

Mike Montgomery, the chairman of the Republican State Central Committee, hopes his candidates can gain

few surprises.

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Commentary

Boys' Club Fight

By Bruce McPherson
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The recent complaint about girls not being allowed membership in the Boys' Club of Santa Cruz isn't the first time the issue has come to light.

But, hopefully, it will be the last so that services provided young men eight to 17 will not be reduced, if indeed not eliminated, at the club's present home on Center Street.

Actually, in the middle of the issue is a statement in the 1977 United Way brochure which states that UW receiving agencies "provide a needed service for all the people of Santa Cruz County." Realistically, it's questionable if any single United Way agency provides a needed service for "all" the people in the county, but that statement comes closer to the truth when all agencies are considered.

About 20 percent of the Boys' Club budget (\$19,330 was allocated for 1978 from the 1977 UW drive) is made up

from the United Way allocation. The bulk (about 70 percent) of the club's activities are supported through the Mallery Trust Fund established in the mid-1960s, with the balance essentially split between supplemental activities and nominal fees taken in from members.

The Boys' Club of Santa Cruz opened in 1966 before women's lib was a going concern, and ERA was associated only with how many earned runs a baseball pitcher allowed over nine innings.

Its by-laws don't specifically say girls can't be allowed, but spells out the club's sole purpose is to serve boys from 8 to 17 years old.

The first challenge to the Boys' Club membership came in 1974, and there has been at least one other time since then that the question has come up. Even if the club's policy prevails again this time, it's questionable it won't be doubted again.

If the issue should reach the courts, then there crops up the question of what

would satisfy United Way's so-called purpose of serving "all" the people. Will it stop at girls between eight and 17, or will it in essence have to open up for a community center?

Don't count on either. The Boys' Club's board of directors here hopes the issue never gets to the courtroom, and it's a good bet that it would pull out of United Way (which it doesn't want to do) if that would avert it.

The Boys' Club of Santa Cruz has never received state, federal or other public-type financial assistance. The opportunity has been there, but the club has avoided that partly so it could operate a club for boys the way it wanted to.

It has done an outstanding job of serving young men — there were about 1,200 members in 1977 — in its more than a decade of existence. It should be allowed to continue to provide that service, just as organizations for girls serve young women.