# THE ISANTA BARBARA VOL.11, NO. 571 THE OPEN TRANSPORT OF THE COUNTY SERVED TO THE COUNTY SER

**Endorsements** 

plus

**Mayoral Candidates** 

by Keith Hamm

**Leaf Blower Ban** 

by Nick Welsh

**Pumpkin Eaters** 

by Laurence Hauben

WALTER CAPPS 1934-1997

### An Era Ends BY JERRY CORNFIELD

alter Holden
Capps, who inspired a generation of college
students,
earned the respect intellectuals,

and awakened the hearts of federal lawmakers with his plea to cherish what they have in common rather than be consumed in conflict by their differences, died in Washington, D.C. Tuesday of an apparent heart attack. He was 63.

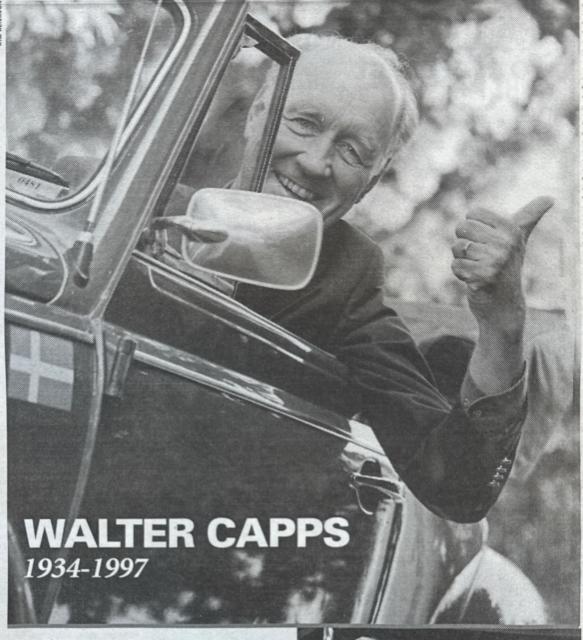
News of his death stunned those in the nation's capital, where the first-term congressmember was expected to cast a vote that night on defense spending; at UCSB, where he had been a professor for 32 years; and throughout the Santa Barbara community, where he, his wife Lois, and their children Lisa, Todd, and Laura, have deep and extensive roots. "The sadness keeps coming," county Supervisor Naomi Schwartz said Wednesday. That day flags at UCSB were lowered to half mast as the initial shock ebbed into outpourings of grief and eulogies from friends, colleagues, and President Bill Clinton.

In Washington on Wednesday, Lois and Laura Capps sat in the gallery of the House of Representatives as congressmembers paid tribute to Walter Capps with whom they had served just 10 months. "It has been an incredible outpouring," said Jeremy Rabinovitz, Capps's chief of staff. "Last night the president of the United States grieved for Walter and the ladies in the cafeteria grieved for Walter because Walter treated them all the same. He didn't feel he was better than anyone else."

Capps had spent the long weekend in Santa Barbara, attending numerous events including presenting a Bronze Star to a Vietnam veteran and surfing the Internet with Hollister Elementary School fourth-graders. He and his wife flew east Tuesday, arriving at Dulles International Airport shortly after 4 p.m. He collapsed from an apparent heart attack while awaiting a taxi cab ride to the House chambers where he was to vote on a Department of Defense spending bill. Paramedics spent an hour trying to revive him before taking him by ambulance to Columbia Reston Hospital in Virginia. Capps was pronounced dead at 5:47 p.m. A military plane was to return the body of Capps to Point Mugu late Wednesday or early today. Lois and Laura Capps were also expected on that flight. Funeral services are tentatively scheduled for 11 a.m. Monday, November 3, at the Old Mission.

Capps was elected 10 months ago, following an expensive and grueling campaign against the incumbent Republican Andrea

ERA CONTINUED



### Honest Everyman BY NICK WELSH

alter Capps had held office in Congress just 10 months before he was killed by a massive heart attack. The first Democrat to represent the Central Coast in Congress since World War II, Capps seemed to personify the honest Everyman hero of Mr. Smith Goes to Washington. Perhaps the most well known and popular personality to emerge out of UCSB, where he taught for 33 years, Capps campaigned at length about saving "democracy from politics" and restoring the "bonds of trust" between government and the governed.

