

Response of Santa Cruz Mayor Bert Muhly Who Defends Catalyst

Mr. Robert L. Bartley
Editorial Page Editor
The Wall Street Journal
Editorial and Corporate
Headquarters
22 Corlandt Street
New York, New York 10007

Dear Mr. Bartley:

If it were not for the Wall Street Journal's reputation for responsible journalism and its wide readership, the City Council of Santa Cruz, California, would have ignored Benjamin Stein's negative article about our City, "At Rainbow's End - A Gang of Bikers," January 10th edition, Wall Street Journal. Since the article apparently is not a put-on as most Santa Cruzans thought it was when they first read it, the City Council feels that fairness requires that it be answered in order that your readers not be led to believe that Mr. Stein's impressions of our City are shared by either those of us who have lived here for many years or the hundreds of thousands of persons who continue to visit us every year.

Mr. Stein made several unsubstantiated statements and several errors of fact which should be corrected. Contrary to his contentions, there

is no "biking community" (motorcycle gangs) in the Santa Cruz mountains or anywhere else in Santa Cruz County. The Catalyst is not and never has been a gathering place for "bikers." This is verified by both our police records and police experience. The Police Chief has no knowledge of Charles Manson types hanging out in the Catalyst or in any other business establishment in the City. The Catalyst is not a place of fear or violence. Our Police Chief has labeled this charge absolutely untrue; citing only a few complaints for minor disturbances over the past three years. Further, local lawyers agree that there is no "thing" in local law practice devoted solely to the defense of "drug dealers" as contended by Mr. Stein. The attorney cited by Mr. Stein as his source in a recent telephone conversation and who is supposed to have such a practice, claims that only one half of one percent of his total income is derived from narcotic cases.

Errors of fact regarding the availability of housing and the size of the University of California campus seem to

Shoes are thrown at newlyweds, but they furnish their own spats.

be in direct proportion to the exaggerations contained in the rest of the article. Our vacancy rate for homes is one percent. I challenge Mr. Stein to find a modern two bedroom home near the beach or anywhere else for \$200 a month.

The tight housing market is a serious problem facing the community. The University of California contains less than 2,000 acres, not the 5,000 acres described by Mr. Stein.

Virtually no one agrees with Mr. Stein that our City is "a magnet for decidedly unpeaceful people and doings." To dredge up the unfortunate murders that took place in our region several years ago to support this contention borders on irresponsibility. To even suggest that this is the case, is to suggest that Boston is a magnet for "stranglers," Los Angeles is a magnet for "slashers," San Francisco is a magnet for "Zebras" and that Houston is a magnet for the perverts of the world. This,

of course, is utter nonsense.

I am not suggesting for a moment that Santa Cruz does not have its share of community problems, but I believe that we have better prospects for solving our problems than do most American communities. The reason lies in the diversity and vitality of the people who live here. Nowhere else in America will one find the array of talent and energy that exists among the people of Santa Cruz and their willingness to use it for the benefit of their fellow citizens and the betterment of their community. Nowhere else in America will one find the degree of citizen participation in govern-

mental affairs and the citizen determination to maintain the quality of their living environment.

It is unfortunate that during his short stay with us (less than a year), Mr. Stein did not take the time to communicate and seize upon the opportunity to participate with others in community efforts. If he had, he would have experienced the same sense of community that the rest of us have found here. Perhaps then he would have perceived the real substance and beauty of Santa Cruz.

Sincerely yours,

Bert Muhly, Mayor
City of Santa Cruz

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