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Anti-Hippie Group Warned On Shotgun Justice

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By Ron Reeves
Sentinel Staff Writer

Present laws are far from perfect, but they are far better than shotgun justice, Superior Court Judge Charles Franich told a citizens committee yesterday.

The committee, made up of representatives from Ben Lomond, Santa Cruz, Scotts Valley, Capitola and Soquel, were seeking legal advice in the control of "hippies."

Judge Franich was the main advisor. He over-ruled objections of Al Conquest, a member of the citizens committee, and allowed Sentinel reporters to attend the county courthouse meeting, which was requested by the committee.

Judge Franich repeatedly attempted to explain that it is futile to make arrests and seek convictions without concrete evidence of law violations. He said it is one thing for a layman to "think" someone is guilty and another to prove it in court.

The judge was frank in discussing the narcotics problem.

"At least 10 per cent of the kids in high school are using marijuana or LSD; a quarter more are experimenting and one half or more have tried them," the judge said.

He assailed public apathy, which has resulted in a breakdown of religion, morals and discipline.

"The big problem is educa-

tion," the judge stated. "We're just swatting flies unless we teach our kids religion and discipline."

He also said many people do not feel some drugs, marijuana in particular, are dangerous. "You'd be surprised at the prominent people in this county who think marijuana should be legalized," he noted.

The problem also comes up in juvenile court, Judge Franich said, where "The biggest problem I have is fighting with the parents. Parents of some of these kids feel the youngsters' sins are their own and they are defensive."

"We're looking for guidance . . . in how we can assist you

and how you can assist us," Conquest said.

"The law doesn't reach some of these situations," the judge explained. "Don't think that passing another law solves anything. Laws only work for people who respect them."

He said, however, that the situation could be improved by more and better trained lawmen and higher salaries for lawmen.

A specific incident came up repeatedly in which Mrs. Catherine Macon said she was frustrated in her efforts to have a young man arrested. She said he swam and walked nude at the Ben Lomond recreation park, which is visible from her kitchen window. She said deputies were of no help and the district

attorney's office would not bring the matter to court.

District Attorney Peter Chang said the indecent exposure law is a "problem area" because of the topless waitress rulings which require an "obscene or lewd" intent in addition to nudity.

"Dismissal is a foregone conclusion," he said.

Mrs. Alice Wilder, speaking for the recreation district, said she thought laws covered such incidences. "Stark naked is indecent exposure," she stated.

She was advised to put up signs stating that nude swimming is illegal in the park.

"We could cover the trees with signs. But you people who are in a position of authority have a definite responsibility,"

she told the judge.

"I don't think the topless thing should exist, but it does," Judge Franich said.

"What you're saying is we have to get a shotgun — that's what we have to do," Mrs. Wilder said. "Are you leaving it to us to kill a couple of people before something is done?"

Ed Peterson, a Ben Lomond resident, stated: "These people are out to harass our community . . . we don't feel we are getting the cooperation we need. We don't have anyone backing us up."

"We're seeing an invasion into our valley of a couple of families a day of this type," Peterson continued. He said this will

hit the area financially and it will no longer be a "wholesome, family community."

Conquest said the group is in process of contacting health and building officials to see if steps can be taken. He said the City of Santa Cruz house-condemnation program has leveled many substandard residences occupied by "this type of people." He also said steps will be taken to check on the legality of property owners renting unsanitary dwellings.

The judge commended the committee for its interest, but cautioned that he was afraid the law might break down "and people may start taking the law into their own hands . . . this worries me immensely."