

HAIGHT ASHBURY

San Francisco Examiner

Style

CLASSIFIED
MARKETPLACE

Begins inside

A section of the San Francisco Sunday Examiner & Chronicle

★ ★ Sunday, January 25, 1987



Calvin Welch
has struggled
on behalf of
the average
Joe for nearly
two decades

Examiner/Craig Lee

CALVIN: Nothing comes between him and his City

Political activist Welch a power for the people

By Burr Snider
OF THE EXAMINER STAFF

'THIS CITY," sighs Calvin Welch, rasping a match to fire yet another in an unending chain of Kent cigarettes, "this city is a heartbreaker."

Welch, by most knowledgeable accounts San Francisco's most informed, most effective and most important community organizer, political activist and coalition-maker, squints through the mist of smoke that envelops him and waits for the words, the phrases, the impeccably composed extemporaneous paragraphs, to click into place in his fervid brain pan.

"The revealed truth about the City of San Francisco is that land — real estate — is at the heart of politics here, and everything revolves around it. It's 49 square miles; it's all already developed, so if you get displaced, a small business, say, by a big business that wants your land, chances are you aren't going to be able to afford paying a new rent, so you're gone, off to Concord."

Welch is getting impassioned now. He may be among the brightest, slickest, coolest players on The City's political scene, but he's also a devout left ideologue. The hard work and long hours he's devoted to these issues over the years come out of a deep conviction that the little people in this town are continually taking a hosing from an often indifferent city hall and the big-dog entrenched downtown interests.



'He is absolutely one of the brightest, most dedicated community people I know'
— Nancy Walker



'Calvin's got a hard edge. He runs over weak men as well as weak women'
— Sue Hestor



'Calvin has always gotten my attention. He has a genuine regard for this city'
— Dean Macris

"Really, that's why there is such a desperation and bitterness here that has worn the sheen off things for me," he goes on. "When you lose a land-use battle in this town, you're gone. One of the hardest things I do is to deal with the losers in land-use conflicts, people who've lost their homes, their businesses, people who, in their own minds at least, have lost their whole community. That desperation is something that public officials here, with few exceptions, don't seem to understand."

Welch stares out the window of the Haight Street cafe, where he is lunching austere on a now-cold pot of black tea. He's been talking for a long time, hours now. The lunchtime crowd is long gone and the place is empty except for the waiters, but never mind. The fire is lit in Calvin Welch's hot cerebral boiler and he's got his towering political intellect out for a nonstop didactic joyride.

"It's one of the truisms of politics," he says, "that the longer people stay in power the more they seem to

forget the practical consequences of their policies."
"No government can be long secure without formidable opposition."—Disraeli.

After nearly two decades of behind-the-scenes struggle to carve out a decent urban existence for the average-Joe neighborhood dweller and low-income elements of The City, Calvin Welch, 42, is still royally peeved at the way things are run. Sitting here recounting the saga of his long and tumultuous career in grass-roots community politics has been something of an emotional roller coaster for him, but for anyone within earshot it has also been a singularly brilliant, supremely illuminating seminar on the murky, gritty *Realpolitik* of San Francisco. As well as anybody in The City, Welch knows how this most unique municipal entity really works at its deepest levels.

Despite its "prissy-clean" self-image, Welch will tell you, this is a venal, hardball kind of town. He and the dedicated cadres of activists-idealists he considers his allies, have had to learn that lesson well.

"One of the first things I learned when I first became active during a rezoning fight in 1971 in the Haight, was that institutions and bureaucracies always take the long view. If you are really engaged in land-use politics in San Francisco you have to take the long view yourself, and be prepared for the protracted struggle. It's not always the case that you win by losing, but sometimes, if you have a good group of people who are dedicated, sometimes you do actually grow stronger in a tactical defeat."

A good example, he says, is Proposition M, the anti-high-rise, growth-control measure, which won on the November ballot. This initiative struggled through four mayoral administrations, three chief administrative officers and three redevelopment agency directors before the community activists behind it finally gained the voter strength to push it through.

