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# Letters

## Cryptic Scrawl

I feel a bit like John Lennon trying to explain his "Beatles are bigger than Jesus" comment, and a bit like Larry Speakes after a Reagan press conference explaining what the president *meant* to say. Nonetheless, in light of the feedback I've already received, I think I should explain the Reagan/666/Anti-Christ statement attributed to me in Nick Welsh's article in your March 11 issue.

In De La Guerra Plaza, near the entrance to the *News-Press* (remember them?) building, someone years ago scrawled into some wet cement the following: "Ronald Wilson Reagan=666." When your reporter asked for my views on the state of the world, the future of man and Reagan in particular, that scrawl popped into my head. "If one believes in that sort of thing," I said, "Reagan fits the criteria..." I then proceeded to "argue" the point academically, in the same way that I might "argue" that Paul McCartney is dead because a backward passage in some Beatle song says so.

As the article clearly states, I do not believe that Ronald Reagan is the devil just because his three names all have six letters. If my overall view of the world and man's future is less than optimistic, it is because of world overpopulation, our incredible technical achievements in the area of destruction, and the nature of man himself. I don't anticipate dying of old age...but not because Ronald Reagan is any kind of "Anti-Christ."

(P.S. My wife's name is Kathie, and my sister's name is Katie. In fact, they're both named Kathleen Ann(e) DeWitt! Aside from those minor words, the article I think I'll go re-read it now over an extraordinarily plain hamburger and a Coke.)

Gerry DeWitt

## Cliff Dwellers

Even though council has taken the liberty to redesign the Cypress Point project in council chambers, it should still be denied.

The plan, as modified by council, results in an unacceptable level of traffic through the adjacent Mesa neighborhood. Even the reduced size project will generate 50 percent more traffic than now exists. Fifty percent!

Suggestions that the skilled care facility be increased to 59 beds are also unacceptable. This facility, which was never addressed in the EIR, will generate a disproportionate amount of commercial traffic.

Discussions at the last council meeting on Cypress Point were to the effect that the developers could come back at a later date for additional units should the traffic levels not be as high as estimated. Will council require the developers to remove units if the traffic is heavier than anticipated?

It was encouraging that council voted to protect the Live Oak grove. That decision is of major significance (please keep it in mind when debating the future of the riparian habitat at the base of Gibraltar

Dam). As important as the oak grove, however, is the *entire* ecosystem represented on the Wilcox Property. Please save the site and the neighborhood. Don't force the issue into court. Deny the project.

Robert Halton

## Religious Experience

I appreciate Dean Stewart's unusually informative, sensitive and perceptive portrayal of former-Governor Bob Kerrey ("The Education of Robert Kerrey," March 11), who is in Santa Barbara on a teaching assignment at UCSB. But I must correct one misleading and erroneous statement.

Mr. Stewart observes that the class on the Vietnam War that Kerrey and I teach together "has little to do with religion; it is merely taught in the Religious Studies Department."

The truth is that the class has a great deal to do with religion, not in denominational or institutional senses, but in a national collective sense. Our intention is to explore the character, the religious or spiritual quality of the nation, both as defined by our founders and as assessed during and following the Vietnam War. In our reading assignments, and in a number of class lectures, we focus on the nature of function of civil religion in America, and we trace its influence on our decisions about when and under what circumstances we choose to go to war. In coming to terms with the experiences of the veterans of the war, as well as with those who stayed out of the conflict for reasons of conscience, we speak of the kind of self-knowledge or self-consciousness that also qualifies as being religious.

Rather than having "little to do with religion," the class is mostly about religion. In my judgment, this is what distinguishes the approach we are taking from other legitimate academic approaches that might be utilized were the course taught in history, political science, sociology, or military science departments. Much of the power of the class is that it helps make fundamentally religious subjects both personally and academically accessible.

Walter H. Capps

## Taste of Honey

[In reference to the Angry Poodle's opinion of Campaign '87's criticism of City Council, March 4]: When we said that the children will not forget their parents' pain and will one day take their place in that room [council chambers], we

meant that literally; because by the time they're adults, we expect we will have the district elections we're struggling to acquire now, and some of those children will be elected to the council. If representatives of minorities, tenants, and poor, working people were on City Council now, I don't think they would have allowed landlords to walk over tenants with children the way the current council has the last two-and-a-half years.

It also seems true that if "honey catches more flies," as Trixie suggested, landlords would not have succeeded in getting the council to do an EIR examining whether not discriminating against children would harm the environment. Actually, landlords didn't use honey, unless it was in the disguise of threats or lawsuits. Likewise, last week when Jeanne [Grafy], Harriet [Miller] and Lyle [Reynolds] were wringing their hands over problems they saw, a child protection amendment was then voted unanimously by others to adopt it. I think the trial of a lawsuit coming from the side was infinitely more persuasive than a bus load of honey would have been.

"Honey catches more flies" is a misleading statement. It was so, then hard to improve working conditions, getting one's place up, and getting a fewer rent increases. We know the only thing that rents is rent control. It's from what we've all known. Watsonville cannery workers not winning their strike was "honey." I think it's no news that "honey" is good for minor complaints, but the effects of child discrimination range from child abuse, to suicide, to giving your children away. So, it's fine to call harsh criticism of the council "strident," but I think it's good to also mention that reality is strident, too, because "strident" means "harsh."

Therese Norris

## The Flow of History

In 1965 I sat in William Burroughs's apartment in downtown Manhattan, and in his dry, mid-western accent, a cross between W.C. Fields and a defrocked priest, he was saying: "The French pulled out because they got smart, then the dumb bastards went in. They're going to be the same. We're over again. We're over again. We're over again. The jungle better, and noblesse oblige, and then they just march our regiments off a cliff." And, of course, he was right.

Watching *Platoon*, in cushy Santa Barbara, in the beautiful

## IMPRESSIONS

by Claire Rabe

No, she didn't want to do jury duty again! Tomorrow she would call her dentist, ask him to write an excuse. She needed a root canal anyway. Or she could show up at the courthouse hoping to be disqualified. Certainly her answers to the lawyers would be geared to lose.