

History

Your rent's too high,
the view's too lowly,
the food's too fast,
and the traffic's
too slow. But it
doesn't have to be
that way. **Bob Morris**
explores Santa
Cruz, an experiment
in utopia.

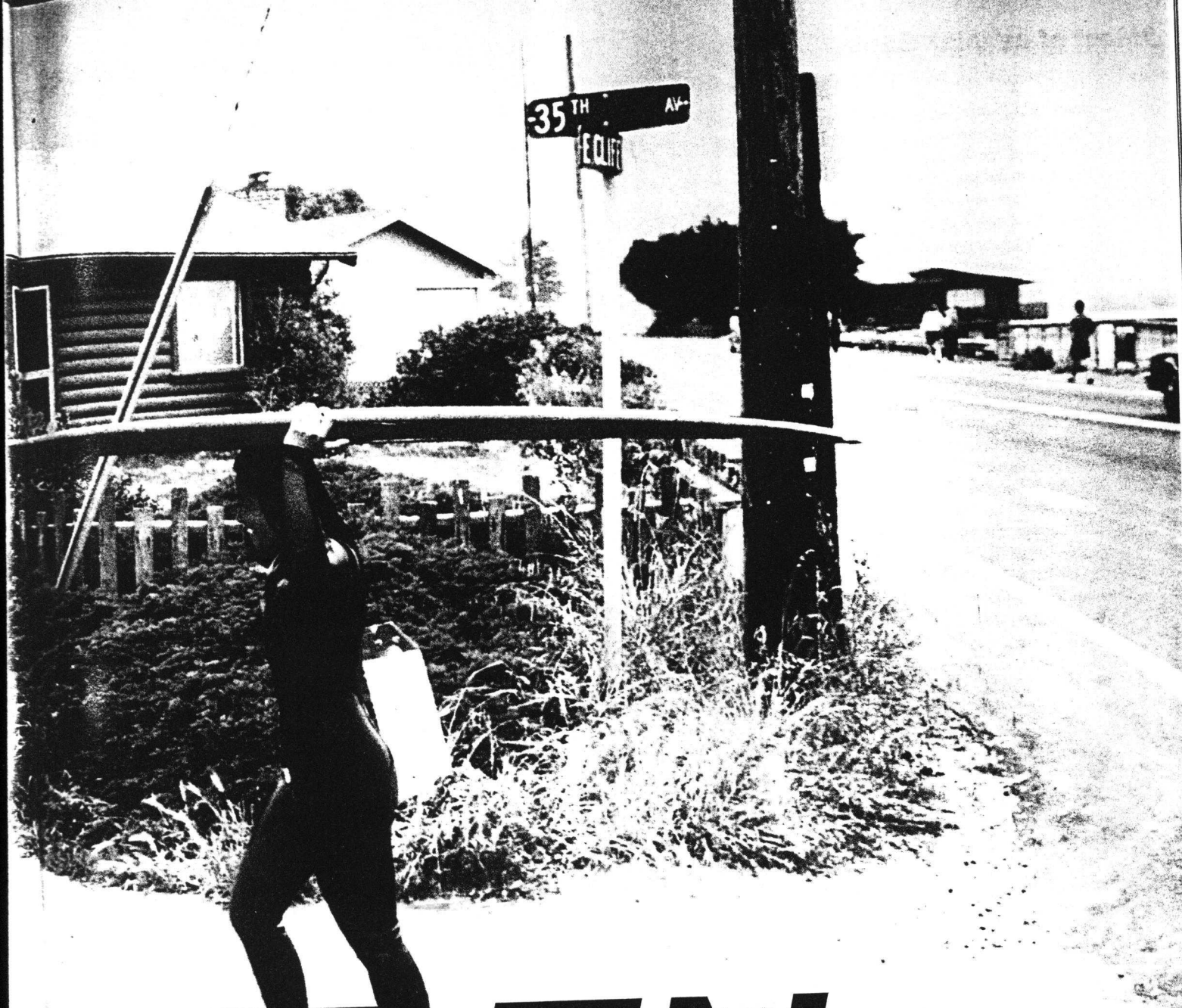


LEFT OF

In the serene mountains above Santa Cruz, not far from the epicenter of the big earthquake of 1989, a tourist attraction called the Mystery Spot has been in business for over fifty years. There, on a pathway in the redwoods, a tour guide who's shorter than you will stand downhill and appear to be taller. Inside a cabin that seems to be pushing itself away from the side of a hill, you'll stand on a table and lean out at such an extreme angle that it looks like you're defying gravity. Quite disorienting. "It appears as though every law of gravitation has gone haywire, turned topsyturvy and just doesn't make sense," says a promotional brochure.