The battle itself, says Welch, was almost as beneficial as the victory. "Now," he says, "there exists a body

— See WELCH, E-3

WELCH

— From E-1

of players in San Francisco working on the community side that is so experienced that the usual long-term bureaucratic advantage of collective memory has been negated. Sue Hestor and Calvin Welch could not produce a victory around Prop. M without literally hundreds of people who had memories, who had experience in a number of fights, and who contributed their efforts and their collective wisdom to the battle.

"If there is a unique quality to politics in San Francisco at this time, it is that this collective memory exists on the community side almost more than on the bureaucratic."

"The secret of all victory lies in the organization of the non-obvious." — Spengler

Calvin Welch's arch-enemy, John Jacobs, president of the San Francisco Chamber of Commerce, will tell you that part of the reason for Welch's success in his political endeavors is his "relentless" dedication. "He continues to pursue his agenda probably 16 hours a day," says Jacobs. "His work is his vocation, avocation and social life, all rolled into one."

It's true that Calvin Welch eats, sleeps and breathes community politics. His only other interest, aside from his family, would seem to be the study of military history, especially that of inferior forces prevailing over superior ones, such as Mao's Long March forces in China and the Vietnamese struggle against imperialism. "It's applicable to the kind of politics I do," says Welch. "A lot of us are engaged in a hopeless task, and I take solace that there are people who faced far more hopeless situations."

Through his base, the San Francisco Information Clearinghouse at 409 Clayton St. (run in tandem with his longtime partner, Rene Cazenave), Welch has been in the thick of scores of political actions. He has fought for rezoning to preserve the character of the neighborhoods; for affordable housing for the low-income and the elderly; for retention of neighborhood libraries and police stations; and in the ongoing battle for district elections of supervisors (he was among the founders of the Citizens for Representative Government, which led the district election fight from the early '70s.)

He has sent out pickets to protest the construction of luxury condos while thousands of San Franciscans

You CAN fight City Hall: Calvin Welch's record since 1971

Won

■ **1971** — After a two-year battle (waged with a coalition of Haight-Ashbury neighborhood groups), succeeded in the largest citizen-initiated rezoning effort in the City's history to that time: 48 blocks in the Haight were rezoned to preserve the existing housing stock in the neighborhood.

■ **1971 (November)** — Election victory on Prop K (to halt the Police Commission's plans to close Park and Southeast police stations). Also resulted in creation of a charter amendment to require Board of Supervisors to approve any future plans for closing neighborhood stations.

■ **1972-74** — Won a fight with UC Dental School on Parnassus, which planned to expand west to 4th Avenue and condemn about 30 houses under eminent domain. Final settlement not only cut the proposed expansion in half, it resulted in two satellite clinics to serve low-income neighborhoods, one at UC Extension on Laguna, and one at SF General. Settlement also resulted in an historic agreement that fixed "into perpetuity" the boundaries of the Parnassus campus.

■ **1973-74** — Succeeded in restricting expansion of St. Mary's Hospital north to Fulton Street. Saved a block of housing that the hospital planned to condemn. Also got Planning Code amended to require all major institutions to submit for file an institutional master plan declaring all future plans for expansion.

■ **1974** — Major voter registration drive for 1975 mayoral election. Registered 50,000 new voters.

■ **1975** — George Moscone, for whom Welch campaigned vigorously, defeated John Barbagelata in mayor's race.

■ **1975** — A community congress of ethnic and neighborhood groups met and called for a variety of reforms, including many which were eventually enacted: district election of supervisors, 10-year limit to term of Chief Administrative Officer, and a redrafting of the city charter.

■ **1976** — Won election for district elections of supervisors, by margin of 12,000 votes.

■ **1977** — Defeated Props A and B which called for recall of mayor, district attorney and sheriff, and for a repeal of district elections of supervisors.

■ **1977-78** — Managed to get a lease on Poly High School for a multi-purpose community center, first lease of its kind for

Lost

■ **1973** — Lost citywide election to achieve district elections for members of the Board of Supervisors.

