

Twist in the meter laws

Crime + Criminals
SC Council

1990-1995
addresses

PR 'disaster'

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SANTA CRUZ — Go ahead. Feed those meters.

Mr. Twister, the licensed latex manipulator with the red nose and red yarn hair, has unraveled the Santa Cruz law against "unauthorized meter feeding."

Declaring the law a "public relations disaster," the Santa Cruz City Council took emergency action Tuesday to yank the law from the books — effective immediately.

The councilmembers gave it the hook, unanimously, with a nose-call vote.

First Councilman Mike Rotkin donned a red clown nose, and beeped his vote. The mayor and other council members followed suit, er ... nose.

Then Councilman Scott Kennedy got in on the act, presenting Mr. Twister with his very own, defunct meter to feed, with the provision that the coins that go into it eventually return to Santa Cruz.

"He's family," said Mr. Twister, patting the meter.

The now defunct law became notorious throughout the country after Mr. Twister, aka Cory McDonald, was cited for "unauthorized" slipping of coins in expired meters downtown.

The street entertainer, who twists balloons into shapes, soon became a national hero for his random acts of kindness ... and the ringmaster in a media circus.

But he left the city image with a black eye.

"We felt the citizens elected us to be the clowns in this town and didn't like someone stepping on our turf," joked Rotkin.

City manager Richard Wilson last week rescinded the \$12 citation, saying the whole thing was silly. But, Mr. Twister and his attorney Ben Rice wanted the law to expire for good.

Rice, who represented the clown "pro-Bozo" said he was offered legal help from some of the "best legal mimes" in the country.

His clown-client is just a nice guy who, for six years, had been stuffing coins because he didn't want people to get tickets.

Mr. Twister said he was just "doing right, making people happy" — until "I found out what I was doing was against the law."

Mr. Twister gave a thumbs up, and nose honk to the council for eliminating the ordinance. "I found a problem. I got a solution in a happy way," said Twister.

"Yahoo!"