The whole county of Santa Cruz is sort of like that.

Take, for instance, the city's new antibias ordinance. When California Governor Pete Wilson vetoed a bill last year designed to ban job discrimination against gays, Santa Cruz responded by passing its own antidiscrimination law, broadening the ordinance to include fat people (people of weight), short people (vertically challenged), the elderly (chronologically challenged), and disabled (other-abled). "All of us know people who would do a great job but who don't fit the physical average," said bookstore owner Neal Coonerty, the councilman who sponsored the ordinance,



EDEN

which has become yet another thorn in the side of fundamentalists and conservative business owners in the community.

Prejudice based on physical appearance (lookism) was also one of the issues fueling the "Myth America Pageants," held in Santa Cruz every year from 1979 to 1986 with the express purpose of hounding the Miss California Pageant out of existence. Within seeing and hearing distance of the Miss California Parade—in which Miss Modesto, Miss Orange County, and Miss Humboldt, among others, would ride atop vintage convertibles, waving their white-gloved hands—feminists from the community would stage guerrilla theater that fea-

tured induced vomitings, women of weight in bikinis dragging scales tied to their ankles, men in drag, and women jumping through hoops. Ann Simonton, a former Eileen Ford model and cover girl whose knife-point rape in 1971 changed her life, once modeled a bathing suit made of raw meat. Later, in front of the civic auditorium, where the pageant was in progress, she threw her own blood on the sidewalk and was arrested for littering.

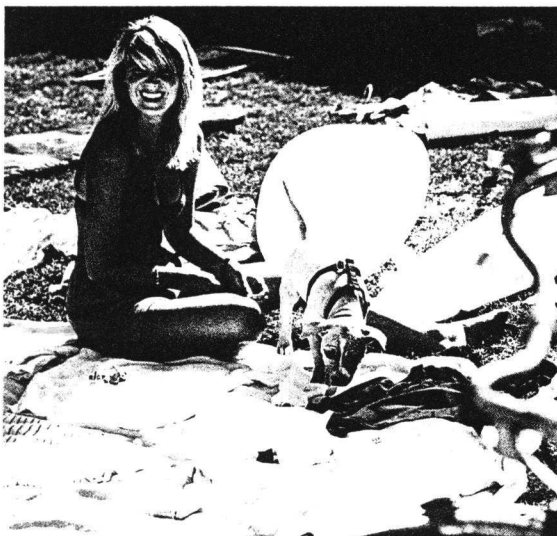
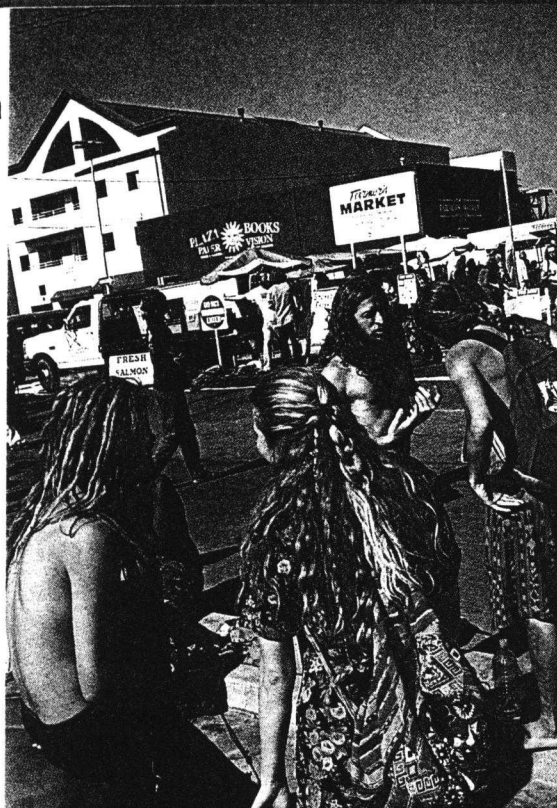
The mayor at the time, a socialist, endorsed the demonstrators and spoke out publicly in their defense. It didn't matter to him that the Miss California Pageant had been bringing in good clean revenue