Blessed with indefatigable optimism and an irresistible sense of humor, Capps denounced the bitter partisanship that marks most current political discourse, and advocated in its place a new civility. There is a contrary spirit out there that threatens to do us all in. It is the spirit of suspicion, fear, cynicism, and suspicion," he said in a 1994 speech. "Those who work on behalf of bringing the people together, rather than espousing that which drives them apart are always on the right side," he added. Ironically, the 1996 Congressional campaign that gave Capps victory over Republican Andrea Seastrand ranks as the most rancorous and partisan in Santa Barbara's history.

Capps was born in Omaha, Nebraska in 1934, the oldest of four



On Saturday Capps awarded the Bronze Star to Army Special Forces Vietnam vet Rick Carter of Santa Barbara (center).

boys.Also sharing the home were two uncles, one of whom—his Uncle Carl—came back from World War II without the use of his legs. And it was with Uncle Carl that young Walter shared a room. Capps vividly described his uncle's nighttime groaning, ex-

plaining that this experience gave him sensitivity to what veterans have gone through.

While Capps was the first of his family to attend college, Portland State University, he was initially a mediocre and disinterested student.

EVERYMAN CONTINUED





### Era CONTINUED

Seastrand, who had been part of the Newt Gingrich-led Republican revolution of 1994. Capps believed the abrasive style and extreme policies of Gingrich and the GOP troops he led in the 104th Congress angered and alienated a majority of citizens. He felt it severed what he termed the bond of trust between the elected and those they serve. He pledged to mend the tear.

Two near tragedies, however, threatened his 1996 bid. He collapsed in March in San Luis Obispo, the result of an irregular heart beat. He underwent a battery of tests over several days before rejoining the campaign trail. Then, May 23, he and Lois were injured in a head-on collision on Highway 154. Near death for the first 24



Walter and Lois Capps campaigned shoulder to shoulder.

hours, he slowly recovered in a two-month hospital stay. In the wake of both incidents, he and campaign staff discussed, and rejected, withdrawing from the race.

The 1996 campaign was also one of unprecedented spending. Capps and Seastrand spent nearly \$2 million combined. The real force came from outsiders, a bevy of heavy-spending special interest groups—business associations, environmentalists, abortion and antiabortion rights supporters, labor unions, gun controllers to name a few—that operated free of influence from the candidates. Capps rode a wave of this political mus-

cle—that he tarely acknowledged—to victory. Then, one of his first acts in Congress, was to back tough reform of campaign finance laws.

Congress offered Capps a new lectern for his message that restoring the bond of trust with citizens requires lawmakers be more civil to one another, constructing solutions from their similarities rather than scratch at each other's scars from old battles.

Cast as a liberal Democrat in the campaign, Capps proved a pragmatic moderate in office. He backed a balanced budget agreement despite opposition from senior Democrats, supported "most favored nation" trading status with China, and pushed President Clinton to ban imports of assault weapons. Legislatively, his first bill increased funds for research into cures for Lou Gehrig's Disease, a move prompted by his closeness with Tom Rogers, the former Santa Barbara county supervisor afflicted with the terminal illness. In recent weeks, he proved his ability to punch his way out of legislative clinches, fending off a bid to buy former President Ronald Reagan's ranch with federal funds without public hearings.

Capps detested the partisan ma neuvering in Congress, as when he voted for a constitutional ban on flag burning. When interviewed he said the Republicans had laid a political trap for Democrats like himself. Opposing it would surely return to haunt him on the campaign trail, he said. He reveled in the heady conversations that sprouted in the halls and offices on Capitol Hill. In one interview, he moved swiftly past talk of budget battles to recount at length and in detail his meeting with Vaclav Havel, the Czech president and author whom Capps revered.

After some stumbles early on political professionals from Washington to Santa Barbara noticed Capps had reached his stride. "This can be a real rough and tumble business," Gingrich said Wednesday. "He was fascinated by the process. He was just beginning to grow and gain an understanding of all this."



