

COUNCIL MEETING DATE:

Monday, December 19, 2016

**ADDITIONAL CORRESPONDENCE
RECEIVED AFTER COUNCIL PACKET**

PREPARATION

Item 5-2. Council Update On Albany Hill Cross

DO NOT REMOVE

Please return to Eileen Harrington, Administration

Eileen Harrington

From: Bryan Marten <bdmarten@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, December 14, 2016 11:57 PM
To: citycouncil
Subject: eucalyptus tree as power pole

Albany City Council,

Thank you for your recent statement that "The presence of the cross in the public park is at odds with the inclusive values the City encourages." I wholeheartedly agree.

I am concerned, however, to learn that PG&E is working to re-energize the power line. I live at the base of Albany Hill a few blocks from the cross. I cannot imagine how the power can be turned back on safely given that the energized wire is *attached* to a eucalyptus tree in what the city designated years ago as a "Critical Fire Area". This is not the typical wire going through branches that need to be trimmed. This is a wire using a eucalyptus tree as a power pole!

The wire can be hard to see up high in the tree but here is the photo the East Bay Atheists' site has posted for over a year now which shows it up close.

Middle photo in the top row: <https://eastbayatheists.org/imagesalbanyhill.html>

Direct link: <https://eastbayatheists.org/Resources/ServiceDrop.jpg>

I am requesting PG&E's plan for the support of the wire and asking the city to share the close-up photo with PG&E and get their response.

Lest we forget:

25 years later: Oakland hills ripe for another firestorm

October 20, 2016

<http://www.sfchronicle.com/bayarea/article/25-years-later-Oakland-hills-ripe-for-another-9984731.php>

"I go with what the Australians say about eucalyptus — they call them 'gasoline on a stick,'" said Susan Piper, who is still haunted by a searing image from her escape on Oct. 20, 1991: A grove of eucalyptus trees aglow in flame exploded just yards from where she sat in her family van, stuck in traffic with her 9-year-old daughter.

Thank you,

Bryan Marten

Eileen Harrington

From: The Rev. Julie Wakelee-Lynch <rector@st-albans-albany.org>
Sent: Tuesday, December 13, 2016 5:28 PM
To: citycouncil
Subject: Cross on Albany Hill

Dear Mayor McQuaid and Members of the Council,

I am writing to express my strong support for the removal of the lighted cross on "Albany Hill." While there may have been a time when such a public display of one sect's religious symbol on public property seemed appropriate, that time has passed.

As the leader of a faith community, I am strongly committed to the separation of church and state. Beyond that, I am very much invested in the work of ensuring that Albany is a place where all people feel safe and welcome.

Albany is not (nor should it be) a "Christian" city, and there should not be religious imagery exclusive to one tradition on city-held land. This is unwelcoming to people of other religious traditions (or those without religious affiliation), and belies the rich diversity of this community.

We all have touchstones to the past that are important and even precious to us. Sometimes, we need to be ready and willing to adapt as times change--to honor the past, but hold it lightly as we live in the present.

Thank you for your attention in this matter.

Sincerely,
The Rev. Julie Wakelee-Lynch
Rector, St. Alban's Episcopal Church

--
The Rev. Julie Wakelee-Lynch
Rector, St. Alban's Episcopal Church
1501 Washington Avenue (at the corner of Curtis)
Albany, CA 94706
tel. 510-525-1716
web: www.st-albans-albany.org
email: rector@st-albans-albany.org

Eileen Harrington

From: Cityhall@albanyca.org
Sent: Thursday, December 15, 2016 10:40 AM
To: City General Mailbox Account
Subject: Contact the City of Albany

Submission information

Submitter DB ID : 16163
Submitter's language : Default language
IP address : 71.198.175.175
Time to take the survey : 2 min. , 15 sec.
Submission recorded on : 12/15/2016 10:40:05 AM

Survey answers

Your Information:

Name Kirsten
Email Kirsten_mahoney@hotmail.com
Subject Cross on Albany Hill

What can we do for you? Thank you Albany city officials for fighting against the Lion's Club as far as you could go with regards to the cross. I read your statement today and feel proud to call myself a resident of Albany. The world is changing and I feel honored to live in a town that wants to change with it.