"Most of us think Santa

since 1924 (Santa Cruz's economy relies on tourism). A broad segment of the community believed that the pageant was exploitative of women and promoted violence against them. In an attempt to marginalize the protesters, one of the pageant's supporters proclaimed, "They're not the example of womanhood I'd like to follow. Many of the women are fat, they don't take care of themselves, they're not even clean, and they're angry." But in Santa Cruz, the radicals, deviants, and underdogs are not so easily marginalized: In 1986 the local chamber of commerce and pageant committee of fine upstanding citizens couldn't take it anymore and, scratching their heads in disbelief, moved the Miss California Pageant downstate to San Diego.

The year before, veterans at Post 5888 of the Veterans of Foreign Wars had been busy getting on the nerves of their conservative parent organization. They had drafted a statement criticizing the U.S. military involvement in Central America. To add emphasis, the little post, which only had about fifty members at the time, sent an emissary to hand-deliver the statement to the Sandinista government. "We wanted to show the Sandinistas that not all veterans agreed with the Reagan administration," said Richard Anderson, the post's former commander. When national VFW officials heard about the statement, they suspended Post 5888's charter. In response, the post sued and, in an out-of-court settlement that made national news, not only got its charter reinstated, but also had two of its members appointed to national VFW committees, where they continue to pepper the militaristic organization with a pacifist point of view.

"Most of us think that Santa Cruz has something to say to the rest of the world—we're just not quite sure what it is," says the current mayor, Don Lane, who owns and works in the kitchen at the Saturn Café, a hypermellow vegetarian restaurant on Mission Street, the main strip into town. "At the Saturn, we're testing the edges of what's acceptable in running a business. If people on staff wanna dress up or pierce their bodies or whatever, that's fine." While the Saturn's almost always busy, Taco Bell, Baskin-Robbins, and the other big joints on the strip aren't. Service at the Saturn is slower, sure, and maybe the place is a little more expensive and a little less hygienic-looking than your basic Pizza Hut or Denny's, but it's local-



To surfers, Deadheads, radicals, and intellectuals, Santa Cruz is a haven for alternative lifestyles and ideas. To others, it's an open-air lunatic asylum.

Cruz has something to say

ly owned and run by cool people, not some big faceless corporation with questionable politics based in another city. On the other side of town from the Saturn Café, Dharma's (it used to be called McDharma's until McDonald's sued) serves up plates of tempeh and tofu to cops, students, fundamentalists, disabled veterans, yuppies, and trippy-looking mothers on welfare wearing their hair in dreadlocks. OVER 10,000 COWS SAVED, the menu boasts. "It's fun to live in a town that isn't just like every place else in America," says Lane. "But we're also doing our best to make it work."

Santa Cruz isn't the only city in America with a population and government so left of center you lose your balance trying to stand up straight there. Seattle has put some of its police force on bicycles. In Berkeley, you can buy coupons to give the homeless instead of spare change that might be spent on cigarettes, drugs, or alcohol. In Eugene, where people carry coffee cups in their backpacks instead of wasting disposable ones, racks for sailboards and bicycles have been installed on buses. Burlington has been electing socialist and progressive mayors for nearly ten years. In Tucson, citizens fought off a state-mandated highway expansion project that was set to rip through an emerging downtown arts district. Boulder, Madison, Bozeman, and Austin, among others, are other small cities where state universities attract idealists. They're interested in detaching themselves from the America their parents and grandparents fucked up when, during the postwar years, they migrated en masse to the suburbs, creating the alienated, car-dependent lifestyle now considered typical.

Appealing to people who have burnt out on trying to support a reasonable quality of life in bigger, older cities, the new-style cities that are doing things differently are guided by utopian and ecotopian thinking. Islands

of progressive politics in attractive settings, they often have downtowns zoned as pedestrian malls that encourage walking and bicycling, public transit that's accessible, and large tracts of parkland (known as greenbelts) annexed with public funds to keep developers and other entrepreneurs from cashing in on and therefore ruining all the charm. Of all the hip small cities in America, Santa Cruz may be the most extreme. Certainly, it's the most beautiful. But that may be because it has fought the hardest to keep it that way.

