

*Crime + Criminals*

# The Death Penalty: How Do Santa Cruzans Feel?

By JAY SHORE  
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Ten days ago the California Supreme Court ruled 6 to 1 that the death penalty is unconstitutional.

Santa Cruz County's five judges, the district attorney, assemblyman Frank Murphy Jr., and state Sen. Donald Grunsky have all expressed displeasure with the decision.

Tri-county (Santa Cruz - San Benito - Merced) residents — 14,000 of them responding in May to a questionnaire sent them by Murphy — were 3 to 1 in favor of retaining the death penalty.

Does anyone agree with the Supreme Court ruling?

The Sentinel wanted to find out. Sixteen adults from age 22 to 71 were randomly chosen

Friday to express their views. All were interviewed as they were strolling on the Pacific Avenue Mall.

The result — half of the people agreed with the court's decision.

Here are the responses, given in the order they were received.

"I don't feel the state has a right to take a person's life

—an irreversible decision," said Rachel Feldman, 22 a UCSC senior.

"I don't believe in the death penalty," commented Larry Cowan, 71, West Cliff Drive.

"I agree with the court," said George Antone, 55, Ben Lomond. "The only guys who ever get executed are the poor bums. You never hear of any rich guys sitting in the chair."

"I don't think it (capital punishment) should be abolished," affirmed Mrs. Jenny Jones, 59 Beach Street.

Said Jack Crick, and Judy Westenhouse, both 21 and UCSC seniors: "I think the death penalty should be abolished."

John Norton, 52, Prospect Court, was "against the (court's) decision."

Municipal Court Judge Don-

ald May said: "What's going to happen if a convict kills a guard. The corrections people will have no leverage . . . I think it's (the death penalty) a deterrent for crimes where a gun is used when it's not necessary for the commission of the crime — such as burglary."

Said Margaret Langston, 54, Dufour Street: "I really think it should be abolished. When

we have retarded children, we don't destroy them. However, I do feel the life sentence is necessary."

But Mrs. Virgil Lynn, 58, Felton, believes, "As long as they get a life sentence they have hopes of being paroled or escaping. I think the death penalty is the only lever we hold over certain criminals."

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## Weather

MONTEREY BAY AREA — Fair Sunday with local late night and morning fog or low clouds. Increasing clouds Monday. Little temperature change. Low Sunday night near 40. High Sunday and Monday in upper 50s to mid 60s. Northwest wind 5 to 15 mph.

Temperatures for 24-hour period ending at 8 a.m. Saturday: High 63, Low 44; for period ending at 5 p.m. Saturday: High 72, Low 40.

# Santa Cruz Sentinel

## U.S., China Reach Areas Of Concord

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"It's so hard," commented Elaine, Stickler, 29 Locust Street. "I don't know exactly what to say about it."

"The death penalty should be used in certain cases," said Dennis King, 22, a city policeman.

Tony Krauss, 23, Corralitos, thinks, "It's inhumane to take

someone's life for a mistake he made. I don't feel however someone who's committed murder should be paroled in seven years."

"If a guy knows it'll cost him his life," said Lloyd Frazier, 36, Capitola, "he'll think twice before he kills someone."

The death penalty is "a necessary evil," commented Gerald Vieber, 40, Graham Avenue. "Society has a right to protect itself."

Howard Craig, 57, Aptos, hasn't made up his mind. "I could argue both ways."

A 40-year-old woman who wished to withhold her name

said, "I suppose I feel it should be abolished. I think they found that in other countries the death penalty is not a deterrent to crime."

At a Republican meeting Friday night, Sen. Grunsky said, "I have consistently over the years opposed the abolition of capital punishment. If the U.S.

Supreme Court doesn't find capital punishment in violation of the (U.S.) Constitution( there will be state action either by the legislature or through an initiative" to reverse the court's decision.

Sentinel columnist Walley Trabing witnessed the execution of Aaronx Mitchell in

1967. It was the last execution held in California.

In a column, Trabing wrote, "I do not favor the death penalty for vengeance' sake. I do favor it as a deterrent, for there is a strong element of fear which keeps us from breaking major laws and I believe it has had an effect on premeditated murder"

On Friday, however, Trabing said, "I'm willing to accept the new ruling to test the argument."

"The death penalty," according to District Attorney Peter Chang, "is the most effective way for society to express its revulsion for a given crime."