Thank you and happy holidays,
Kirsten

Eileen Harrington

From: website@albanyca.org
Sent: Saturday, December 17, 2016 12:03 PM
To: Eileen Harrington
Subject: Advisory BOARD, COMMISSION, COMMITTEE APPLICATION

Submission information

Submitter DB ID : 16172
Submitter's language : Default language
IP address : 108.216.158.235
Time to take the survey : 22 min. , 19 sec.
Submission recorded on : 12/17/2016 12:03:23 PM

Survey answers

Vacancy you are applying for:
Planning & Zoning Commission

Personal Information:

Name Val Joseph Menotti
Home Address 1106 Ordway Street, Albany, CA 94706
Telephone 510.527.5498
Fax Not answered
Preferred Email VMenotti@pacbell.net
Occupation Regional Planning
Business Address BART, 300 Lakeside Drive., 21st Floor, Oakland, CA 94612
Work Phone 510.287.4794
Work Fax Not answered

Please state your qualifications for this Board/Commission/Committee and your objectives if you become a member:

Education

- Masters' Degree in City & Regional Planning, UC Berkeley
- Bachelor of Science, Mechanical Engineering, Stanford University

Professional

- Land Use and Transportation Planning professional for 20+ years
- 16 years at San Francisco Bay Area Rapid Transit, Chief Planning & Development Officer

Volunteer Public Service

- President, Inner Sunset Park Neighbors, San Francisco (1997 - 2000)
- Citizens Advisory Committee, San Francisco County Transportation Authority (1999 - 2004)
- San Francisco County Transportation Expenditure Plan Advisory Committee (2003)
- Albany resident since 2004
- Albany Planning & Zoning Commission (2015-2016)

Objectives

- Improve livability in Albany
- Ensure affordable, quality design of remodeled homes in Albany that balance the needs of neighbors and families
- Carefully balance the vision and goals as expressed by the public in the General Plan in the Commission's decision making
- Enable Albany to meet its share of regional housing needs, while providing alternatives to traffic congestion

Please list past and present community activities you have participated in:

- Albany Planning & Zoning Commission (2015-2016)
- Volunteer, Marin Elementary School Moonlight Auction
- Volunteer, Albany Yes on Measure N1 Campaign (2016)
- Coach, Albany-Berkeley Girls Softball League (2013-14)

By checking this box you verify that the above information is correct:

Yes, the information above is correct

Eileen Harrington

From: Sara Sunstein <info@sarasunstein.com>
Sent: Friday, December 16, 2016 10:22 PM
To: citycouncil
Subject: Lions Club cross

Hi all.

I'd like to thank Rochelle for her NextDoor postings the last 4-6 weeks. And I appreciate the Council's statement that you'd prefer the cross removed, given that it's on public property and some community members find it intolerable as well as unconstitutional.

I'm one of those community members.

Not being an attorney, I'm not fully up on what an easement is legally, but my understanding is that it's permission to pass on someone else's property, an access issue. So I don't understand how the Lions Club equates access with ownership. And I also wonder about the height involved with an easement? Perhaps that cross is higher than easement rights.

I support you all to do whatever you can to get rid of the cross for once and all. (and find out which PG&E decision-maker is a member of the club or has been influenced by them. Clearly the wiring is dangerous) Please look into all the good information that has been posted on NextDoor from concerned neighbors, atheists and otherwise. Apparently there are tried and true ways to get rid of such heart- and eye-sores.

Thank you.

Sara

P.S. Can't come to Monday night's meeting (I'm dealing with moving, remember?) so I'm sending this email instead.

