway because he supported the United Farmworker boycott against the chain.

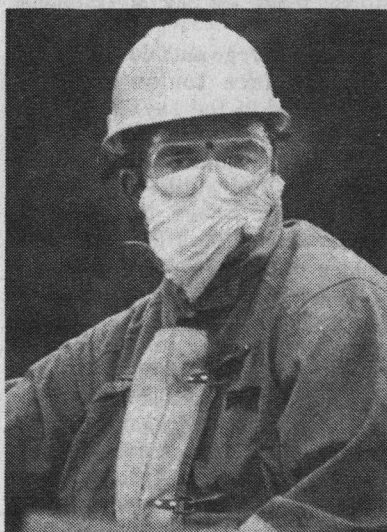
THE BIGGEST “action” story of the year was the week-long firestorm in the Santa Cruz Mountains that started July 7. It burned 13,800 acres of once-green land now darkened and charred to the east of Highway 17 at the summit and northward. The fire destroyed 23 homes and five trailers. No one was killed. On July 9, firefighters from all over Northern California made their night-long stand along Summit Road where they stopped the fire from reaching the forested canyons on the Santa Cruz side.

Downtown, the Greek community and the entire county was shocked at



Interior Secretary Donald Hodel at Cabrillo College.

the brutal murder of Father John Karastamatis on May 19. He was beaten to death in his office at the



A weary firefighter

Prophet Elias Greek Orthodox Church on Church Street.

No one has been arrested or charged. The case took a bizarre twist Dec. 14 when the priest's onetime secretary committed suicide when police officers showed up at her home on River Street to question her. Before killing herself, she took a couple of shots at the police at the door.

In the political arena, another bizarre twist happened when Secretary of the Interior Donald Hodel first made a pact to protect offshore areas along Central California and then changed his mind after touring the state's coastline.

Before the pact was made, progressives in the city of Santa Cruz put an initiative on the ballot opposing offshore drilling. When Hodel made the pact, it appeared the initiative was a waste of time. However, Mayor Mardi Wormhoudt pro-

phetically warned, “The wolf hasn't gone away from the door.”

Union strikes against two food plants in Watsonville are nearing the third month. Two frozen-food plants are struck, involving more than 1,700 workers in the Teamsters Union. There have been incidents of violence and arson. Plant managers at Watsonville Canning and Frozen Food Co. and Richard Shaw Frozen Foods say market conditions are forcing cutbacks in pay. Workers say they can't live on decreased amounts of money. The strike continues into the new year.

The Santa Cruz City Council settled down to business as usual after a hot election did little to change the composition of the body. The election resulted in replacing retired Councilman Spiro Mellis with former Councilman Joe Ghio. Voters returned Wormhoudt and Councilman John Laird for second terms, leaving the council with a four-member majority of liberals and progressives.

This area lost some of its past in 1985 with the deaths of journalist-historian Warren “Skip” Littlefield, a man whose name was synonymous with the Santa Cruz waterfront; Malio Stagnaro, the unofficial mayor of the wharf; Norman Clark, developer of Roaring Camp and a man carrying out a vision to open a rail service from Felton to Santa Cruz, and Ralph Guzman, UCSC educator and activist.

UCSC celebrated 20 years in our community, causing a local journalist to praise and lament the first 20 years as “the best of times and the worst of times.”

Sure as the dickens, university officials came with a new 20-year plan. It calls for substantial growth and more job-oriented courses and majors.



On strike at Watsonville Canning and Frozen Food Co.

A UCSC plan to build a high-tech center on campus has been shelved.

Sister Josephine Sullivan, head of Dominican Hospital, left to become a consultant for a medical collaborative. She was replaced by Sister Julie Hyler. John Petersen, president of Cabrillo College, left

and was replaced by Robert Agrella. Bob Rockett, city administrator of Scotts Valley, left and was replaced by August Caires and Ray Talley, county environmental health officer for 23 years, retired. He has not been replaced.

While the Santa Cruz Mountain fire was the “action” story of the year and Wingspread and offshore oil-drilling the “environmental” stories, the “never-ending” story was the homeless.

At times, it appeared the wanderers suddenly had become everybody's darling as the search went on to find them shelter. A year-long and highly politicized search here resulted in temporary shelter for 25 at the Catholic soup kitchen on Mora street and 25 at a temporary shelter hosted by the county on Cedar Street.