When the University of California opened its doors amid a redwood forest above a meadow there in 1965, Santa Cruz was still known as a sleepy little resort town on Monterey Bay. But with Ken Kesey and his Merry Pranksters blowing minds in La Honda and San Francisco just to the north, and Joan Baez commandeering world peace from a retreat near Carmel just to the south, it didn't take long for things to change there, too. Students who arrived, having escaped the sterility of suburbia and the backwardness of small towns, found that its sweet weather, unspoiled

Bob Morris writes about nightlife for The New York Times.

the rest of the world," says Mayor Don Lane. "We're just not sure what it is."

beaches and mountains, renowned boardwalk and roller coaster, pelicans, butterflies in eucalyptus trees, and funky houses for rent mixed well with hallucinogens and the radical thinking taught by professors who were fomenting social and cultural revolution from classrooms up on the hill.

Coming from places where they had assumed that all of politics was a game of compromise that never swung far enough to the left to include them, students found out that they could walk over to city hall or the county offices and talk to the people in charge. By the mid-'70s, they had started voting out of office conservative politicians, who carried the cloaks of developers and businessmen, replacing them with progressives who were as outspoken against unplanned growth as they were in support of social programs.

None of this came easy, but compared with older, bigger cities, Santa Cruz started out with a cleaner slate for civic experimentation. It didn't have the problems endemic to New York, Chicago, or Los Angeles (industrial pollution and racial tension), so it was easier to control as it grew. And to help oversee growth, there was Bert Muhly, a passionately political man and one of the founding fathers of Santa Cruz's progressive government. Employed as the county's planning director from 1961 to 1970—the years when the newly opened and surprisingly hip university (with majors in such programs as agroecology, community studies, and the history of consciousness) began transforming Santa Cruz from a resort and fishing town to a busier city—Muhly devoted himself to putting together an aggressive plan that would prevent development from sprawling over to San Jose, just on the other side of the Santa Cruz Mountains.

Muhly, sixty-nine, grew up in a poor Maryland family, went to college on a football scholarship, and was not exposed to political idealism until he studied urban planning at Berkeley in the '50s. His own worldview really began to rock when he moved to Santa Cruz in the '60s. "It was the age of Aquarius, and I was in the middle of it," says Muhly, who dresses like a football coach and leaves the front door of his Victorian house unlocked. "My kids were in college at the time, and they taught me about life in the changing society." Inspired by the author Lewis Mumford's windy but prescient railings against suburbanization and the dehumanizing effect of cars and freeways on neighborhoods, Muhly, as the county's planning director, encouraged residents to endorse policies promoting community instead of destroying it. "I survived at my job for nine

years because the people wanted a conscience," says Muhly, who took a primitive planning department and turned it into one of the most sophisticated in the state. He attributes his success to tenacious involvement at the local level. "You never once took anything from anybody, not even a Christmas tree, so you were never obligated," he says. "And you never let up. If a guy who thought the way you thought was running for office, you went out and supported him." During his tenure, Muhly not only supported initiatives that preserved beaches, meadows, wetlands, and forests, but also required developers to build affordable housing so that Santa Cruz would not become a place exclusively for the rich. His planning helped restrict high-rise building and stopped freeway growth.

"Developers who were covering vast areas of California with schlock subdivisions learned that they wouldn't get away with it here," he says. "I remember teaching a class in urban studies at the university some of those years, and I'd take alienated students from fouled-up places like Orange County out to the cliffs north of town to barbecue salmon. They'd see how beautiful it was and how clear the air was, and I'd tell them that there were two thousand homes proposed for this site and who was doing it and why."

Muhly's constituency grew. "When I hit the streets working as a planner here, I found that I was seen as a bureaucrat," he says. "There was such distrust of bureaucrats, even the ones who wore liberalism on their epaulets, that I had to look at it." He ran for and won a seat on the city council in 1973 in order to oppose the construction of an oceanfront convention center in town and a subdivision on the agricultural land adjacent to the beaches north of town (both approved by the old regime of elected officials who had ignored his recommendations as county planning director). The following year, he was elected by a landslide to preside over the council as mayor. That was the beginning of the turnaround.