■ **1977 (November)** — Entire slate of candidates for supervisors lost (mostly to incumbents) with the exception of

city," says Dean Macris, director of city planning. "I regard him as the chief spokesman for an articulate group of activist leaders. When we differ, Calvin has always gotten my attention. He has a genuine regard for this city, and his voice makes a difference."

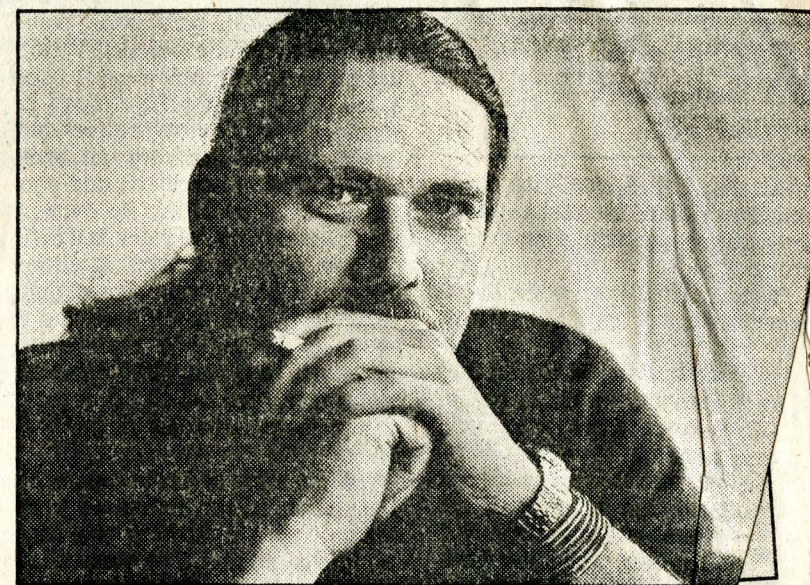
"Politics is the art of the possible." — Bismarck

So why is it a good bet that you don't recognize Calvin Welch's name? How can a man be so influential, so powerful, so centrally situated in a community for so long and yet be virtually unrecognized except within the ranks of a small cadre of community activists?

Because, as it happens, this is precisely how he would have it. "If Calvin ever ran for office, I'd have a heart attack," laughs Sue Hestor. "What he does best is play an invisible role. There has to be someone who understands how it all works, where the pressure points are, what the constituencies are, who the players are and how the people are organized. But this is not necessarily the person who gets quoted on the front page of the newspapers."

"Calvin is a very complex personality," says Nancy Walker, president of the Board of Supervisors. "He is absolutely one of the brightest, smartest, most dedicated community people I know, and he has been a driving force in keeping this city responsive to low- and moderate-income groups ... (but) sometimes he wants things to be a way they can't always realistically be — poor people not to be poor, a better redistribution of the wealth. He sort of fundamentally believes that what is good for General Motors, so to speak, is not necessarily good for America. Some perceive him as being quite doctrinaire, but frequently Calvin takes a strong position that he probably doesn't believe is achievable just to be able to have a strong negotiating position."

"There are those political animals who can't run for office successfully, but who get a charge out of leverage," says John Pachtner, a communications specialist and writer with Levi Strauss, who has known and worked with Welch for years. "Calvin talks to a whole lot of people on all sides of the spectrum, and he definitely knows where all the bodies are buried, but since he represents a definite viewpoint, a lot of people write him off as an ideologue — though all, I think, would concede that he's very, very bright, that he works incredibly hard, and that he has run some very successful grass-roots campaigns in this town. He is definitely not to be dismissed, even if won't wear a tie, or is not willing to trade his pony-



Examine Katy ddatz

'I know what it takes, but I'm a terrible candidate'

— Calvin Welch

from his hometown of Stockton in 1964 because it was a cheap place to live while he studied political science at San Francisco State. He enjoyed what he describes as a wonderful upbringing in the Valley, and a classic California high school experience — senior class president, football, debating team, all that. His dad was a "Steinbeckian Okie from West Texas" who came to the Imperial Valley to pick fruit as a teen-ager and never held a steady job until he was 35. His mother worked as a waitress for years before getting a job in a Bank of America branch, where she eventually became the manager.