DELICIOUS, FESTIVE & HEALTHY



Democratic heavy-hitters came out for Walter Capps. President Clinton (top) came to Santa Barbara City College days before the 1996 election. Senator Bob Kerrey (above), a Vietnam veteran, joined Capps and his wife, Lois, at a UCSB rally.

### Everyman CONTINUED

Ultimately, the study of theology ignited his passion, as did an undergraduate named Lois Grimsrud, whom he married 36 years ago.

They moved to New Haven, Connecticut, where Capps attended the prestigious Yale Divinity School, from which he graduated in 1961. Capps wanted to teach, not preach, and in 1964 the Capps family moved to Santa Barbara, where Capps had gotten a job heading UCSB's then fledgling Religious Studies Department. Under his tutelage, that department thrived and garnered national recognition.

UCSB, like other campuses across the country, was about to explode in the '60s, due to the pressures and divisions caused by the Vietnam War and the Civil Rights movement. Capps had been a moderate Republican, voting for Richard Nixon, not John Kennedy, in 1960. But Capps, moved by the charisma of Camelot and stirred by the moral eloquence of Martin Luther King Jr., switched parties. As the anti-war movement picked up steam, Capps opposed the war and volunteered to counsel draft resisters. By the early '70s, he had become intrigued with a new strain of German theology that concerned itself with how best to inject moral values into public policy.

By the late '70s, Capps had gotten involved with the nationally prestigious Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions, then located on campus. In a former interview, Capps recalled attending one especially scholarly gathering there to discuss the effect of the Vietnam War on American Society. Two Vietnam vets were present, but said nothing, "They said they didn't have the right words. I asked them to participate anyway. So one guy started banging the table with his prosthetic arm, hollering, 'Let's start talking about the war!"

In 1979, Capps started teaching his now famous class on the Vietnam War, one of the first to address the national wounds festering from that historically unpopular war. By 1983, vets started showing up and speaking about their experiences and their psychic wounds. It was the beginning of something powerful and cathartic. Capps's former campaign manager, Kevin Looper, said, "That class wasn't Walter teaching. It was really a series of guest lecturers. But the genius was that he selected people who told very personal stories about their experiences—the conscientious objector and the Navy Seal-and he let the conflict unfold. In the process, they would both come to realize they both loved their country.'

Capps's class attracted the interest of TV reporters and producers, who also began to show up. When Capps took students on field trips to Washington, D.C. to visit the Vietnam Memorial, the media often tagged along. In 1988, the TV news magazine 60 Minutes featured the class. Capps gradually became a frequent visitor to the halls of Congress where he testified on issues important to Vietnam vets. Capps was able to get both grunts and draft dodgers to tell their stories; but he also was able to bring high-profile vets like Nebraska Senator Bob Kerrey, badly injured during the war, to talk before the young students. Kerrey was so impressed with Capps's class that he guest taught it one semester. And Kerrey helped spark in Capps an interest in politics. In fact, Capps worked on Kerrey's 1988 Senate race, as well as his 1992 presidential bid.

In the hardball world of faculty politics, Capps assiduously shied away from conflict points, managing to hover safely above the ongoing fray. Yet his career flourished. He published 14 books, won appointments to numerous sate and national committees, and was elected vice-president of the Academic Senate.

He and Lois had not lived the stereotypical insulated academic life. From their warm comfortable home, a renovated one in the Garden Street district, the Capps family participated fully in Santa Barbara's civic life. Lois, who worked as a public school nurse, is almost as well known and respected as her husband. And their three children have also distinguished themselves. Laura works for President Clinton; Lisa just earned a Ph.D. in psychology and obtained a teaching position at UC Berkeley; and Todd is a talented musician.

In the '90s, Capps started a course called "Voice of the Stranger," in an effort to humanize the homeless, the poor, and the different, which was also popular with the students. But Capps, then in his late 50s, was growing restless. In 1994, when visiting Congress with a delegation of scholars, Capps came upon then Congressman Michael Huffington sitting on committee. "He didn't say anything. He didn't do anything," Capps said. "Disdain was the look on his face."

