

# editorial

## Incorporation talk

THE INCORPORATION of Aptos as a city in its own right is a subject which comes up periodically, usually when someone gets mad at the county government.

It's an idea with a great deal of attraction, for it provides an area — in this case, that nebulosity known as Aptos — with an identity. If incorporated, Aptos would become a town with definable borders instead of a loose alliance of neighborhoods whose only common bond is their midcounty location.

With incorporation, it is argued, would come autonomy. Aptos residents would be "out from under the heel" of county government, in the words of one Aptos Chamber of Commerce member. It would be free of a board of supervisors "that's going to kill us," in the words of another. People in Aptos would be masters of their own destinies.

That is the drill favored by those who want incorporation. These are arguments which sound convincing about the time people get their tax bills or when the supervisors pass an ordinance which gives some property owners the willies, such as the recent action concerning septic tanks.

But the other side of the incorporation coin deserves inspection, also.

"Getting out from under the county's heel" may be more of an illusion than a reality should incorporation be accomplished. A new city would be immediately responsible for its own streets and law enforcement — two very expensive items in a city's budget.

The new city could organize its own police and road departments, but it's unlikely it would do so, in the formative years at least. The sensible alternative would be to contract with the county for the services, which is hardly getting out from under its heel. The fledgling city would be dependent upon the county for a number of other services as well, which makes total escape from its influence an impossibility.

In the final analysis, incorporation for Aptos merely means the imposition of one layer of government on top of another.

The situation would be somewhat different if Aptos was an identifiable neighborhood with a central core to bind it together, but it's anything but that. It's hard to imagine the residents in such diverse areas as Rio del Mar-Seascape, the village, Seacliff, the flats, and Aptos Terrace-Vienna Woods-Park Wilshire ever finding enough common ground to make them want to give up their relatively ungoverned state. There's certainly no evidence of a groundswell of such opinion.

As the southerner angered by damnyankee foolishness finds comfort in talk of secession, so do harried midcounty taxpayers find solace in such talk — but it's just not practical.

Perhaps they can better adapt Winston Churchill's definition of democracy to their unincorporated condition — it's the worst form of government there is — except all others.