

# Grand jury is short on facts - Borovatz

Allegations that the grand jury is "politically motivated" were leveled by a furious board of supervisors chairperson Ed Borovatz in response to the grand jury's recently released report on the 1977 budget sessions. The report charges the board with engaging in "political retribution" in its budget cuts, ignoring the advice of department heads, destroying the morale of county workers and undermining public confidence in government.

Supervisor Marilyn Liddicoat was the only member of the board consulted during the preparation of the report, which bears a striking resemblance to many of Liddicoat's own positions on the budget.

The angry chairperson compared the latest report to the final 1976 report, citing them as two examples of "reports more politically motivated than based upon fact."

Last year's report, especially the hastily produced section on welfare fraud, has been prominent in recall literature. It is widely believed that this year's grand jury would issue a series of interim reports intended to damage the more liberal majority of the board during the recall campaign.

Grand jury foreman Ed Hall refused to discuss Borovatz' charges with the *Independent*.

Rather than explain the grand jury's choice of witnesses, Hall left a message claiming that he had previously been promised he would be shown interviews before publication, and would not talk unless the newspaper "cooperated" on that matter.

No such promise has ever been made to Hall and it is against the policy of the *Independent* to allow pre-publication review of articles.

Liddicoat meanwhile confirmed that she testified on the budget on August 15 at the request of the grand jury.

When a reporter pointed out the similarities between the report and her own positions, Liddicoat said that she noticed it too, joking that the grand jury "must be brilliant."

Although she was pleased that "somebody is complaining about the same things" as she, Liddicoat said she was "surprised and disturbed" that no other member of the board had been called to testify on the budget.

After studying the budget sessions and later developments, the jury concluded that "media coverage and subsequent awareness of the conflict over the budget seems to have eroded public confidence in county government."

Part of this erosion has involved "an atmosphere in which allegations of Brown Act violations flourished,"

according to the report.

But the grand jury "found no evidence" that the Brown Act violations alleged by Liddicoat and Supervisor Cecil Smith had actually occurred.

Although the report concludes that some of the cuts "could be viewed" as political retribution, no specifics are cited.

The importance of giving greater weight to the opinions of department heads in arriving at a final budget is the dominant theme of the grand jury's suggested remedies.

## City dump clean-up ordered

by Richard Cole

Continuing health hazards at the Santa Cruz City Dump near Highway 1 have led the state to order an end to the pollution of streams below the dump.

That cease and desist order replaced a stronger staff recommendation which would have referred the case to the state attorney general for possible criminal prosecution.

The Regional Water Quality Control Board told the city Monday it must upgrade the water pumping system in the dump and remove septic tank

Although most of the cuts criticized in the report were made over Liddicoat's objections, the Aptos supervisor confessed that she, too, had voted for a few cuts without consulting department heads first.

Disorganization, uncertainty, inefficiency and a deterioration of morale are all said to have resulted from the failure to involve top management in arriving at the final budget.

Borovatz called the report a series of "opinions stated as fact with no substantiating data." —Bob Johnson

ponds from their present location on top of fill.

Continuous pump failures had allowed sewage from the ponds and other sources to pollute Lombardi Creek below the dump.

If the city does not meet the deadline or fails to show a good faith effort to correct the hazards, the board ordered its executive officer to refer the case to the attorney general.

The strong staff recommendation for immediate prosecution had followed months of fencing with city public works director Bill Fieberling

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