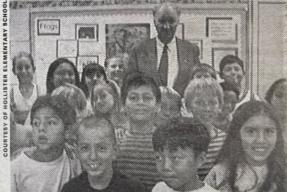
When Huffington announced he was running for the Senate, Capps expected Democratic Party heavy hitters like Gary Hart, Jack O'Connell, or Tom Rogers to run for the vacant office. When they did not, Capps very belatedly did.

The 1994 Congressional pitted him against Andrea Seastrand, an arch conservative State Senator at a time when arch-conservatives were winning. The Capps campaign was vintage Mr. Smith Goes to Washington. He spoke so often of "restoring the bonds of trust" that even now, the phrase is known to his staff as "B.O.T." He stumbled, he bumbled. He started late. He didn't do any of the things campaign experts said he had to, like, for example, raising money. At one point, chafing at the cookie-cutter approach of the national party, Capps wrote the DCCC a letter stating, "You should know that most of the materials you send out here have absolutely no relevance to anything anyone out here is talking about." California Congressmember Vic Fazio, in charge of the DCCC at the time, read that letter during a congressional tribute to Capps this Wednesday.

But in spite of his best efforts to alienate the party hierarchy, Capps got big help from high places. For example, Hillary Clinton came to Santa Barbara for a fund-raising event at the Miramar for Capps. He also enjoyed tremendous grass-roots support. Sometimes it seemed every car on State Street sported a Capps bumper sticker.

Capps lost that race by the as toundingly slim margin of 1,600 votes. Two years later he was back, running again against Seastrand. It was a very different campaign. Struck by a drunk driver on San Marcos Pass in the summer of 1996, Capps was severely injured. While he recovered, his campaign went on without him. Santa Barbara's congressional seat was one of the five most hotly contested races in the nation as the Democratic Party sought to take Congress back from the Republicans and Newt Gingrich. Rather than dicker with Capps, a host of progressive special interest groups with strong ties to the Democratic Party flood ed the district with operatives and money, all blasting away at Seastrand with both barrels. They did not answer to Capps, and they ran their own campaign. This allowed Capps to speak no evil of I opponent. Instead he preached the gospel of hope, optimism, an connection. At campaign fun raisers, he briefly outlined his for Es-the environment, econom education, and equality-said few words about the race, and the sat down at the piano, where he lead the assembled in a folksy sin a-long. Throughout it all, Cap exasperated his political cons tants. He wasn't what they want him to be; he didn't have well-fo mulated positions on all the issu But that's not what Capps w about, "We had 1,300 volunted out working election day," recall Capps's former campaign office Cathy Duval. "And they were just out there because of wh Walter believed. The guy conne ed in a way I rarely see

Before taking office, Capps sa's he hoped one day to return teaching. He imagined hims speaking to students, saying, "I'ried to convince you that y can't simply be idealists is a so of hypothetical way. You have find the ways to put your ide into action. I've tested that an found you can do it. And no that I've found that's the case, like to see you folks go out a try it, too."



Whenever possible, Capps spoke with students. On Monday before his death he visited with Hollister Elementary School fourth-grader

### What's Next

Under state law, Governor Pete Wilson must, by November 12, declare the seat vacant and order an election. This will prompt a special primary election January 13, 1998. Voters will receive ballots with the names of all candidates, and can vote for anyone, regardless of their own party registration. If a candidate receives a majority of at least 50 percent plus one vote, they will assume office through December 1998, the remainder of Capps's term. If there is no majority winner, than a special general election will be held. March 10. On that ballot will be names of each party's top vote getter from the primary. There will also still be regular elections—at June primary and November general—to elect a congressional representative for a two-year term starting in 1999.

Who will succeed Capps? Privately, Democrats say they hope it's Lois Capps. She was unavailable Wednesday, but a Washington source close to the family said, "No one should rule out the possibile ity of Lois Capps running and winning this seat." State Senator Jack O'Connell is another name mentioned by local Democrats. He said this is a time for grieving and not politics and said he will not ponder that question until next week. Republicans Mike Stoker and Rene Bravo, who previously announced they would challenge Walster Capps, are expected to compete in the special election. Candidates must file nomination papers by December 1.

