



Members of the county's proposed Youth Commission are welcomed to their first meeting by Pajaro Supervisor Henry Mello, standing left. Commissioner members-elect seated are Lisa Anderson and Doug Ley of Santa Cruz High School, Scott Smith of Watsonville High, Rodney Quartararo of Holy Cross High, Hans Goto of Watsonville High, Janis Watkins of Holy Cross High, and Janice Stewart of Soquel High. Standing are Bill Silva of Mora Central High

School near Watsonville, Gary Walker of Soquel High, Fred Howard of UCSC's Cowell College, Clyde Morgan of Monterey Bay Academy, Duane Evans of San Lorenzo Valley High, and Deanna Lawrence of San Lorenzo Valley High. County officials seated at left are Administrative Officer Carl Millar, Sheriff Doug James, attorney Mike Johnston and analyst and commission staff head John Zehner, both with backs to camera.

## Youth Commission Organizes For Role In County Government

By Wallace Wood  
Sentinel Staff Writer

Another historic breakthrough for the youth of Santa Cruz County took place Friday afternoon as 12 young people sat down to form the first county youth commission.

Like the appointment of 17-year-old Tom Noble to the county planning commission, the new youth commission promises to be unique.

Its goal will be to advise the county board of supervisors on the youth viewpoint, and to recommend action. A list of study items ranged from agriculture to water pollution.

Most of the commission will be made up of high school students, two from each school, though a UCSC representative was included and a Cabrillo College representative invited.

It is not an official commission yet, but county supervisors gave their approval to the idea for such a group late last year.

In its first 2½-hour session Friday, the new group displayed

remarkable poise as it drew up its charter for presentation to supervisors.

The youth commission meets again March 13 to take final action on the charter, to be in the form of a resolution to supervisors. If the board agrees, the youth commission will become a formal body.

Praise for their demeanor came from youth's chief patron here, Pajaro Supervisor Henry Mello. "You deserve praise for your great skill and bearing today. I'm going to tell my fellow supervisors you won't be any rubber stamp commission," Mello told them.

Scott Smith of Watsonville High School was named chairman. Gary Walker of Soquel High School became vice-chairman, after Janice Stewart of Soquel High opened the session as temporary chairman.

"All these people should be hailed for their foresight" in setting up the youth commission, Smith commented, indicating the county staff and Mello. "Thanks from all of us

for giving us the opportunity to have something to say."

Mello had commented earlier that "we feel one of the best places to get answers to our problems is from young people who are the citizens of tomorrow."

The youth commission, Mello said, "can involve itself in virtually everything we involve ourselves in as supervisors today."

Sheriff Doug James, a youth booster, commented the commission is "a step in the right direction," but cautioned the group "to think things out and not fly off the handle as some people will want to do."

"Your advice to old people like myself," he grinned, "will be accepted if it is presented in the right vein."

Some of the new commission's charter as decided on by the group:

**MEMBERS**—Two representatives from each high school or college. Selection of members is left up to each student body. This provision was adopted by a 10-3 vote.

Another provision giving membership only to students while they are in the school they represent passed by a 7-5 margin. The minority wanted a one-year membership limit.

**OFFICERS**—The chairman and other officers will be selected annually, by majority vote. A similar vote can remove the officers "for cause."

**DUTIES**—Commissioners would have the right not only to review questions sent to them by supervisors, but could initiate recommendations on their own. The group passed this point unanimously.

The commission's staff will consist of administrative analyst John Zehner and attorney Mike Johnston.

Some comments on the commission from the students was

requested by Mello. The students' replies, in part:

**Lisa Anderson, Santa Cruz High**—"This is one of the best things Santa Cruz County has ever done. One of the things we might do is in the area of education."

**Rodney Quartararo, Holy Cross High**—"This is an opportunity for us to give our ideas and put them into action."

**Hans Goto, Watsonville High**—"This may sound like a great one-time thing, but this can be permanent and have a great effect on the future. We should keep progress in mind."

**Janis Watkins, Holy Cross**—"Now is the chance for every school to have our say. Youth is interested. We do read the papers, and follow government. We have a chance now to show how interested we really are."

**Janice Stewart, Soquel High**—"Adults are sometimes afraid to let us go out, like when we passed out pamphlets for the school tax election. They're afraid we'll do something wrong. But we really care, not just us, but all the kids at school are really interested."

**Bill Silva, Mora Central High**—"We have a chance to take a step into our own future."

**Duane Evans, San Lorenzo Valley High**—"It will be a great help to have discussion between adults and students. Often you don't think adults understand us and often its the other way around."

**Deanna Lawrence, San Lorenzo Valley**—"We will know more about county government and have more part in it."

**Fred Howard, UCSC**—"I see a great mistrust between the students and the community, particularly up on the hill. We are very isolated up there. I hope this commission can further relations with the community."

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