"I'm one of those odd guys, certainly in the '60s, who never went to war with my parents," he says. "They were hard-working people for whom the family was the center of their lives. They weren't active in politics, but the trinity in my house was Roosevelt, Truman and Jesus — in that order. My father was a staunch union man who died bitter about the state of the union movement."

He got to the Haight just before the hippie tide was swelling, but he wasn't caught up in it. "I thought the whole hippie thing was pretty silly, and only in looking back do I realize how unique and precious it was, so sweet and naive," he says. He became involved with the 409 House, an Episcopal Church-funded drop-in center, the first of its kind in the Haight, where people came, says Welch, "when they were really screwed up."

an American, and my responsibility was to America. I deeply admired these people, the Karions, and I realized there was nothing I could do for them. They're a proud people who weren't going to last.

"But they illustrated for me the importance of people living over time in one place, as they demonstrated to me, a political scientist who was trying to figure out what the essence of politics was, the incredibly important relationship between land, place, culture and politics. So when I came back to San Francisco in 1970, I asked myself, what is the functional equivalent of a peasantry in the United States? And of course I could see that it was the urban dweller, which formed the greatest mass of people. And then I asked myself, what is the principal land question in an urban area? It's housing. And since I had already lived in communes and had that hippie-dippie orientation anyway — reinforced by my experience in East Africa — I came back and began to apply what I figured out to be the lessons I had learned."

"In politics a community of hatred is almost always a foundation for friendships." — de Tocqueville

What Welch quickly became was a thorn in the side of anybody who was using clout, connections or cash for ends not consonant with those of the disadvantaged. "Calvin is genuinely motivated by political principle," says John Pachtner, "but I would also have to say that he is motivated by wanting to give the

downtown corporations to help pay for low-income housing. His fine tactical hand has helped guide campaigns for such liberal candidates as George Moscone, Harvey Milk, Barbara Boxer and Nancy Walker, and he has lashed together community coalitions comprised of the most diverse and surprising elements imaginable to achieve the requisite clout to carry an issue. (Consider, for example, the time in the early '70s when Welch got the John Birch Society, the Police Officer's Association and the radical Good Earth commune to join forces to keep City Hall from closing the Park police station.)

"All governments are obscure and invisible." — Francis Bacon

What makes Welch so effective is his ability to mesh high philosophical aspirations with skillful nuts-and-bolts political maneuvering. He'll tell you he learned how by screwing up.

"I guess the first real introduction I had to citywide electoral politics was the 1973 campaign for district elections for supervisors," he recalls. "I was sure we were going to win simply because everybody I knew was going to vote for it, and when we lost 2 to 1, I realized there was a whole part of this town of which I had no knowledge at all.

"That was the first time I looked at a precinct map or got precinct results. I started on a long process of trying to figure out who was in this town and why were they here and how do they vote and how do you talk to them? The town is so diverse it's a humbling, exhausting, grueling place to do politics. It's what makes community organizing so frustrating. And it's even more frustrating not to be able to explain to your mother exactly what it is you do."

Welch's fellow activists have no trouble explaining what he does. "It's hard to think of a major issue involving the restructuring of power that's come along in this city that Calvin hasn't been involved in," says Sue Hestor, the attorney who spearheaded the Prop. M campaign. Hestor has worked with Welch closely over the years on various issues.

"In this city, since no one group has enough clout by itself, the neighborhoods and the various ethnic groups have to work together to have major impact on the issues. Nobody gets these people together better than Calvin."

Sue Bierman, of the Planning Commission, sees Welch as being the integral guy who "doggedly keeps things on track over a long period of time — like the fight to erect affordable housing at Poly

community purposes. (City eventually changed its mind and decided Poly unsafe for any purpose. In 1981, UC Med Center optioned site. Community effort spearheaded by Welch succeeded in persuading School Board to withdraw the option. In 1984 a Welch-led group arranged a lease agreement between City and the School Board for a community center and affordable housing.)

■ **1979** — Won Nancy Walker's campaign to unseat Lee Dolson on Board of Supervisors in District 9.