## Quote of the Week:

'I've been to many funerals where my words exceeded the deeds of the deceased. It will not be possible to do that with Walter.'

-United States Senator Bob Kerrey eulogizing Congressmember Walter Capps, who died suddenly Tuesday, October 28, of an apparent heart attack

### county

O OPERATOR FOR ARMORY SHELTER: 5w that Governor Pete Wilson has signed law reauthorizing the use of armories as nter shelters for the homeless, the next big restion is who will run Santa Barbara's arory shelter? The Salvation Army has dened to do so, after running it successfully the past three years. According to Capin Ian Robinson, the Santa Barbara branch is just been assigned to handle payroll and perwork for Ventura and Oxnard's aristmas bell-ringers, and there aren't reurces for that and the Armory. The county scrambling to find a replacement in time r the shelter's opening date, December 1. st year, the armory provided shelter for up 250 people.

#### anta Barbara

DME FOR THE HOMELESS CENTER? Mayor arriet Miller has appointed three city counmembers—Helene Beaver, Marty Blum, d Elinor Langer—to a committee to investite the possibility of opening a day center for meless men and women. The idea for such center, a place where homeless people can be their bags, wash up, make phone calls, tain child care, and prepare for job intertws, has been in the air for at least 10 years, at has been taken up recently by members of a Downtown Organization, which represts downtown business interests. San Luis bispo recently opened a center.

EW P.O. BUILDING PASSES, BARELY: After uch huffing and puffing, the U.S. Postal twice has agreed to change its design for a assive postal annex building slated for conuction at Nopalitos and Cacique streets. e initial designs so appalled City Hall that e City Council called on Senator Barbara axer and the late-Representative Walter ipps to back them up. The Postal Service is agreed to add landscaping and remove e razor-sharp concertina wire atop the ain link fence. The redesigned building will main massive and monolithic, but architecral tricks will be employed to make it apar less so. And the roof will now be red tile.

JBLIC RESTROOMS—RELIEF IN SIGHT? ay Hall inched one step closer to providing iblic restrooms Tuesday, authorizing the penditure of \$450,000 to design and build 2,000-square-foot building on vacant land ross from the railroad depot that would suse a visitor information center that inudes sinks, toilets, and mirrors. The city was the land, which will be leased to the aamber of Commerce, who will staff and anage the center. Bathrooms will be open the public during business hours.

GATER GOES BENEATH THE WHEEL: A 13ar-old Santa Barbara Junior High School ident, riding his skateboard luge-style to aool early Monday, sped through an interction and was run over by the school's prinpal, Gerrie Fausett. The boy lost his spleen id sustained liver damage, authorities said, adding that Fausett was not at fault; she will not be charged. The accident proved untimely and ironic, since Fausett and the school district recently opposed the placement of a temporary public skateboard park adjacent to the junior high on Quarantina Street.

### Carpinteria

NEIGHBORS, NOT WAVES, ATTACK SEA-WALL: Frightened by the so-called mother of all El Niños, members of the Sandyland Cove Homeowners Association have added more boulders to an existing seawall in front of their homes, upsetting some beachgoers, who claim the beefed-up barrier juts too far seaward, narrowing the beach and possibly affecting wave action and the longshore transport of sand. The homeowners were permitted by the Coastal Commission to increase the height of the blockade, but not widen its base. The Environmental Protec-

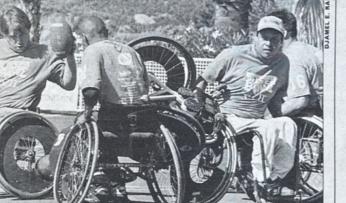
coastal mesa off Bailard Avenue. Owner Ralph Brown has his own development plans for the site, but said he would sell it for a fair price.

### **Education**

AND SUMMER SCHOOL FOR MANY: This year the Santa Barbara Elementary School District will offer summer school classes to 25 percent of its students, more than doubling its enrollment capabilities. The additional summer school programs will be funded by federal and state monies now used for such things as instructional aides. District representatives said they want to increase student enrollment in summer school programs because research has shown that children benefit from attending school continuously, with a three-week vacation between sessions. The district plans to offer both enrichment and remedial classes.

