

# Satanic Cult In Santa Cruz Denies Devil

*'I am tired of talk  
of blood rituals'*

By Don West  
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SANTA CRUZ — Witchcraft rumor mongers had better beware of giving the devil a bad name or they may find all sorts of things going bump in the night.

The high priest of the local Karnak Grotto of the Church of Satan proclaims the power of vengeance amongst his many magical rituals and has been known to use it.

"I am more than a little tired of all this talk of blood rituals and sex orgies," said the Rev. James Stowe, angrily fingering his baphomet medallion outside a dim ritual chamber.

## Mutilation Murders

Stirred by recent mutilation murders of three college girls, wild rumors about witchcraft cults and sacrifice rites have begun drifting out of the mountains.

"We do not believe in sacrifices, nor do we use blood in our ceremonies," said his wife, High Priestess Dolores Stowe.

While she admits shedding her black robes of office for nude participation in magic rituals, she insists her role is only a symbolically passive one and does not serve any orgiastic purpose.

Satanists have been accused of mutilating animals and people in blood rites in remote sections of the mountains, but local officials have not found any evidence to support the rumors.

Three years ago, a dog that had been completely skinned floated down Soquel Creek onto the beach at Capitola, renewing the witchcraft rumors.

## Witchcraft Movie

This grisly event coincided with local filming of an exploitation movie on witchcraft that mixed pornography and pseudo voodoo to stimulate box office interest.

Undersheriff Lee Davis insisted that the Capitola incident was the last known case of animal mutilation reported.

This was confirmed by

Mrs. Alva Engberg, president of the Santa Cruz County Animal Welfare Association, who takes care of all animal cases in the county.

"There were a lot of wild stories from people who knew somebody who knew somebody who had seen something, but nothing first hand," she said.

## Mountain Frolic

A national magazine kept the myth alive by taking pictures of a mountain frolic of a group from San Francisco calling itself the New Reformed Orthodox Order of the Golden Dawn. This group's ritualistic use of a magic circle to shut out evil forces makes them suspect as non-believers.

"All evil and power is within the individual and this nonsense about drawing a circle to keep evil out is just that — nonsense," said Stowe.

Their church is located in a white clapboard house in the downtown area with one room set aside as the ritual chamber. It has a black and red motif completely shut away from all light. A skeleton bedecked "seat of power" occupies one wall overlooking the ritual altar.

"The 'sword of power' rests on a black mantle awaiting the next ritual.

## Satan Symbol

Satan does not really exist so far as their followers are concerned, Stowe said, explaining that the name is merely a symbol to mark their opposition to Christian principles.

Stowe, a former electrical methods engineer, summed up their philosophy as:

"Do what you will as long as no undeserving person is harmed by your action."

"We are in no way affiliated with despicable criminals who pretend to be members to carry out their foul deeds," he said, adding darkly that authentic members are strict "establishmentarians dedicated to law and order."