■ **1981** — Community-based non-profit housing corporations (many formed with help from Welch and Rene Cazenave at 409 House) became major producers of affordable housing in City.

■ **1981-85** — Drafted legislation for Downtown Plan ordinance requiring commercial developers to build affordable housing according to a formula, or to pay an "in lieu" to The City for such housing.

■ **1981-82** — As part of negotiating committee for San Franciscans For Reasonable Growth, won a settlement from five commercial developers which required them to pay \$5 million more to The City than previously agreed upon in housing initiation and transit impact fees.

■ **1982** — Barbara Boxer triumphed in primary and general elections for John Burton's seat in Congress.

■ **1984-85** — Won legislation setting annual limits on downtown growth.

■ **1986** — Won 10-year battle to achieve victory on Prop M, the measure to limit commercial downtown growth.

High School. He's been the one to keep that going for years. Calvin is a philosopher, and it's one of his great pluses that he thinks things through, both alone and in groups. In terms of affordable housing, he has provided some of the most innovative ideas in this city, terribly important ideas. He has a heart that just doesn't stop."

"Calvin's importance is basically in the area of long-range strategic planning for The City," says Rene Cazenave. "The question of who's

Harvey Milk, who won in District 5 (The Castro, Noe Valley and The Haight).

■ **1978** — Lost an attempt for a proposed amendment to impose a real estate tax on housing speculators. The proposal suffered a "staggering defeat" before the Board of Supervisors.

■ **1979** — Lost narrowly on Prop T, a height-limit growth control measure (a forerunner of Prop M).

■ **1979** — Took ("a complete and total bath") when he endorsed Quentin Kopp for mayor.

■ **1980** — Lost narrowly in August special election to repeal district elections, and after collecting 40,000 signatures in a 6-week petition blitz, again lost narrowly in the general election.

■ **1982-83** — Lost, by 1,200 votes, initiative drive for Prop M growth-control measure.

going to live and work here, and how the quality of life is going to be. Without a counterdirection being proposed that recognizes the low income, working class and Third World elements, it'll be a city dominated by the downtown forces. Calvin has been the one to provide such a vision."

Certainly the top level City Hall bureaucrats with whom Welch often bumps heads agree that he is a formidable force. "No doubt that Calvin plays a special role in this

can for a state, no matter what the inducements."

Welch smiles in agreement to all of this. "It's true, I just don't have the personality to be a public official," he concedes. "I guess on one level I can dish it out, but I can't take it, even though I try not to attack public officials personally. I didn't know George Moscone that well, but oddly enough we talked about this a great deal. He didn't like what politics did to his family, and I don't want to subject my kids to that either. I know what it takes, but I'd be a terrible candidate."

"There is a certain satisfaction in coming down to the lowest ground of politics, for we get rid of cant and hypocrisy." — Emerson

Welch is now heading up Haight Street toward the low-rent offices he has occupied for years at 409 Clayton, where the primary work of late has been the hunt for government and foundation funding to develop community-based, non-profit housing corporations to serve the working class and the elderly. (The biggest project cooking presently, says Welch, involves negotiations for affordable housing in the huge Mission Bay project.)

Welch knows the history of every store and business on Haight Street, how long they've been there, what occupied the space before, and whether or not they've served the community well. He points proudly at old neighborhood standbys like Uganda Liquors, Pacific Pharmacy and the Pall Mall Bar and Grill, while excoriating the arriviste corporate chains like The Gap and Roundtable Pizza.

"Look at the abomination over there," he fumes, pointing at a trashy, yuppola print and poster shop. "That used to be a food collective there. Good people. They got run out."

As the street life flows by, he takes it all in. "Haight Street is an urban lifestyle archaeological dig in which you can find all the urban social movements of the last 40 years manifested in one way or another," he says. "Mostly in the faces of the people. There are punks, hippies, remnants of the beats, anti-war health faddists, pro-war joggers, skinhead skateboarders ... name it.