MILLION MILES FOR TEENAGE BICYCLISTS: Pedaling one million miles is a lot of work: Luckily, the 174 Santa Barbara Middle School students crossing this milestone Saturday rode only the last 120 of the million tallied over the school program's 19-year history. The students returned from a six-day tour through the Santa Ynez Valley last weekend. The private Santa Barbara Middle School's curriculum mandates that the entire student body accompany faculty on two week-long bike trips yearly as part of its "Rite of the Wheel" program.

THE REAL SUSPENSION STORY: A report released by the Santa Barbara School District last week tells how many students were suspended last year and why. Fighting was one of the most common reasons for suspensions, with 546 students in middle school, junior high, and high school suspended for this reason. Another common reason for suspension was tardiness or truancy: Santa Barbara High School, which has focused on this issue, had 776 suspensions; San Marcos, 138; and Dos Pueblos High School, 48. Students have also been suspended for defying authority.



Burning Wheels: Seven teams from throughout the Southwest gathered in Santa Barbara this weekend to bump, run, and crash into each other for top honors in the 17th annual Blister Bowl—a grueling form of wheelchair football—sponsored by the city Parks and Recreation Department at Leadbetter Beach parking lots. It's a full contact sport, and players frequently found themselves—and their chairs—tipped over. However, only one injury—a dislocated shoulder—was reported. According to the rules, every team must have at least one woman or one quadriplegic; they can have as many ambulatory players as they want—though everyone must play in wheelchairs. Mentor Corporation of Goleta fielded a team with several walking players, but they were eliminated early on. Ultimately, two LA. teams—Casa Colina and Colours, shown here—made it to the championships. The Casa Colina Krushers won by a score of 6 to 0, in sudden-death overtime.

### **Environment**

OIL \$\$\$ WILL PUMP UP COAST: For years Santa Barbara County has pushed the state to share some of the royalties it pocketed from offshore oil developments in federal waters. On Tuesday, the California Resources Agency finally awarded the county \$1,325,711 of those funds for 15 projects intended to protect the coastline and offset the negative effects of offshore oil development. The monies will underwrite studies of locations for new oil and gas projects and on the impacts of expansion of greenhouses in the Carpinteria Valley, help restore the Gaviota tarplant, and build new coastal bike trails. Also Tuesday, the state gave two grants totaling \$322,000 to Carpinteria, one of which will be used for interpretive signs at the Carpinteria Salt Marsh Reserve. A bill coauthored by Assemblymember Brooks Firestone and Senator Jack O'Connell made it mandatory that royalties be distributed to coastal cities and counties.

A SCIENTIFIC DILEMMA: Joseph Rotblat, a physicist who won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1995, spoke at UCSB on Monday about the need for scientists to take responsibility for the effects of their discoveries on humanity. Rotblat, who worked on the Manhattan Project but quit before the atomic bomb was completed, received the Nuclear Age Peace Foundation's Lifetime Achievement Award for his dedication to eliminating nuclear weapons. Even though Rotblat said strides have been made to eliminate nuclear weapons, he said there is an ongoing need for scientists to be aware of the effect their discoveries have on society. He said with experiments being done on such things as cloning and genetic engineering, there needs to be a type of pledge for scientists, similar to the Hippocratic Oath, to ensure that science helps, and does not harm, humanity.

tion Agency is expected to determine what additional permits are required.

HOW MUCH TO BUY THE BLUFFS? David Anderson of the Santa Barbara Land Trust and Carolyn Barr of Central Coast Consulting—both instrumental in the public acquisition of a 783-acre portion of the Sedgwick Ranch—have been recruited by the Citizens for the Carpinteria Bluffs to help them purchase and "preserve forever as open space" Bluffs I, an 83-acre section of undeveloped

MEETING THEIR MATCH: A new program at Santa Barbara High School, designed to set minority students on the road to college, paired students up with mentors from the community last week. Assistant-Principal Sheryl Oliver said only one third of the 60 or so students in the program have been paired with mentors. Oliver, who created the program, said the students involved in Project College Bound have been placed in challenging college-preparatory classes, and receive tutoring and counseling.