

Accusations flying in council campaign

By PAUL BEATTY
Sentinel Staff Writer

SANTA CRUZ — Charges and counter-charges are free-flowing in the Santa Cruz election campaign as it comes to the final weekend before votes are cast Tuesday.

The All Santa Cruz Coalition has charged that incumbent candidate Michael Rotkin is hiding behind a quick-front group called "Citizens for Honest Elections" that has sent out literature in support of progressive candidates.

Rotkin says the campaign organization correctly filed its organization papers at City Hall and there's nothing secret going on.

The group includes Jack Hillis and Keith Rolle, longtime supporters of progressive politics.

According to the coalition, "Yesterday a piece of literature was received by an unknown number of Santa Cruz residents from a group calling itself 'Citizens for Honest Elections.'"

"Inasmuch as this committee was

never heard of before, and that it was unclear as to who paid for the mailing of this literature, an investigation was launched with the city clerk's office."

Rotkin said, "Does that mean they had to walk over to City Hall and ask to see the organizational papers?"

The coalition's statement continues, "Records in the clerks office revealed the true identity of this new organization was a 'controlled committee' of Michael Rotkin that was created only last week for his own secret political purposes."

The "Citizens for Honest Elections" accuses the All Santa Cruz Coalition of being a front group for real estate and construction interests that raised the money to hire Marathon Communications of Los Angeles to run the moderate slate's campaign in Santa Cruz.

"Here's how they do it," claims the newly-formed campaign organization:

"Hire Marathon Communications, Los Angeles, campaign firm . . .

Please see back of section

Charges fly in council campaign

11-4-83

Continued from Page A1
compile your computer dossier . . . (and) manufacture a slate of 'moderates.'"

Rotkin's controlled committee claims that 85 percent of the coalition's campaign funds is coming from real estate, construction, retail and wholesale businesses and insurance companies.

The coalition further demands: "What does Michael Rotkin have to hide? Why does he need a bogus committee to do his dirty work?"

Rotkin said he agreed to let Rolle and Hillis set up the committee in order to let it raise more than \$75, which is the limit under the city ordinance for other than controlled committees and candidate's committees.

The coalition further states, "Rotkin was caught last week distorting the truth about his relation to Tom Hayden's Campaign for Economic Democracy."

One of Rotkin's election staff works for CED in San Francisco and sent out a postcard urging CED members to get to Santa Cruz this weekend to have a part Friday and do campaign work for the progressives through the election.

The campaigner went back to San Francisco after the coalition broke the news of his postcard and claimed "Tom Hayden's CED is trying to steal the Santa Cruz election."

Rotkin says he didn't authorize a call for CED volunteers and that he doesn't need them, nor does he especially want them.

CED headquarters in Santa Monica did not return phone calls to say if the postcard had been approved by the state steering committee of CED.

In a separate charge Thursday, candidate Jane Weed said that the coalition has collected more than \$10,000 in questionable contributions.

Those contributions came from persons and businesses that have multiple entities, or from families that had a number of its members contribute.

She names one family contributed \$2,700, all in \$300 amounts.

A company managed to get up \$1,500 from its different entities.

The city ordinance limits contributions to \$75 from each person for each candidate.

The coalition, by putting together a slate, can collect \$300 (four times \$75) from each contributor.

The coalition has since picked up some school candidates and that could increase its ability to raise funds.

In a further action, the coalition's attorney, Tim Morgan, has complained to the district attorney, that the postcard to CED members was not identified as to its source.

The number of complaints to Assistant District Attorney Don Gartner is growing daily.

City Councilwoman Mardi Wormhoudt complained over the coalition's making use of a survey, that the Alert Santa Cruz group had taken and was believed to be used by the coalition.

Wormhoudt said the Alert group should have filed a financial statement. Morgan said that Alert

was an educational organization and not political.

The coalition filed a complaint against Wormhoudt, saying she had failed to fully explain her financial expenditures two years ago when she ran for the City Council. Wormhoudt said it was a harassment complaint.

Weed filed a complaint against coalition candidate Jim Felich, saying he had received two homeowners' exemptions in one year. The assessor said it was probably a bureaucratic error. Felich was also tagged for being late in paying his property taxes.

Gartner says he's not going to let the district attorney's office be used in the political volleyball that's going on in the city.

He said the office would take time to look into all complaints and if there's substance would file charges.