"The way I've come to think of the Haight is this: If California is the lunatic fringe of the United States, and San Francisco is the lunatic fringe of California, then the Haight is the lunatic fringe of San Francisco — the heart of the heart of the heart. And I say this with all due bias of a San Franciscan who loves his neighborhood."

Welch first came to the Haight

work with a high-plains Ugandan tribe related to the Masai, and it turned out to be the major epiphany of his life. "I spent two years of my life among people who had probably spent 40,000 or more years on the same land," Welch recalls. "They taught me much, mostly about myself. I realized that I was

powerful a kick in the pants. He became known as a guy who could get disparate groups of people to work together, who could run a grass-roots campaign, who could get results. But with it also came charges of manipulation, of a certain intellectual imperiousness, an

— See WELCH, E-4

FAMILY CLIPPINGS



**20% off
Family haircuts**

Sale \$35 Reg. \$45
Sculptured Nails

Sale \$8 Reg. \$10. Look what's in store for the family. Save 20% off haircuts for mom, dad and kids. Bring the whole family along for some sensational clippings. Long hair extra.

Sculptured Nails enhance your total look. Don't miss the savings.

Sale prices effective January 25th through January 31st, 1987.

Sebastian® and Nexxus® hair care products available. No appointment necessary. Open evenings and Sundays.



THE STYLING SALON

JCPenney

ALAMEDA, South Shore, 521-4020; ANTIOCH, County East, 754-0701; SunValley, 687-7264; CORTE MADERA, Town Center, 924-4163; CUPE Park, 446-9626; EASTRIDGE, San Jose, 238-0318; HAYWARD MTN. VIEW, San Antonio Center, 941-7553; OAKLAND, Eastmont Stoneridge, 463-9554; RICHMOND, Hilltop, 222-4425; SAN BRUNO, 463-9554; SAN MATEO, Fashion Island, 570-5650; WESTGATE

©1987, J.C. Penney Company, Inc.

WELCH

— From E-3

irriating impatience with those who didn't share his vast capacity synthesizing large amounts of information.

Calvin's got a hard edge; he's a powerful person," says Sue Hestor. "I had people accuse me, because I work with Calvin, of not being a feminist, which is ridiculous. He runs over weak men as well as weak women. He's called manipulative, but somebody has to call the shots, and when you do, you're vulnerable. He's also called powerful, but when you work to take the power away from the people, the political and economic clout at a diffuse it to the community, that power hungry?"

"His political skills are phenomenal, and there is no doubt that he has dedicated his life to grass-roots politics," says Sandy Powell, a professor of political science at San Francisco State. "But he can be infuriating as well as charming, and at times has no hesitation about letting people know he doesn't consider them his intellectual equal."

"My opinion of Calvin Welch is that he is seeking power for Calvin Welch, and everything else is a masquerade," says Stan Smith, secretary of the Building Trades Council, and a vociferous opponent of Prop. M. "I think his whole being is to be in power or to be the kingmaker. I think what he and Sue Hestor want are to be the power brokers, to dictate what to build and what not to build in this town. If the Calvin Welch-Sue Hestor gang got in power, I personally feel they would pave over Golden Gate Park and fill in the Bay if it was to their benefit."

"Calvin Welch is one of the strong forces contributing to the perception that San Francisco is not an easy place to do business," says John Jacobs, of the Chamber of Commerce. "He has a single-minded belief in the rightness of his cause. He believes, I am certain, that his way would lead to a more perfect society, while we say that there is no reason to believe that a choking off of a city's economy is any way to improve anyone's life."

Nancy Walker couldn't agree less. "Calvin sees himself as middle class in the sense that he feels affinity with those people who are not rich or important, nor who are ever likely to be," she says. "But he's also pragmatic in that he knows that the cities aren't going to be turned around all that easily. I disagree with those who say he is destructive or obstructive. He believes in the empowerment of the people to make determinations in their own lives."