What's different about here?" says Chris Matthews. "It's a haven. All you have to do is drive over the hill to San Jose to see." Matthews, a burly veteran busted in the '70s for trying to bring some marijuana into the U.S. from Panama on a military plane, is a poet, screenwriter, activist, former county supervisor, and co-owner of a downtown pub called the Poet and Patriot. "People are more humanitarian here. It's a place that allows you to think and see in terms of beauty, and from that arises a respect for everything from nature to



Many in Santa Cruz prefer the laid-back, locally owned cafés to convenience restaurants run by faceless corporations from other cities.



"People are more humanitarian here," says local writer and activist Chris Matthews

the whole human process. The logical extension is political action."

Matthews, who is writing a screenplay for the producer of *The Milagro Beanfield War* and has started another one for Disney, says that he views his pub as "the kind of place where all different kinds of people on the social strata can come and communicate." Mention a topic or a local personality at the Poet and Patriot, and you'll get blasted with ten different opinions, but unlike what you would find in some pubs elsewhere, you won't get blasted with any ethnic or sexist slurs. Even New Jersey, where Matthews was brought up but never plans to return, is given a fair shake. For last year's New Jersey Night, an annual event he hosts, Matthews flew in Douglas Palmer, the first black mayor of Trenton, to speak alongside Jane Yokoyama, Santa Cruz's first Asian mayor.

Matthews grew up in Elizabeth, New Jersey, enlisted in the military, and was a paratrooper in Central America in the mid-'60s, where his first antigovernment feelings began to stir: "You got down there and you saw poverty and how Americans were exploiting it. You saw American officers living real well and the rest of the people living in shacks of tin and cardboard. We were teaching Central American officers about torture, about how to control the population. I was a trained killer, but when I started smoking Panama Red, I began to feel just the opposite. I felt respect for life and other people."

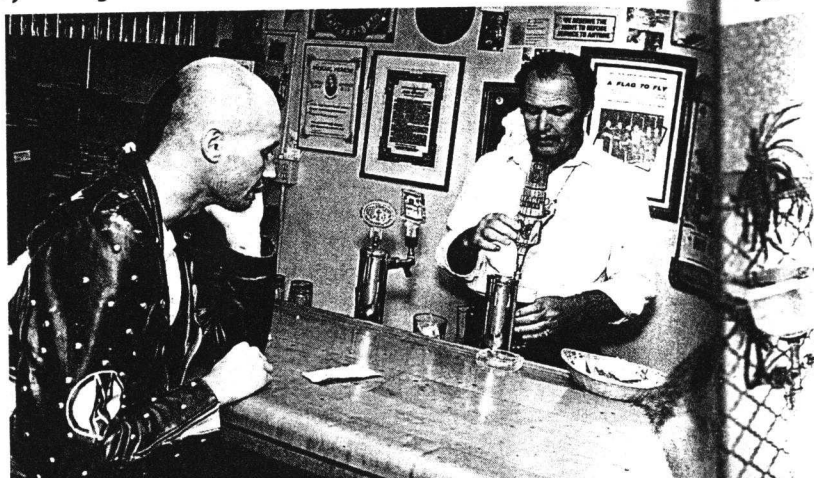
He began bringing that Panama Red home to turn his friends on to a higher consciousness. After the bust and prison, he drove his van, via Boulder, to Santa Cruz, where he first hooked up with other local vets in an organization called Vietnam Veterans Against the War, then found his way into local politics.

Matthews ended up getting appointed as a county supervisor (there are five of them representing constituents in the City of Santa Cruz as well as the smaller towns that make up the county) after working as a community activist in Watsonville, a small city in the southern part of the county with a large population of Chicano farm workers. He felt that Watsonville's city council—which had always been a conservative good-old-white-boy group—was planning to redevelop the downtown and wipe out the poor Hispanic neighborhoods, so he helped organize a grass-roots campaign against them.

"At the time, the board was working on some big land deals that would have turned this whole county into a place for just the rich," Matthews recalls. "My archenemy was [chairperson of the board of supervisors] Marilyn Liddicoat. She was a dragon lady, straight as a chain saw, who gave full and rounded meaning to the word 'bitch.' Some people even called her evil. She represented the big developers' interests out and out, and she attacked the social programs we had for taking away from free enterprise. We really went to town on each other. She called me a drunken amoral bum. [Matthews has been cited once for drunk driving.] The time she alleged that I beat up my girlfriend, I demanded that she apologize, but rather than admit she was wrong, she said I was more dangerous than Dan White, who had shot [supervisor] Harvey Milk and Mayor Moscone in San Francisco. She called everybody who was progressive in the county a crummy bum, so all the progressives went around wearing buttons that said I'M PROUD TO BE A CRUMMY BUM."

