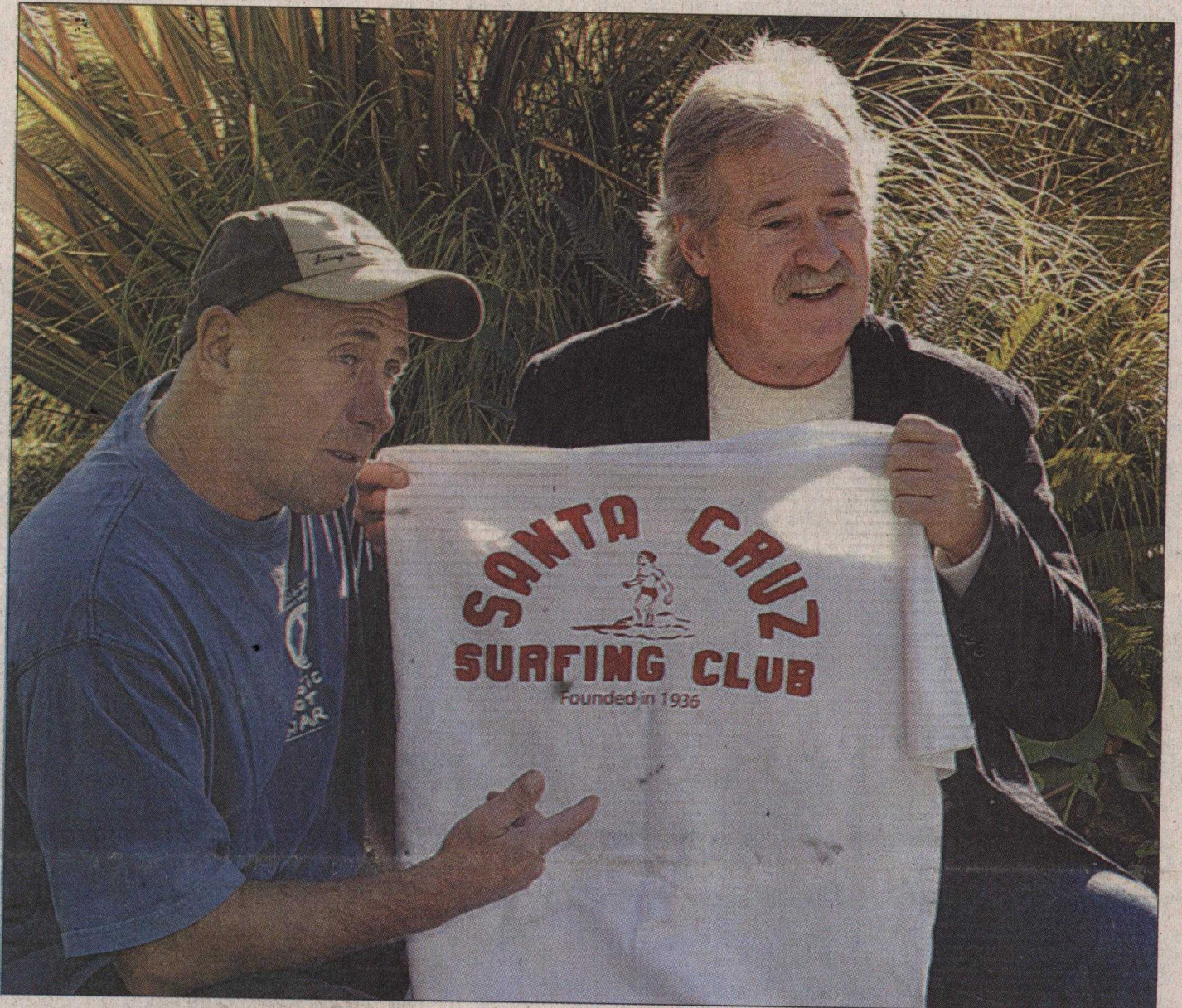


Santa Cruz surfing club wants logo back

Surfers considering legal action against man who is selling shirts with their logo, photos; want money to benefit Surfing Museum



Dan Coyro/Sentinel

'Boots' McGhee and Dan Young are part of a Santa Cruz Surfing Club that wants to use the club's logo to raise funds for the Santa Cruz Surf Museum.

By **GENEVIEVE BOOKWALTER**
SENTINEL STAFF WRITER

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SANTA CRUZ — As surfers around the globe write checks to help save the city's Surfing Museum, the museum's co-founders are steamed that they no longer have one of their best fundraising tools: T-shirts bearing old surfing photos and the logo from the original

Santa Cruz Surfing Club.

The issue, they say, is that the grandson of an original club member trademarked the logo and photos and is now selling screened shirts, shorts, women's underwear and other apparel online and not giving any proceeds to the museum.

Similar shirts once benefited the Surfing Museum and raised

funds to build the iconic surfer statue on West Cliff Drive. Now, however, club members can't sell products that bear them, museum supporters said.

"We need the funding desperately," said museum cofounder and surfing club member Dan Young of Aptos. "We need that to save the Surfing Museum."

The museum's funding was

eliminated from the city budget earlier this month as Santa Cruz leaders struggle with a \$7 million deficit. Young is helping raise money and find volunteers to keep the museum open, and must present a plan to the city on Jan. 5.

Meanwhile, the surfing club Monday officially registered as

Logo

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the nonprofit Santa Cruz Surfing Club Preservation Society, in an ongoing effort to protect and preserve the club's history.

If some kind of agreement cannot be reached over the trademark, Young said, the group is considering legal options.

Ryan Rittenhouse, the grandson of original club member Robert Rittenhouse Sr., holds the trademarks. Multiple attempts to reach Rittenhouse on Tuesday were unsuccessful.

The original Santa Cruz Surfing Club logo sweatshirt was created for the club's first members not long after the group of 27 young men organized in 1936. A commemorative T-shirt, featuring the logo and a photo of original club members standing in front of their longboards, was sold from 1989 to 1992 and paid to build the surfer statue on West Cliff Drive. In 2004, Levi Strauss reprinted the original shirt as part of its "Vintage Collection," and proceeds helped the Santa Cruz Surfing Museum. That shirt, which sold for more than \$100, gained fame when Paris Hilton wore it on the cover of Elle magazine in March 2004.

But neither the club's logo nor the photos were ever trademarked. So in 2006, Young said, Rittenhouse trademarked them himself and began selling cheaper apparel online and around town.

Young said club members have asked Rittenhouse for their logo back and for partial proceeds to benefit the Surfing Museum, in exchange for licensing rights or another agreement. But a deal could not be reached.

Now, club members said, they're looking at a court case.

"He took sales away from us and never did give anything back," said Howard "Boots" McGhee, a member of the Santa Cruz Surfing Club and cofounder of the Surfing Museum. "It's not the Santa Cruz way, nor is it the surfing way."