Sara Sunstein
Ortho-Bionomy®, Somatic therapy
510.526.5414
<http://www.sarasunstein.com>

"As the soft yield of water cleaves obstinate stone, so to yield with life solves the insoluble." Lao Tzu

Please note: If you're emailing about an appointment that is within 24 hours, I may not see it. Please call instead.

Eileen Harrington

From: Bryan Marten <bdmarten@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, December 16, 2016 6:05 PM
To: citycouncil
Subject: Re: eucalyptus tree as power pole
Attachments: DSC_0492.JPG; DSC_0494.JPG; DSC_0497.JPG; DSC_0498.JPG; DSC_0499.JPG

I took the dog up the hill to check out the cross for myself this afternoon and discovered PG&E has finished the job and it is *much* safer. Maybe even completely up to code, minus concerns about the cross itself falling over (which is still a concern due to the erosion at its concrete base and the haphazard welds holding the plate to the concrete).

The wire used to be connected at the street at a pole and then threaded through eucalyptus trees (attached to one!) to eventually get to the cross. And maybe PG&E said its original plan was to improve safety by merely fortifying the wire but what I saw today they *actually* did is to make a new connection at the street mid-way between 2 poles (see attached photo) with a straight shot to the cross with no extra support. That is a shorter distance than it was before to the pole because it's almost straight perpendicular from the line. I checked where the line to the cross sags and it is pretty low to the ground but not reachable by me so it may meet code but I don't know. I don't know how long the wire is - its unsupported length may or may not be up to code.

In any event, the East Bay Atheists and the city and all who expressed concern about the fire safety represented by having for decades an electrical service using a eucalyptus tree as a pole in a Critical Fire Area (!!!) appear to have caused a huge change for the better for the residents and city of Albany. There may still be issues with the safety of the cross structurally or with the new electrical service distance or height. That should be looked in to by someone knowledgeable in electrical and structural codes but those who have been involved with this effort should know that they have helped make the situation *much* better than it was.

There are also of course serious concerns the council and I and others have expressed with how the cross in the public park goes against the city's statement of inclusion. Those still need to be addressed.

Attached are the photos I took up at the cross. The photo DSC_0492.JPG I took a few months ago showing zoomed in where the wire used to connect to the street at a pole so you can see the difference. The other 4 photos are from today with the new connections.

Bryan Marten

On Wed, Dec 14, 2016 at 11:57 PM, Bryan Marten <bdmarten@gmail.com> wrote:
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25 years later: Oakland hills ripe for another firestorm

