

Debbie Mellinkoff

This is an interview with Al Castagnola, the mayor of Santa Cruz.

What are your expectations for Santa Cruz?

As a native Santa Cruzian I don't want Santa Cruz become a large sprawled urban city. I favor, although I do not think it can stay as I knew it as a child, but I do think Santa Cruz can retain what we all like about Santa Cruz, all its natural beauty. It's small, but yet it has enough to offer shoppers and visitors what they want, and I think we can retain that by planned controlled growth. I don't think we can stop growth, contrary to what alot of people say. There are some inherent factors that we're going to have to live with, and one is the University of California. Just its normal rate of growth will cause Santa Cruz to grow either in a good or bad way. Even if we stopped everyone else from coming, that normal growth of the University would cause a population growth in Santa Cruz. When I ran for office, I ran on the platform for planned controlled growth, and if we plan it today, we're not going to have some of the mess you see over the hill and in some other areas where they didn't plan and it went helter skelter. So, I think we can do it; we can retain what we like about Santa Cruz and still maintain a nice rate of growth. We have grown about two to two and a half percent a year, and that is a nice normal growth. We've done this over a period of years and I think we're absorbing it well.

I don't think I would have given all those concessions if I had been on the council then. They wanted it then

What role does the University play in Santa Cruz? Still, every-

I think you're going to get pros and cons on that matter. I think the overall benefits of the University far outnumber what a lot of people say are detriments about the University. There are certain things I'm not particularly happy with, but you have to look at the overall picture. There is no question that the University forces growth. You can look in any city where a university is located and you'll find growth. When Santa Cruz first accepted the University, I really wonder if they totally knew what they were accepting. I think the climate of the universities ten or twelve years ago was a lot different than the climate now. However that is changing now, and I don't think you see as much upheaval and turmoil on the campuses as you saw seven or eight years ago. The reactions of the University when emotionally charged issues have come up such as the Vietnam war and things like that did not just happen in Santa Cruz, but what was rather typical throughout the country. So I don't think you can use that as a basis for saying we don't want the university here. The university does have long range benefits which the community has already benefited from. Look culturally what it has done. I think we have to work with the University. I realize there are natural barriers between the climate of the University and that of the city. We have started a series of quarterly meetings which the city asked for, and we have accomplished a few things. However, I do think that our contract with the University is very binding and providing all these services; it's sort of a one way ticket. I don't think I would have given all those concessions if I had been on the council then. They wanted it then

although there were some people that didn't want it. still, every-
one was fighting to get that UC campus located in Santa Cruz.

They wanted it because they saw good benefits from it. Probably
if it had been five or six years later, it might have been "Take
it." I have been accused of attacking the university, but I'm not
really attacking it. I'M only trying to get something which I feel
is good for Santa Cruz. We have to work together. If we work as
we have, then we've accomplished some major little things like the
fire station which will be a major accomplishment if it becomes a
reality. We've worked on the parking problem. I realize we still
have problems to work out, but if we can work at them together,
and if it's not a one way ticket, we can accomplish more. I do
feel that we must bend the regents a little bit. They must realize
that there are people living in the community and that they want to
shape their own way of life. The University is located in Santa
Cruz; Santa Cruz is not located in the University. I think too
many times towns lose their identity because of the growth of a
university. The students and the chancellor and myself all feel
that we must try to keep the enrollment down to between ten
to fourteen thousand students. I would hate to see the day when
the long range plan of 27,500 students becomes a reality. It's
frightening to think about because then we would lose what we all
like about Santa Cruz.

What part do tourists play in Santa Cruz?

Long before the University was located here, the two largest
industries in Santa Cruz were agriculture and tourism. Without
the good economy which tourism helps to provide for the Dream Inn,
we wouldn't be able to buy open space

provide jobs, and do some of the things people are advocating. Tourism is a clean business. It doesn't create problems in the schools; they come and they go. If you can get a good caliber of tourists that come here and spend, with their families, two, three, or four days a week here, then that's the ideal. I can't foresee the day when tourism isn't the number one or two industry, because of its natural setting: the beaches the redwoods, etc. People are going to come here to enjoy those things. If we can capitalize on that as we have, and offer them places that they are used to going in other areas, then I think that is a clean industry. It's one of the cleanest industries in the country, and it's a lot better than locating businesses or industries which might pollute. Realistically speaking, Santa Cruz is never going to become a major industrial town because it is off the beaten track and off the major highways. The city and the people made up their minds a long time ago that we don't want any smoke stacks here. Clean type industries like Wrigley's, Lockhead, Sylvania, and Lipton are good industries. They employ local people. That's the type of industry we should strive for; those which don't pollute and which employ local people. and it's not what I have envisioned for out there. I don't want no Convention business is good business also for Santa Cruz. The city used to have a great convention business, but it lost out because it did not keep pace. Now, we do have some facilities which are able to handle conventions. It's a good clean business. They come, they spend well, they get out, and you probably never see them again. They come back ^{to visit because} they like the area. Half the time, I don't think people know that there are two or three hundred delegates in town staying at the Holiday Inn or the Dream Inn. of Developing a program in connection with the convention center.

