

## Beiers

Continued from Page A1

mayor of Scotts Valley. The council was faced with recall against three of its members.

Beiers, a gentle woman with solid liberal credentials, was named to replace Reich. She wasn't a unanimous pick and her appointment wasn't made on the first ballot.

In 1990, she ran to fill the last two years of the term, and was top vote-getter. She repeated that performance in 1992.

At first, she was in step with veteran progressive council members Mardi Wormhoudt and John Laird on all the major issues.

But she broke ranks, too. She cast the lone vote against demolition of the St. George Hotel and supported a temporary campground for the homeless, for instance.

She took the same liberal but independent stance, more recently when the council approved a package of conduct codes for downtown, including an anti-panhandling ordinance.

Beiers voted with the rest of the council for most of the ordinances. But she alone voted against a sidewalk-sitting ordinance, saying it was too onerous and rushed, and would backfire.

According to city laws, the council can elect any of its own to be mayor and vice mayor. The appointment in recent years has gone to the top vote-getters.

### Passed for mayor

Beiers was passed up for the mayor's seat once when council members concluded her two-year term didn't qualify her.

But, by virtue of repeat high votes in the 1992 election, she is in line to replace Mayor Scott Kennedy on Nov. 22, when new members Celia Scott, and Mary Beth Campbell take their seats and Kennedy starts his second term on the council.

"I'm ready and prepared," said Beiers. "It's my turn."

As a council member, Beiers is not perceived as outspoken or having much to say. She is at ease

talking to people, however, and enjoys attending civic events.

She attributes her popularity with voters to her willingness to listen.

Her critics say she's too willing, and has had trouble keeping meetings manageable because she lets people speak at length.

Beiers concedes she doesn't like to cut anyone off, and voted against a three-minute limit imposed on people who want to address the council during the open, or oral communications, sessions.

"We are not kings and queens sitting up there. I'm always uncomfortable with not letting them finish," she explained.

The problem, she says, are the long and complicated agendas that often push meetings past midnight.

"I don't make good decisions after 11 o'clock," she says. "I can hardly even speak."

Beiers said she would like the council to consider meeting more than twice a month. She also hopes to initiate neighborhood forums, where people can meet with council members and city department heads on a more informal basis.

During the next year, the City Council will plan a new Police Department. It also will consider a housing and marine center development at Terrace Point and a new Santa Cruz City Schools District administration building on Mission Street, and a proposal to widen River Street. Just as important to Beiers are neighborhood issues, particularly crime and traffic.

### Still a runner

Before she ran for office, Beiers was a distance and marathon runner. She started in 1981, when she was 48 and desperate to find a sport.

"It was just at that stage in my life where everything I ate stuck to me. I had low energy and a yearning to do something active," she said.

Since then, she has competed at every distance from five miles to the marathon — eight of them — and has run the Wharf to Wharf 15

times.

She missed the Wharf to Wharf this year, recuperating from knee surgery after being injured training for the Big Sur marathon. She runs five days a week and has developed a different view of the city because of it.

"I know the nooks and crannies of the city," she says. She prefers to bike to City Hall instead of drive.

Attorney Jim King, Beiers's running partner for 11 years, describes her as an upbeat person who particularly enjoys runs through Pogonip and Nisene Marks State Park and, more recently, Grey Whale Ranch.

"You never hear her complaining or griping or anything like that," says King. "She's a very smart, wise person."

"She's got a good ear and is a good listener and has a pretty good common-sense approach and a lot of compassion," he says.

Beiers never remarried. Her children — Kristin, John and Mary — have since grown and graduated from college. Her son is an environmental attorney in San Francisco. Both daughters hold master's degrees in nursing and live in Portland, Ore.

Like her father, Beiers required that her children attend college out of town and that they spend a year in New York City to gain a different perspective on life.

### Make it on your own

"We always knew that's the way it was going to be," said her son John Beiers. "It's part of her philosophy to get out in the world and make it on your own. She's very independent and always wanted us to be."

Beiers travels regularly to visit her nine grandchildren in Portland and in San Mateo. She also returns to Langdon, a town with 1,800 residents where her brother-in-law owns the bar and a nephew owns the gas station.

But she has no plans to leave her Westside home. "I will always live in Santa Cruz," she said.



Dan Coyro/Sentinel

Katherine Beiers arrived in Santa Cruz a young widow with three children.

# She came to stay

Katherine Beiers says it's her turn to be SC mayor

By ROBIN MUSITELLI  
Sentinel staff writer

SANTA CRUZ — Katherine Beiers, the woman who soon will become mayor, fell in love with Santa Cruz in June of 1967 at 4 in the morning.

A young widow rearing three children on her own, Beiers was on a mission to find a new hometown. Her husband, Gene — he was the boy next door in Langdon, N.D. —

had been killed while he was stationed as a flight surgeon in France. The couple's children were 3, 18 months and nine days old.

After his death, Beiers moved to Los Angeles, where she lived with a sister and spent five long years earning her master's degree in library science.

Then she started looking for the town she could call home, a place to rear her children.

She had three criteria: "The kids had to be able to ride to school on their bikes or walk. They had to be able to get to the dentist on their own and to the Saturday afternoon movies."

### Search for a home

Beiers set out on a search, driving up the coast. She arrived in Santa Cruz at 4 a.m. and pronounced her mission complete.

"I had this sense of a do-able town. I knew it was exactly what I was looking for," she says.

Soon she found a home and lease, too.

The house she bought was on Charkey Street, near Lighthouse Field, where she still lives.

Beiers said she was about to buy the property when the real estate agent told her, "By the way, there's going to be a convention center and hotel and shopping center there (at Lighthouse Field). And by the way, there's a university here," Beiers recalls.

Both the university and Lighthouse Field shaped her life.

Eight months after moving here, Beiers got involved in city politics, successfully fighting the Lighthouse Field development plans.

She got a job as librarian at UC Santa Cruz, where she still works part-time.

Once in the political arena, she never left.

A liberal Democrat, Beiers, 62, served on the city Planning Commission, was on the Civil Service Commission for 10 years, and spent time on a number of community organizations, including the YWCA.

She worked on Democratic Party issues and met many of the people active in local politics.

### Joining the council

Her entry onto the City Council was by appointment, in March 1989.

Mo Reich had just resigned amid scandal after admitting he'd sent an obscene valentine card to the

Bio B

Big council agenda — Page A2