

Dress Code

Students Air Dress Code Complaints Before Board

The Santa Cruz High School District dress code got a thorough airing and the controversial family life program was peeked at last night, although neither matter was officially on the school board agenda.

A group of Santa Cruz High School students, led by Charles Natanson, last year's student body president, strongly objected to the code. The code has been in effect for eight days, and the students said it wasn't going to be accepted.

The group appeared before the board on advice of Aaron Nelson, Santa Cruz High School Principal.

"They asked us what avenues are there to appeal, so we referred them to the board," Nelson said.

Natanson declared the code, as written and adopted, is "unfair" and represents the standards of adults, not the standards of students. He held that student opinions, which were gathered while the code was being formed, were not taken seriously.

"The code, as it was finally written, did not reflect our views at all," Natanson declared.

He said he felt he and the other students who worked on the project had been "tricked."

The board heard about 45 minutes of conversation and then went into regular business. Then there was another hour and a half of talk, some of it reaching shouting level.

Natanson said the board should "encourage understanding and communication between the young and adults." He said the Santa Cruz campus previously had an open and tolerant attitude, which is now being destroyed.

He held the code "requires students on the high school level to abide by standards set up by a group of adults and reflecting the values of a group of adults."

"It discourages any kind of communication between the generations," Natanson declared. He said he considers hair length to be a "very trivial area," but that it has assumed great proportions as a symbol of student-adult relationships.

Board Member Roger Gintert said some dress styles are "disruptive" to classroom work. He also said the general public will refuse to pass bond issues if the students are wearing hair and clothing styles which are considered extreme.

"I think we must go ahead and adopt the majority rule in many areas of our life," he said to allegations that the dress code is infringing upon individual rights.

He said he feels the code is "liberal" and will "fit the majority."

"We didn't trick you," he stated.

Gerald Spodick, a Santa Cruz senior, said the code "takes away the rights of the parents" to decide how students will handle their appearance.

Mrs. Nancy Andresen, a mother of teenagers, stated: "Hair length is trivial. I don't see why so many of us adults get so excited about it . . . I would never choose the length of hair as a battleground."

She said, however, that the issue is a great thing with her youngsters.

Mrs. H. R. Lans, who said she represents the taxpayers, stated: "I do not like to pay for dirty, hairy apes."

Natanson held that if the dress code is to really represent the majority thinking, it should be given "the fair test of the ballot" instead of listening to "who can shout louder."

"My faith in the school board is shaken," Natanson said.

Board Member Charles Smith stated: "There are going to be rules you children will have to follow throughout your life."

Board Member John Melendy said: "Somewhere along the line we have to have rules . . . if we don't we'll be back to animals." He held that some clothing, especially short, short dresses, is "indecent in our society today," and should not be allowed on campus.

"I say we've been talking about this for over a year . . . I say the dress code is a policy of this district and should be enforced as a policy of this district," Board President Don Starr stated.

"We're going to have to live with this for a while and see how it works out," Smith said.

Although there was no definite commitment, Starr recommended that the students abide by the laws at present, but keep discussion open about future changes. There was no action on requests for additional public hearings.

Nelson said so far no one has been suspended because of long hair, but suspensions may not be far off. He said the policy is to work with the student, and if this doesn't work, to contact the parents. If there is not compliance, "then we'll take the attitude of suspension," Nelson said.

"We want to give a reasonable chance for adjustment," Nelson added.

The sex education discussion began immediately under oral communications through questions by Mrs. Sylvia Manson, and was soon joined by others in the audience.

They demanded to know if the television series, "The Time of Your Life," was going to be shown to students this year. Superintendent Denzil Morrissey said the series is being held in abeyance pending a study by the Family Life Committee, which will then report back to the board. The regular family life classes are continuing.

"If you want to stand up at every meeting and nit-pick, then we'll nit-pick back," Starr stated, asking that the questions and demands be placed in proper written form for board consideration.

The sex education block drifted out and did not return for the later discussion period.

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Air Force Cadet



Cadet James S. Hamm of Santa Cruz is one of the more than 850 cadets who will enter the sophomore class at the U.S. Air Force Academy this year. Hamm recently completed a program in survival techniques, base defense tactics and a combat course in infantry weapons. He was named to the commandant's list for outstanding military performance and received the silver wreath insignia. A 1966 graduate of Soquel High School, Hamm is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Nathan W. Hamm of 525 Lockhart Gulch Road.