Liddicoat, who was the target of an unsuccessful recall campaign, ended up resigning as chairperson anyway, and within a few years the Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors and the Santa Cruz City Council had progressive majorities.

With the progressives in control of both the city council and the county board of supervisors by 1981, the local government had shifted from serving the interests of establishment entrepreneurs to serving the more recently arrived idealists. The changeover



Chris Matthews serves a customer at the Poet and Patriot.

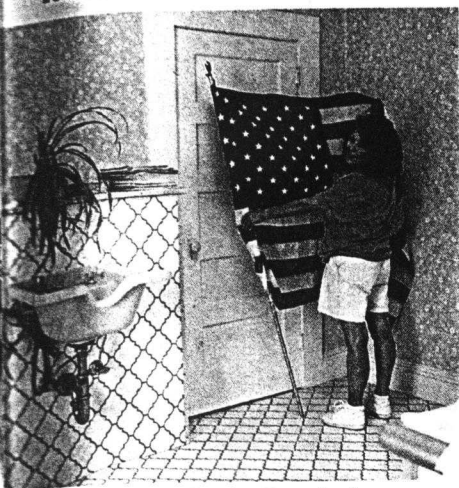
to a more socialistic public policy came just at the right time, too, because a few years before, Proposition 13, a statewide initiative, had cut all property taxes back to 1 percent and has held them there ever since. That meant severe cutbacks in state funding to California's prestigious public university system, as well as to all social, health, and cultural programs. So, while the rest of the state and the country were doing the every-man-for-himself Reaganomics dance, progressive programs were solidifying in Santa Cruz, where the municipal population had doubled to over 50,000 and the county population in rural areas was growing just as quickly, to more than 200,000.

Over the past twelve years, the city's budget for human services—healthcare, child care, senior transportation, legal and nutritional services, help for the homeless, the elderly, people with AIDS, and those affected by domestic violence—has increased by 900 percent. Before 1986, the funds came from the same federal revenue-sharing monies that other cities around the nation were using for real estate development and padding local officials' salaries. When those funds dried up, the city council succeeded in getting voters to approve a 5 percent "admission tax" (dubbed the "fun tax" by the *Santa Cruz Sentinel*) on boardwalk games and rides, movies, concerts, and such.

The policies that have been enacted in Santa Cruz since the progressive takeover read like a Republican's nightmare. For municipal employees who were living together but not legally married, the city enacted one of the first domestic partners health benefits programs in the country. For people opposed to apartheid and U.S. intervention in Central America, the city divested its monies from any institution involved in South Africa and made Santa Cruz a free port for trade with Nicaragua. For the local community of protesters (opposing anything from the logging of redwoods on the university campus to the sale of war toys in stores at Christmas-time), the city council backed the establishment of complaint procedures against police for harassment and brutality. For environmentalists, the city council also established curbside recycling early in the game and became a force in the statewide opposition to offshore oil drilling by focusing public attention on a local winter nesting ground for sea elephants.

But there were problems in the garden of Eden. In addition to attracting surfers, Deadheads, computer nerds, radicals, ecofascists, and intellectuals, word had gotten around that Santa Cruz was a fine place to be homeless. The Pacific Garden Mall, a pleasant downtown area free of heavy car traffic, had become a place where young white people mixed in with junkies and malcontents with nothing to do but hang out in front of the natural food store—food stamps and welfare checks in hand, backpacks and bedrolls on the sidewalk.

Matthews. "It's a place that allows you to think and see in terms of beauty."



Antitax crusader Carolyn Busenhart.



Bert Muhly: Not just another bureaucrat.

"Santa Cruz looks to some people like an open-air lunatic asylum with a growing population of the criminally insane," Page Stegner wrote in a 1981 article for *Esquire*. "What was once, depending on your point of view, merely colorful, or distasteful, or weird, or mildly disconcerting, became ominous, dangerous," Stegner wrote, suggesting "something more menacing out there on the street than flower power and the merry pranksters" was afoot.

