

Endangered Species

Salamanders came out best in 1971

History may record 1971 as "The Year of the Salamander" in mid-Santa Cruz County.

The last breeding grounds of the rare Santa Cruz (or Aptos) long-toed salamander near La Selva Beach were saved when the Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors turned down a proposed rezoning that would have allowed a 169-unit mobile home park on the site. The threatened amphibian won overwhelming public support.

Human beings did not in all cases fare as well.

Three school tax increase proposals that affected mid-county boys and girls went down to defeat. Tax overrides lost in the Soquel, Live Oak and Pajaro Valley Unified School Districts.

A joint sewage disposal project for Santa Cruz and the East Cliff and Capitola Sanitation Districts was urged by the State Water Quality Control Board and approved by the three agencies involved. It won an 80-percent federal and state grant. But at year's end, it was under attack by the Sierra Club, which demanded an Environmental Protection Agency review of the \$4.6 million project to see if it would worsen pollution in Monterey Bay instead of helping to clean it up.

The Soquel Creek County Water District moved to annex its

entire service area, including most of the mid-county, but the annexation cracked up on the shoals of politics.

John Linley Frazier was convicted of the murders of Dr. Victor Ohta, Soquel eye surgeon, his wife Virginia, his sons Dennis and Taggart, and his secretary Dorothy Cadwallader, and sentenced to die in the gas chamber.

Development in the mid-county proceeded apace, but residents, some of them appalled and frightened by the fate of the once-verdant Santa Clara Valley did not in all cases welcome it with enthusiasm.

Rio del Mar residents got together and kept a four-lane roadway out of their rural retreat. The projected Aptos By-Pass faced an increasingly uncertain future.

The Capitola Chamber of Commerce may have set a first for Chambers everywhere with a public meeting to air members' fears that Capitola is developing too fast.

Though some other developments brought loud outcries, there was relatively little public opposition when the city of Capitola rezoned the historic Vetterle Bros. Begonia Gardens in Capitola Heights to allow a 342-

unit apartment complex on the site.

Begonia Festival leaders said they will go ahead with the colorful annual event no matter what happens to Capitola as a begonia center.

There were bright spots, especially in the realm of music. The Cabrillo Music Festival in Aptos was again hailed as a triumph by critics and was a near sellout. The Santa Cruz County Symphony acquired a new director, George Barati. And the Santa Cruz County Youth Symphony won critical acclaim as it opened its sixth season under the baton of Norman Masonson.

The Live Oak School District acquired a new superintendent, Duncan Coleman, who proceeded with the development of programs for turning the schools over to the use of the entire community after school and in the summer.

And the run-down, gopher-pocked Del Mar School playing field acquired a champion in the North Bay Kiwanis Club, which proceeded to remodel the field with strong community support.

Here's a brief month-by-month rundown of how it all went in the mid-county in 1971, as reported in the Green Sheet:

—Jan. 7—Santa Cruz Gardens

School inaugurated a traffic safety patrol.

City Manager Ryder Ray outlined a nine-point program to make Capitola a better place in 1971, headed by the Wharf Road underpass project.

—Jan. 14—Mrs. Miriam Parker found her favorite trail to Capitola Beach from Park Ave. blocked off by the State Division of Beaches and Parks and started a vigorous campaign to get it opened again, with wide community support.

The State Division of Beaches and Parks unveiled a \$1.7 million project to double the use of Seacliff and Rio del Mar Beaches, calling for a 20-foot-wide promenade from one end of the beach to the other, a "people-mover" to move beach-goers along the promenade, and a 180-space parking area at the south end of Beach Drive.

—Jan. 21—The Live Oak School District discovered that it was broke because an unexpected dip in enrollment cut state funds.

The Local Agency Formation Commission gave its approval to the proposed annexation of Capitola Heights to Capitola.

—Jan. 28—The State Department of Beaches and Parks agreed to reopen the trail from Park Ave. to New Brighton Beach if the city would ban

parking on Park Ave. It was a deal.

The financially-troubled Live Oak School District asked for a \$100,000 state loan because of a feared deficit.

—Feb. 4—A group of Aptos parents got together to consider secession from the Pajaro Valley Unified School District because it can't pass bond issues.

K-Mart announced plans to develop a major retail store at 41st Ave. and Highway 1 and annex the property to Capitola. The Soquel Merchant's Association launched an opposition campaign.

—Feb. 11—Harry Hooper Sr. of Capitola was admitted to the National Baseball Hall of Fame.

The Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors approved rezoning to allow the new Aptos Post Office to be built at Soquel and Mar Vista Drives, despite opposition from a delegation headed by Mrs. Lucille Aldrich.

—Feb. 25—Park Wilshire-Vienna Woods residents reactivated their Homeowners' Association to try to solve their water problem, electing O'Brien Riordan president.

Lot split foes joined forces to fight a proposed lot split audience in a meeting at Soquel High School.

—March 4—A plan to revamp (Continued on page 13)