

Grand Jury Board Should Set A Better Example: Jury

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County supervisors should set examples of "statemanship, high ethical standards and leadership professionalism," but they too often engage in "name calling, threats, attempted intimidation and in-fighting," the 1978-79 county grand jury said today in its final report.

The jury said that image of the board reported in the media is "a source of embarrassment to county employees and many citizens."

(In other pointed reports, the grand jury recommended the county Elections Department be separated from the County Clerk's office (Page 23), praised and warned county Superintendent of Schools Richard Van Deren, and gave support to Health Services Director George Robertson, who is now under attack from some board members (Page 7).

The report on the supervisors states "on numerous occasions the grand jury has heard rude, negative and unsubstantiated statements made by members of the board about county employees" and has resulted in a low morale of county employees.

"The sense of a pending political fight over every issue which appears before the board adds further to the feeling of instability in our county government, and causes uncertainty in many sectors of the public," according to the report.

The grand jury said its members have heard the board address its "rude, negative and unsubstantiated statements" also to "individual citizens and the grand jury itself."

During budget sessions the past two weeks, it seems the board had some insight into the jury's criticism, as it has been genteel in its budget deliberations.

The jury notes, "Articles critical of the behavior of our board have appeared in newspapers from Santa Cruz to San Francisco and Chicago and have been a further source of embarrassment to our community as well as a major contribution to a sense of governmental instability in Santa Cruz County."

The jury states the "instability" makes it difficult to recruit top level people for government here.

In its conclusion, the jury states:

"Although no laws cover this area of conduct, not every act of poor conduct should require a law.

"These matters of conduct fall into the areas of statemanship, high ethical standards and leadership professionalism (and) do not reflect what the Board of Supervisors is required to do, but what the board ought to do for the betterment of the entire community."