

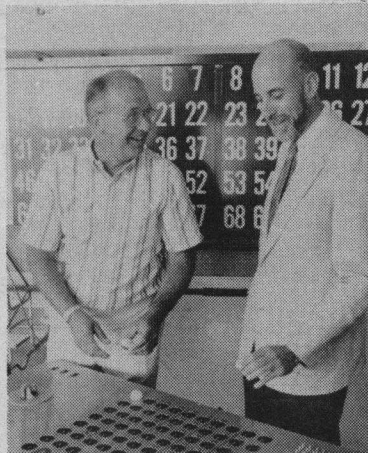
# Bingo Boosters Fight Mob Infiltration

ORGANIZERS of a small bingo fund-raiser at Soquel High School are afraid the mob may be on its way to Santa Cruz County to infiltrate the potentially lucrative bingo market — no longer simply a haven for “little old ladies” looking for ways to stretch their Social Security checks.

To protect a fund-raising bonanza that has brought a total of \$225,000 to the Soquel High athletic department over the past two years, Soquel High boosters are pressing the board of supervisors to adopt a local ordinance that would prohibit the packaging of a high-stakes “bingo parlor” in the county.

Leading the campaign against big-time bingo are Howard Marcus, the president of the school's booster club, and Ron Walters, the school's athletic director.

Marcus' and Walters' are basing their concerns on bingo-related problems that have occurred in several other Northern California cities, including Salinas, Oakland and Sacramento. In those places, some smaller bingo games have been



**Soquel High's athletic director Ron Walters and Booster president Howard Marcus want to keep big-time bingo out of small-time Santa Cruz County.**

forced to suspend operation because big-time developers have opened so-called “bingo emporiums” that run seven nights a week.

Allegedly the landlords of such operations are realizing huge profits by charging high rents to the non-

profit organizations running the bingo contests and by “skimming” unreported money off the top. In Oakland, authorities have raided bingo parlors and seized records of suspects believed to be conducting scams.

“We aren't interested in having a ‘super bingo hall’ in Santa Cruz County,” said Marcus an attorney. “It's not just that our game at Soquel High would have trouble competing with a big operation. It's also that the idea of a private landlord coming in here and making a lot of money off bingo is against the spirit of what the games are all about — to help raise money for a variety of tax-exempt organizations.”

Although bingo has not become as widespread here as in other nearby locations, several organizations have gotten in on the action. Besides the Wednesday night game sponsored by the Soquel boosters club, four other local groups run games of similar size on various nights of the week — St.

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