

I.V.: A History — Part I

By Peter Munteer

A Look Back At Isla Vista's Attempts, Triumphs and Failures regarding Self-Governance, Part I



On the night of February 25, 1970, a large crowd gathered to watch the Isla Vista branch of Bank of America burn. (*El Gaucho* Photo Archive)

In Isla Vista's nearly 70-year history as the primary home of UCSB students, various residents and activists have made multiple attempts in the 1970s, 1980s and early 2000s to establish a form of governance within the square-mile neighborhood, all of which have failed thus far.

I.V.'s official status is a census designated place (CDP), a label used by the U.S. Census Bureau to identify a given population that carries no governmental structures within it. CDP's are typically under the direct supervision of county governments, as is I.V., which is represented on the Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors by 3rd District Supervisor Doreen Farr. The only agencies within I.V. that have any authority over the area is the I.V. Recreation and Parks District, which is responsible for I.V.'s numerous public parks.

When the Board of Regents established Santa Barbara State College as the third campus of the UC system in 1944 and pursued further enrollment, the population of I.V. also began to grow. Despite this, the level of existing infrastructure remained relatively low until the 1960s, when the Board of Supervisors created a zoning committee for I.V. that allegedly allowed development to occur with looser restrictions, according to longtime resident Carmen Lodise.

The 1970s: Isla Vista's First Attempt at Self-Governance

Self-governance for I.V., according to Lodise's book *Isla Vista: A Citizen's History*, was never seriously considered until the 1970s. According to the book, a movement to give I.V. a stronger form of government manifested after several civil disturbances in the '69-'70 academic year, which culminated in the infamous 1970 I.V. Bank of America burning and the deployment of National Guard troops to the area by then California Governor Ronald Reagan.

Several months after the bank burning, during a second civil unrest in April 1970, 21-year-old student Kevin Moran was shot and killed by police while trying to put out a fire on the steps of the rebuilt Bank of America building. After previously attributing the death to a sniper, the Santa Barbara County Sheriff's Department admitted several days later that the killing of Moran was from an accidental discharge from a Santa Barbara Police officer's rifle.

Following the bank burning, in April 1970 the Board of Regents established a seven person committee to determine the role of UC Santa Barbara in governing I.V. The commission issued a report in October of the same year that became popularly known as the Trow Report, after committee member Martin Trow, a UC Berkeley sociologist. The report contained seven recommendations for university involvement in I.V., among them directing UCSB to adopt policies recognizing I.V. as integral to student life, giving the campus vice chancellor authority over university services in I.V. and building university owned apartments for students in I.V. The report also said the university should act to encourage greater collaboration with the County in governing I.V. and that the size of the student population be limited to 1970 levels.

Following the civil unrests of early 1970, the I.V. Community Council (IVCC) was formed and officially recognized by the Board of Supervisors and the Board of Regents, both of which provided funding to the body, which took it upon itself to provide an open forum to allow Isla Vistans to democratically address issues faced by the area. According to Lodise's book, the council would decide by consensus on actions they believed would serve I.V. and would then present them to various government entities, such as the university and the County. The council, made up of 11 representatives, split I.V. into eight precincts and gave each one a vote.

Among IVCC's earliest actions included the establishment of various I.V. groups and partnerships between the university and the County. Among these included the establishment of bus passes for students with the Santa Barbara Metropolitan Transit District, — a practice that continues today — the design and construction of Anisq'Oyo Park, and the establishment of I.V.'s only currently remaining governmental authority, the IVRPD. Various offshoots and commissions were established by the IVCC and included a police commission, a planning commission and an animal control commission.

Isla Vista's Attempt at Cityhood Shutdown

According to Lodise, cityhood was first on the minds of many residents following the 1970 Bank of America burning.



On Jan. 29, 1970, police beat a student, Chris Hall, during a rally outside present-day Cheadle Hall. Protesters gathered to demand an open hearing for fired professor Bill Allen. (*El Gaucho* Photo Archive)

“It was not unreasonable to incorporate all the area into a city,” Lodise said.

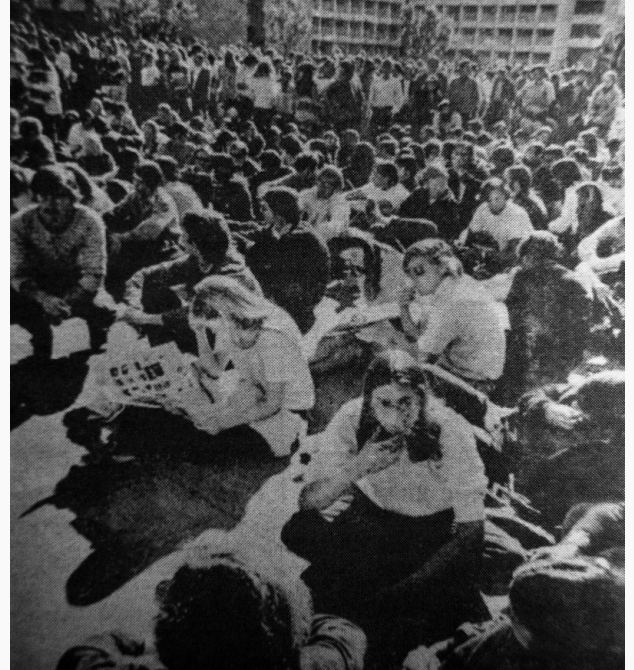
In *A Citizen's History*, Lodise states over 80 percent of the I.V. electorate favored cityhood in an advisory election in 1972. Among the most significant actions taken by the IVCC however was the commission's role in pushing for cityhood for I.V. and in submitting a proposal for cityhood in September 1973 to the Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO), a county entity responsible for overseeing the establishment of local governmental agencies.

In November of 1973, the Board of Regents, then-UC President Charles Hitch and university administration came out in opposition of including the campus in an incorporated I.V. Shortly thereafter, the Santa Barbara County LAFCO rejected a cityhood election request from I.V. on a 4-1 vote, according to Lodise in *A Citizen's History*.

CHECK OUT THE *DAILY NEXUS* WEBSITE TOMORROW FOR PART TWO OF THE SERIES: 1970s – 1980s

Reporter Josh Ortiz contributed to this article.

Between 2,000 and 3,000 students crowd the administration building during the second pro-Allen rally in many days on Jan. 30, 1970. Later that afternoon, nearly 300 police officers used batons to forcibly clear the area, sparking three more days of protests. The academic senate refused Allen's request for an on-



hearing. (*El Gaucho* Photo Archive)



On Feb. 25, 1970, police officers work to restrain a resisting former UCSB student, Rich Underwood, after mistaking a bottle of wine he carried for a molotov cocktail. (*El Gaucho* Photo Archive)