Bert Muhly, in a response to the article, rebuked Stegner for associating "a tolerant Santa Cruz" with the behavior of psychopaths. But Stegner was not the only taxpayer to be fed up with the city's tolerance of UTEs (Undesirable Transient Elements), though he was the most articulate. Not long after his article appeared, something called "troll bashing" came into vogue, and three teenagers out hunting for "trolls," whom they described as "long-haired hippie-types, transients, communists—people that suck up welfare and sleep in the bushes," shot a homeless man in the back with a homemade bazooka. Their lawyer claimed that community attitudes may have suggested to them that ridding the town of transients was a laudable act, citing "a general attitude that transients are detrimental to the county of Santa Cruz, and if they would all leave, we would all be better off."

Still, Santa Cruz continued on its progressive course, hammering out innovative programs that addressed residents' and business owners' concerns without being heartless. But while the county's shelter system, free meal program run by the homeless, work programs, and garden project (supported in part by Harrison Ford) are shining examples of civic altruism, they make the marginalized minority of conservative taxpayers hit the roof.

Carolyn Busenhart, the owner of the Charisma Styling Salon and an antitax crusader who started an organization called Take Back Our Town, hits the roof a lot. She hit it when, to encourage alternatives to driving, the city was taking steps to reduce parking and add a bike lane to the thoroughfare that runs past her business. She hit it when she heard the city was allowing homeless people from all over California to come to town to protest a municipal camping ban. And she went *through* it last year when the county supervisors instituted a building permit fee for new home builders and businesses in order to supplement community day care.

"This just proves that all of you supervisors have gone stark, raving mad," she said at a public hearing for the new fee. "You're not stupid, but you think the rest of us are. You have been here too long." She began a recall campaign, which charged the targeted supervisors with "saddling the public with inappropriate taxes, squandering tax dollars, and betraying the public's trust." It failed.

"I think the homeless issue is a fraud created to hold the taxpayers of America hostage," she says after turning down *Family*

Feud in the living room of the modest ranch house she rents. She and her boyfriend, Vernon, who's on the phone in the next room, build houses as a side business but can't afford to live in them. "Shut up, Vernon! You're way too loud in there," she yells as she digs through a box of county budget books for the numbers to back up her arguments. "People are rewarded for sitting on their butts around here. How about personal responsibility? If people were responsible

about themselves, the government would get the hell out of our lives. The liberals—I don't like to call them progressives because these people are antiprogress—they keep coming up with new and clever ways to tax us. The bleeding hearts are portraying themselves as the good guys against the evil slobs, and the overall impact is the destruction of our society. Socialized medicine sounds good to everybody, unless you're the doctor."

Busenhart credits Ayn Rand's polemic novel, *Atlas Shrugged* (which uses the devices of fiction to preach a philosophy of self-interest over altruism), for her own deep distrust of socialism. "It's the most timely book I've ever read in my life and I've read it about umpteen times. The point of it is that everybody damns the producer, and yet without the producer, what do you have? You have nothing!"

A native of Santa Cruz, she grew up on welfare herself. Her father died when she was very young, and because there weren't any day-care programs at the time, her mother couldn't go to work until she and her sisters were old enough to take care of themselves. Right after high school, she put herself through beauty college and started a business. So, unlike many of the people who immigrated to Santa Cruz to go to school or enjoy the beauty of the place, she didn't have time to contemplate the essence of things. Her sisters, as it turns out, were on welfare for much of their lives. The irony of this seems to escape her and, if anything, only serves to strengthen her convictions. "You want a chicken in every pot?" she asks. "I say, go out and earn it."

Steven Hartman was another crusader who wasn't gonna take it anymore. A blue-collar worker from a local family, he tried, unsuccessfully, in 1989, to recall four out of five city council members after they opposed allowing the USS *Gary*, a guided-missile frigate, to dock at the municipal wharf on the Fourth of July, as it had for many years. The city council members thought they were simply honoring the wishes of what appeared to be the pacifist majority in the community. After weathering the recall, some of the council members blew it, though, by sending Hartman an obscene valentine of a man in drag giving him the finger, inscribed with the words HAVE A FUCKING NICE VALENTINE'S DAY. When Hartman received it, he publicly called for their resignations. On local television and in the *Sentinel*, he derided the arrogance of what he dubbed the "progressive machine." "If you aren't politically correct in Santa Cruz you have no say," he railed on one news program. "The navy ship issue is not simply that. We're talking about civil liberties here. We're talking about freedom of choice, freedom of expression." Although he's the same age as the people in office, Hartman seems cut from a totally different cloth, a more polit-

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Left of Eden

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ically normal kind of cloth, the kind that would be more comfortably worn almost anywhere else in America. His battle cry echoes that of President Bush. "We need business leaders on the city council. We need to get revenue into this city so you don't burn people with extra taxes," he says. "Santa Cruz is dying. The progressive machine will steal what it can from the city and let it collapse." After running unsuccessfully for a seat on city council, he moved to Sacramento, where he now lives in self-described "political exile." Perhaps the more traditional social climate there will suit him.