"Power is so apt to be insolent, and liberty to be saucy, that they are seldom on good terms." — Lord Chesterfield

as a typesetter), with two young children in public schools, Welch lives a decidedly non-elegant existence in the Haight. He dresses in standard prole-poet style (jeans, old tweed jackets, sneakers, an armload of African bracelets), and gets around a lot on Muni. He owns a nice Victorian on Ashbury, but he'll tell you that he bought it cheap through a homeowner's assistance program (whose passage he had a hand in) before the real estate boom and pays only \$200 a month on his mortgage, which bit of luck, he says, helps subsidize his political work.

"When some of us old commune people bought our houses we were denounced as right-wing pigs buying into capitalism. I've been called everything from a right-winger to a Communist, so now here I am 15 years later still working for affordable housing," Welch laughs. "If my motivation is money, I'm a total failure. I live on the kindness of strangers."

Over the years, Welch will tell you, he's had to do business in some strange quarters with some unlikely characters to achieve his ends. Joe Alioto, Dianne Feinstein, Quentin Kopp, various factions on the police force — if the cause demanded, he could find reason to fuse forces with them.

"I supported Dianne in 1967 when she ran for mayor against Alioto and lost," he says with a rueful chuckle. "In fact, I helped get her out of a press conference on the corner of Haight and Ashbury when she decided to use that venue to declare war on drugs in the Haight."

Welch remembers Alioto almost fondly as "the last of the big-city pols, a guy who understood constituency, who understood the necessity of maintaining a base."

"The media has erected this image of Feinstein as this terrific hands-on mayor," he says, "but Joe Alioto really knew what was going on in this city, because it was his guys usually doing it. If you were with him you got taken care of, and if your base demanded that you oppose him, he didn't take it personally — you were just doing your job and there wasn't rancor in it. It was the working out of competing interests. Feinstein takes it personally."

"Joe made a classic statement to her once when, after he beat her for mayor, she came to him lobbying for an appointment for somebody to some commission. 'Lady,' he said, 'it's this simple. You don't cash loser's tickets at the winner's window. If you want a quick way to compare the styles of the recent mayors, it's this: Alioto loved monologues; Moscone loved dialogues; Dianne likes memos.'"

"All the cities of the earth should rise up against the man who ruins one." — Anon.

Now sitting in his office, amid the cultural and radical artifacts of years of activism — Mime Troupe

maps, a picture of Roger Craig of the Giants with two young kids, a call to action for the I-Hotel, a signed picture of Dennis Banks, old commune photos, mementos of Harvey Milk — Calvin Welch grows reflective.

He wants to emphasize how important it is that San Francisco not become a "a corporate headquarters ghost town." Our historic role, he says, is as an entry point to the Pacific East, and as an exporter of precious commodities, the most precious of which in this day and age is our agriculture, which the Third World countries on the Pacific Rim need the most.

"Is San Francisco still a manageable, liveable city? Yes, but it's teetering on the brink of not being. Having two children in the last 10 years and watching them grow up and deal with The City, I think it's a lot more menacing than it was, and it grieves me that my kids don't feel as free to walk the streets as I did. And certainly the primary interests that got me into politics, the whole question of housing, of community, have both grown worse since I've been here. But, yes, I think this is still a redeemable city, a city that has not turned the corner on its own promise, even though it is fast approaching the point of no return."

Then Welch brightens. A smile suffuses his severe features. "San Francisco really is a different kind of place," he says. "It genuinely does have a higher sense of community than most other cities, and I'm interested in fostering that very frail quality, because ... basically because it feels good; it makes urban life bearable. I think San Francisco works in the way a city is supposed to work, which is to be a very cosmopolitan, polyglot, diverse place. We pride ourselves that if we can do politics here we can do it anywhere."

And nobody does San Francisco politics like Calvin Welch.



In 1977, Welch, seated front right, posed with Citizens for Representative Government members

de•pres•sion (dĭ-prĕsh-ən) 1. despair, sorrow, blues, despondency
worry, desperation, bleakness, gloom, hopelessness.

We can help.



Call toll free 1-800-654-8968

1600 Gordon Street, Redwood City, CA 94061

specializing in the treatment of abuse problems, drug and alcohol problems, eating disorders such as anorexia and bulimia, and general psychiatric problems such as anxiety and depression.