The search had its local flavor.

Ben Lomond resident Jane Imbler took a Mahatma Gandhi approach to helping the poor. She went on a month-long fast, beginning a week

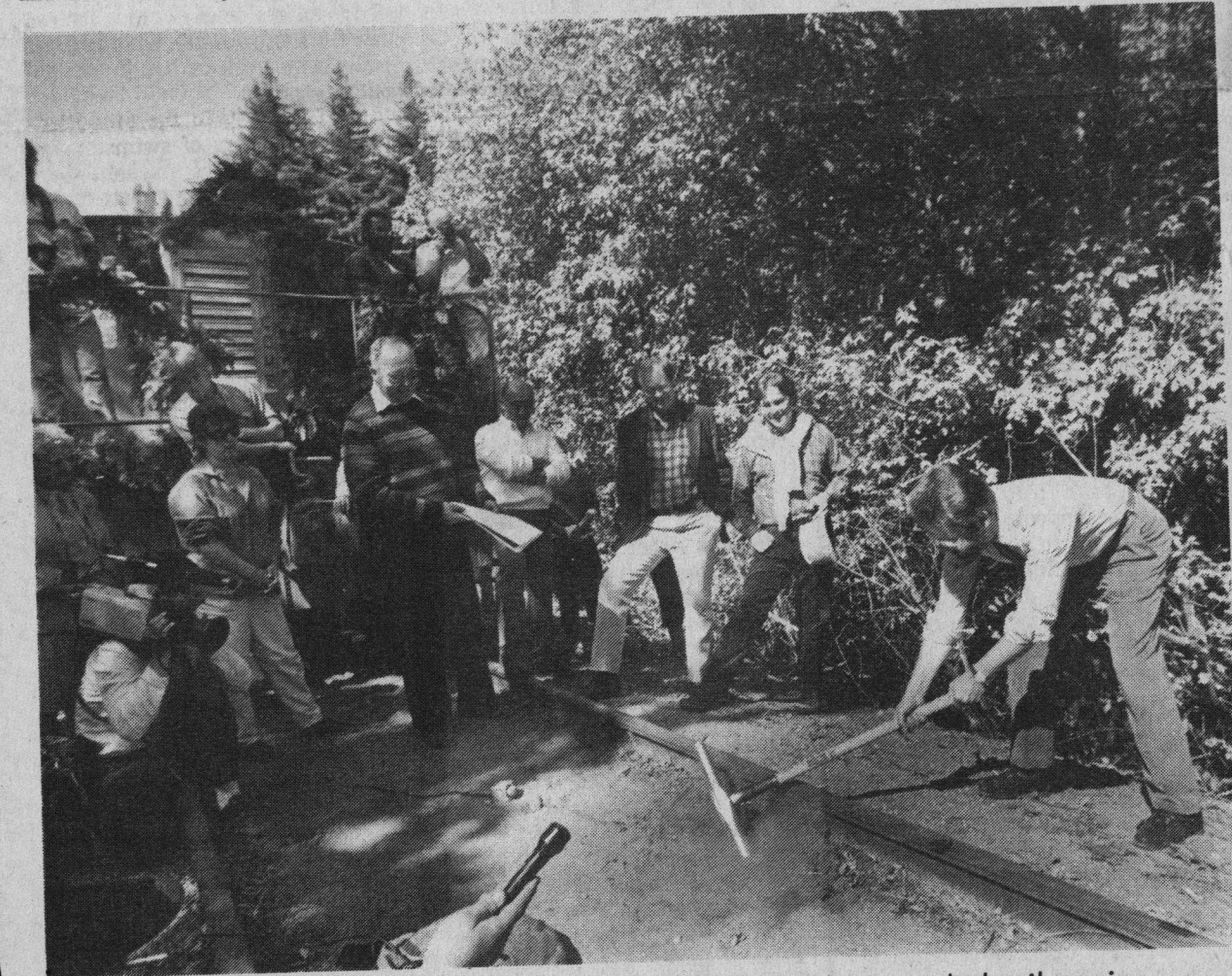
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The late Norman Clark, presided over opening of expanded rail service



Protester Ann Simonton outside Miss California Pageant

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Ben Lomond resident Jane Imler
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before Thanksgiving.

She ended the fast with a few
spoonfuls of chicken soup on Dec. 18,
the day the Cedar Street shelter
opened.