As for his dire predictions of economic collapse, Santa Cruz isn't in much worse shape economically than, say, Detroit (where the city's noted art museum has had to drastically curtail its hours), Richmond, California (where the public school system declared bankruptcy), New York (where budgets for human services have been slashed across the board), Philadelphia (mired in fiscal crisis), Houston (with its tax base crippled by real estate vacancies), or any other place that has stayed on a more traditional course of fiscal conservatism. And while it's true that most of the historic downtown buildings that collapsed or were demolished after the quake of 1989 haven't been rebuilt yet, the economy in Santa Cruz is far from dead.

Shops and restaurants waiting to rebuild have relocated to tentlike pavilions on streets adjacent to the rubble, where business remains active. (Many people in Santa Cruz would rather shop or eat in a tent than at a suburban mall.) But there are obstacles to rebuilding quickly. One of the most obvious is that the country was slipping into its deepest recession since World War II when the earthquake hit, so big banks are not making loans as readily as they used to. The other obstacle is planning. To help offset the affordable housing shortage and to keep development from sprawling by intensifying building in the city's core, the city council has decided to encourage more people to move downtown and keep the area hopping virtually twenty-four hours a day. The plan they adopted calls for residential apartments above downtown storefronts. To a New Yorker, this may sound terribly obvious, but in the West, the plan is unusual enough to stump the banks and, again, make them drag their feet on loans. In the meantime, despite the rubble downtown, the taxes (which are high, but not the highest in the nation), the pricey cost of housing, the longstanding drought, the incoming smog from San Jose, the occasional

shark attack on surfers, and the threat of floods, fires, and more earthquakes, no mass exodus has occurred.

WRITERS FROM PLATO TO DE TOCQUEVILLE HAVE kicked around ideas about the public good. In a recent *New York Times* editorial, economist Andrew Schotter, author of *Free Market Economics: A Critical Appraisal*, writes that our own government's fear of the term "socialism" has kept it from making capitalism, the most productive economic system, more humane. He also makes a more practical point: "When tax rates on the wealthy are low and social programs are small, this creates incentive for anti-social behavior by the poor that decreases everybody's quality of life." Looting doesn't happen in cities like L.A. for no reason.

The irony about people who don't want to pay more taxes is this: They end up forking out the same money they could have invested in the community good for protection from the havens, for private schools, summer camps, health clubs, country homes, country clubs, transportation, doctors, and all the other services a government should be able to offer. After all, in other industrialized democracies (with economies both better and worse off than ours), healthcare, education, transportation, child care, and culture are heavily subsidized by the government.

In Santa Cruz, where people have decided that it's worth taxing themselves to pay for some of the basics that the nation and state refuse to provide them, where public responsibility seems to be as much a motivating factor as private profit, a kind of new world disorder is humming. It's sort of controlled capitalism more than socialism or communalism or communism. Whatever it is, it's working.

Of course, the place is not without its contradictions. But Lynne Basehore, the director of the Homeless Garden Project, is an optimist. "The old economic system and oil-based economy is going out," she says. Meanwhile, her Saab is parked on the street. Over at the government building, county employees—who encourage alternatives to driving—still collect monthly car-mileage allowances. Up at the swankiest restaurant in town, a family throws a blowout Bas Mitzvah for the daughter of the owners of Dharma's. Down the road at the Resource Center for Nonviolence, a young couple returning a videotape leave their two pit bulls at the door. And at the River Street Shelter, where dinner has just been served, Shaun, a handsome and soft-spoken young man from Mendocino County who came to Santa Cruz to study architecture at the community college, says that he can't afford the high rents in town. But he doesn't want a job working at McDonald's, either. "I'm used to working in better restaurants," he says. •