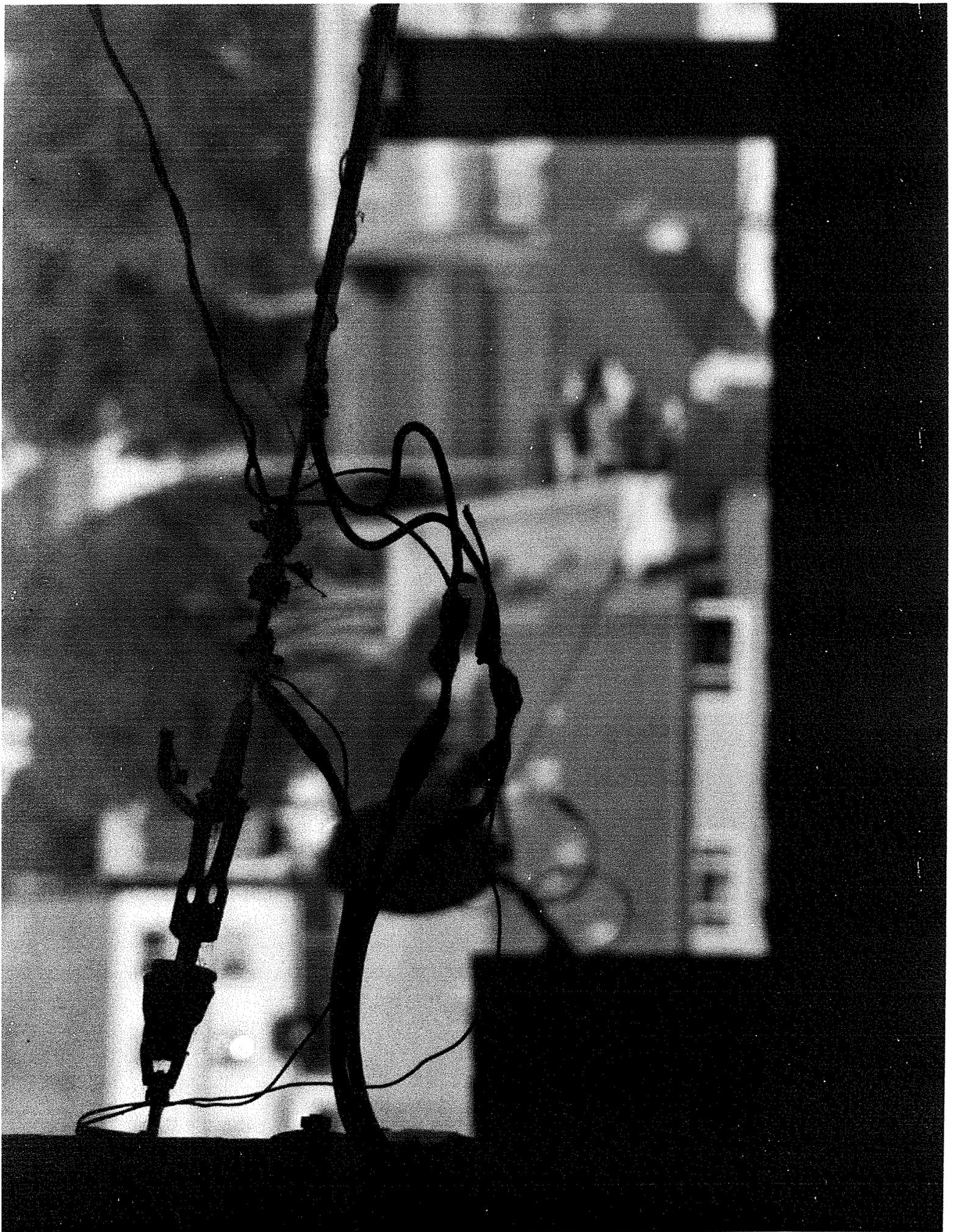
October 20, 2016

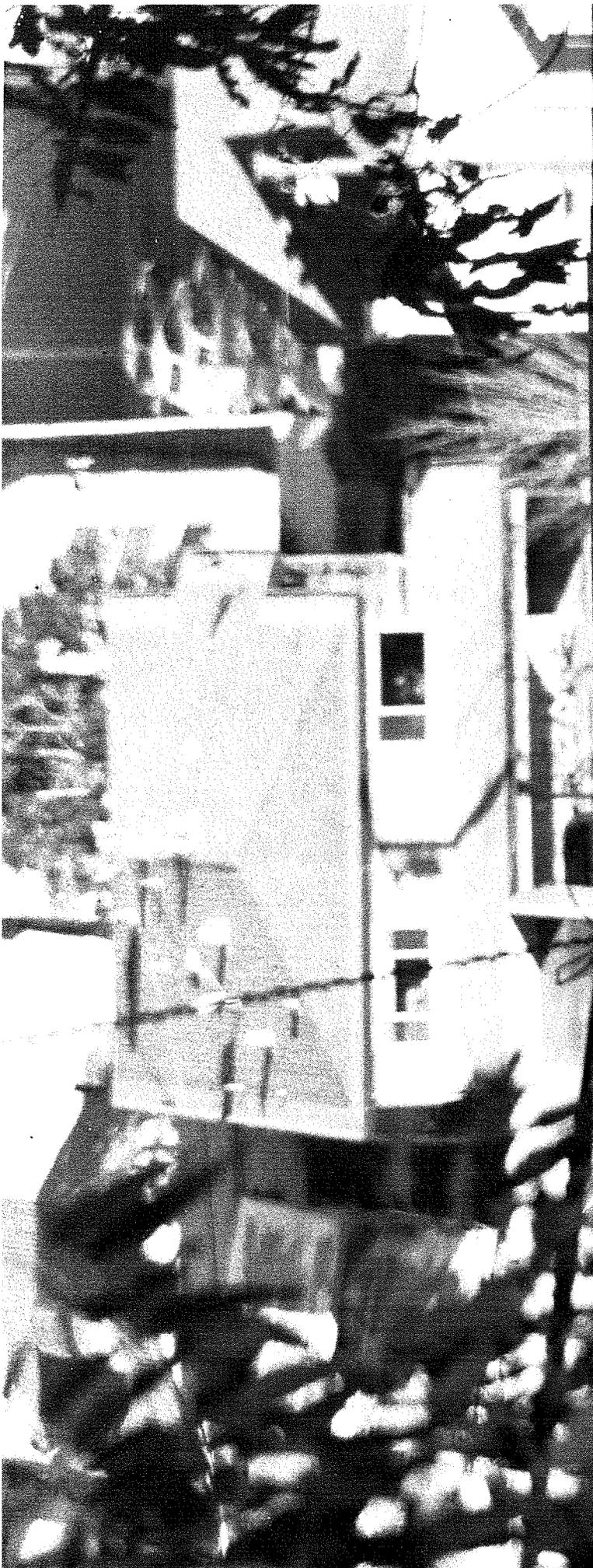