they come; they go; they're unnoticed and they're dropping money, which turns over five or six times. Somewhere that money touches

I am sure Proposition 20 will have an impact not only private but also city projects. I think if we try to work to accomplish the goals they set forth in it, it can be good. I just hope everybody when it turns over that many times in a community.

Are you in favor of the plan to build a convention center on Lighthouse point?

it doesn't create moratoriums, unnecessary delays, and court cases. If it does, I'm afraid of what it might do to the economy. If it's

Publicly and on the record I am in favor of building a convention center. I strongly believe we need a convention center. As for the controversy over the location of the center, I am in favor of proposed location, Lighthouse point. A lot of work has gone into the planning and too many commitments have been made for the site to be changed. I think it is an ideal location for a convention type facility; a hotel and a shopping village. Other than leaving the land as open space, I think this is the best possible use. The city has never owned the property, and since it has always been in the hands of private owners, it is inevitable that some type of development will go there. I myself think it would be one of the most unique spots on the coast. I hope that the developers and city planners will work close together. I won't support it if the plans come in and it's not what I have envisioned for out there. I don't want no concrete monsters. I want it to blend in with the existing area out there. It's possible there will be another location chosen. If something happens to Lighthouse Point, by that I mean if some unknown courts, or Proposition 20, or if the developers don't come through, then I think we should look at another location.

Another reason why I am in favor of a convention center is that it provides jobs for lower income people; that's where we are sorely lacking jobs now. We got a federal grant for the purpose of developing an on the job training program in connection with the convention center.

How does proposition 20 affect Santa Cruz?

I am sure Proposition 20 will have an impact not only private but also city projects. I think if we try to work to accomplish the goals they set forth in it, it can be good, I just hope it doesn't create moratoriums, unnecessary delays, and court cases. If it does, I'm afraid of what it might do to the economy. If it's going to throw the trades people out of work because of moratoriums and delays, then I think it could hurt. I would have preferred to see a measure come out of the legislature with a few of the cloudy areas in Proposition 20 clarified. It would have been a better bill that way, but I can understand why the people passed it because of the ineffectiveness of the Legislature. Proposition 20 affects about a thousand yards of Santa Cruz, plus we have the river which flows through the city and that sort of puts a permit zone which bubbles up into the central core of the city. I hope that the main concern of Proposition 20 will be to protect the coastline. No one is against protecting the coastline; it's just that there was some disagreement as to how it 's to be accomplished. Now we've got it, so lets live with it and make the best of it. We've got to work together on this because everyone will suffer if it's just going to be roadblocks.

Do you see anything wrong with the direction in which Santa Cruz is going?

I can't see anything really wrong with Santa Cruz. It's more that I and old and new Santa Cruzians are concerned with the direction Santa Cruz is going . We have a unique opportunity today to do something which we won't be saying ten or twenty years from now that we did ^{lots of} things wrong in 1972. I don't think there is any

one segment or one individual is doing anything wrong. I strongly believe that Santa Cruz's destiny has to be determined by everyone. I don't like to see any one group dominate anything. One of my basic concerns is to preserve some of the natural aspects of Santa Cruz. I have been pushing hard to work with the county and the other cities in order to purchase open space. I'd like to see some sort of bond issue which would allow us to purchase key areas which we like, I think the mood of the people is ready for this. We're also considering a type of bedroom tax which developers would have to pay. This would allow for more neighborhood parks. The main thing is that we must work together if we're going to accomplish these goals.

stop growth, contrary to what a lot of people say. There are some inherent factors that we're going to have to live with, and one is the University of California. Just its normal rate of growth will cause Santa Cruz to grow either in a good or bad way. Even if we stopped everyone else from coming, that normal growth of the University would cause a population growth in Santa Cruz. When I ran for office, I ran on the platform for planned controlled growth, and if we plan it today, we're not going to have some of the mess you see over the hill and in some other areas where they didn't plan and it went halter skelter. So, I think we can do it; we can retain what we like about Santa Cruz and still maintain a nice rate of growth. We have grown about two to two and a half percent a year, and that is a nice normal growth. We've done this over a period of years and I think we're absorbing it well.