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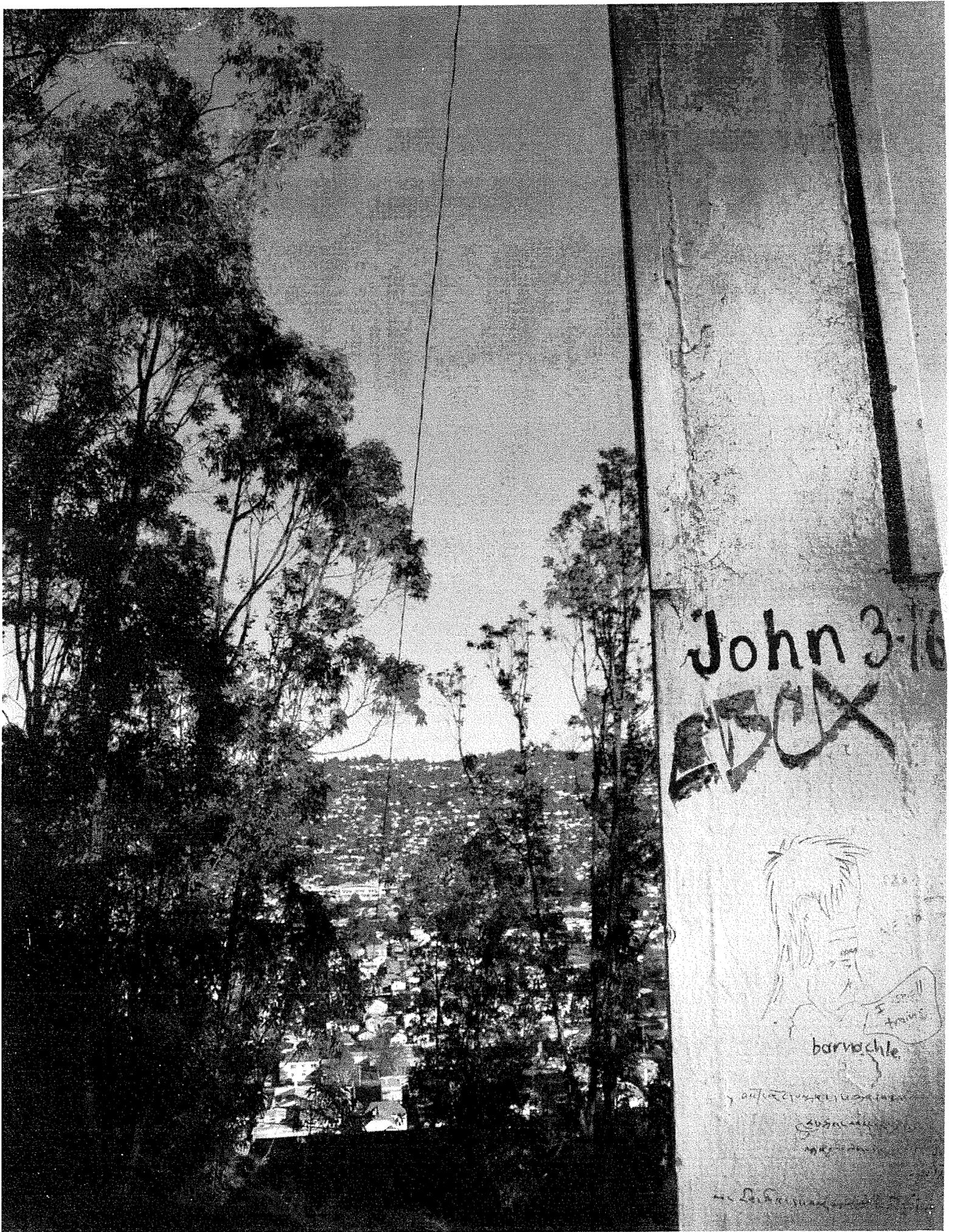
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Thank you,

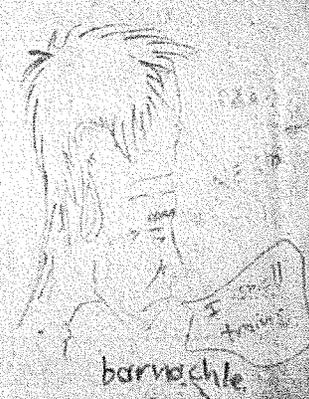
Bryan Marten





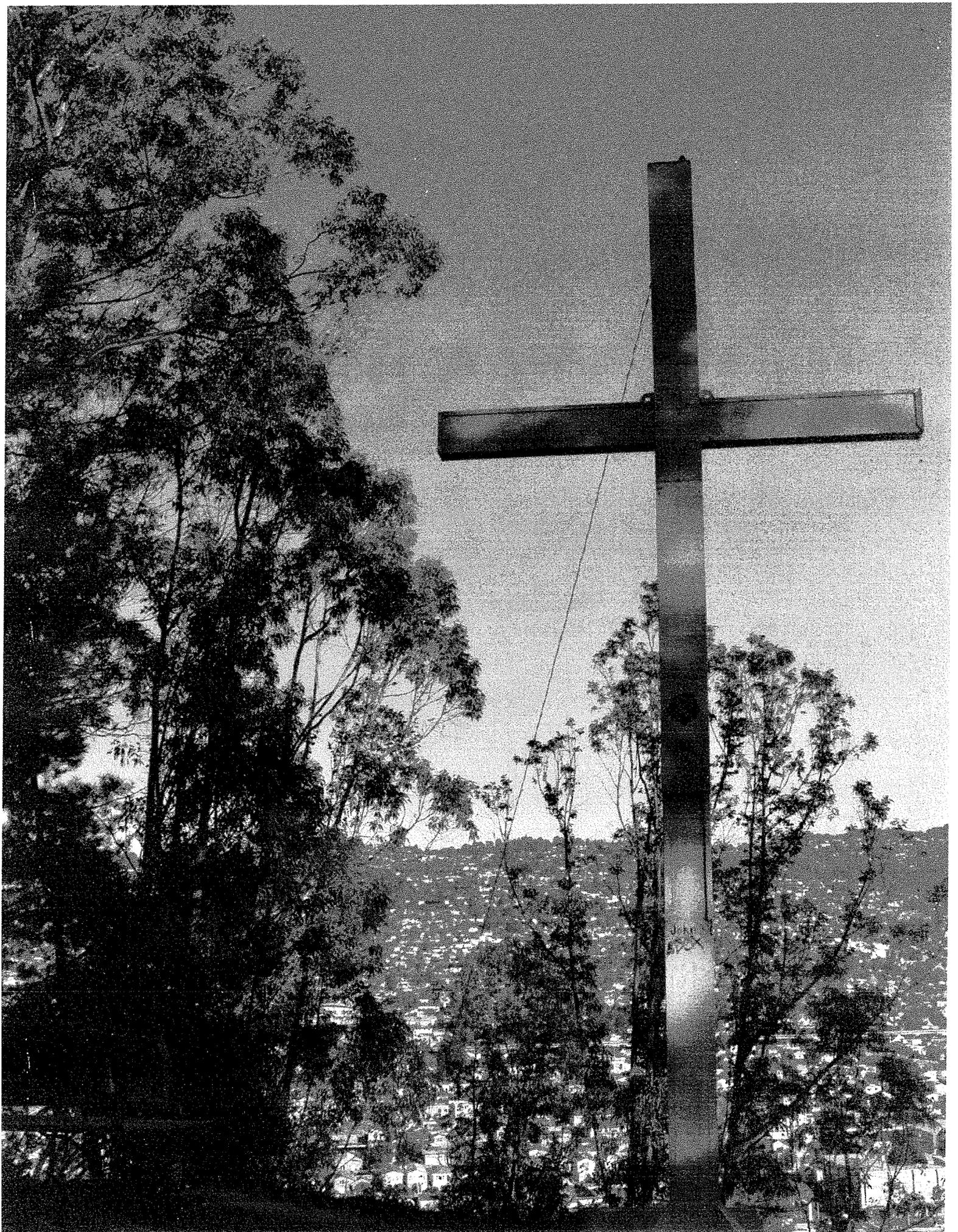


John 3:16



barnacle

outreach
gospel
mission





Eileen Harrington

From: Jeffrey Bartlett <jmbartlett@lmi.net>
Sent: Monday, December 19, 2016 9:28 AM
To: citycouncil
Cc: 'David Nicely'
Subject: Lions member opposes Albany Lions action re cross on Albany Hill

Importance: High

Dear City Council:

I am a longtime Albany resident and also a member of the Berkeley Lions Club. As a person affected in two ways by the controversy regarding the cross on Albany Hill, I wish to express my wholehearted support for the Council's position on this issue and my complete opposition to that of the Albany Lions. This is a divisive issue that harks back to an unpleasant time in our history when efforts to force one religious group's beliefs on others were common. The time is long past that we should allow such overt symbols, especially so grandiose and unavoidable. I would like to see the cross removed from Albany Hill so we can end this controversy that threatens the separation of state and church on which our society is based.

I am proud to be a member of the Lions for more than 10 years and a past president of the Berkeley Club. Although I speak for myself here, other members of the Berkeley Club have expressed sentiments in agreement with mine. The Lions are a global service organization that seeks to help people in need regardless of their ethnic or religious nature. I find it unseemly that a local Lions chapter should involve itself in such a reactionary cause, which can only bring disrepute on the greater Lions organization. I urge the Albany Lions to stop this ill-considered action and allow the Council to go ahead with its efforts to remove the cross. There are many worthwhile activities in which the Albany Club can involve itself, and often does. Let's return to such service that brings people together rather than dividing us.

Sincerely,

Jeffrey Bartlett

Past President, Berkeley Lions
office 510-528-7055
mobile 510-333-1948
jmbartlett@lmi.net

832 Cerrito St.
Albany, CA 94706