



Ernie Williams

attract only bug-eyed puckerlips worried about front lawns, "fiscal responsibility" and the homeless. Serious downers all—which says what needs to be said about why I visited Williams last Friday instead of one of the anti-arena queen- and kingpins.

Most people talking against the arena are very negative," Williams says. "They talk about the homeless . . .," he contorts his face in disgust. He sees young guys walking around the streets homeless and says, "I have no pity for them." They should have jobs, homes, he thinks.

"When I was young, you couldn't stop me," he says. "And I had barriers." Williams says that when you're a black man without US citizenship—as he was when he first came to the States from his native Canada—"you're kind of on your own."

It's not pity that Williams inspires, it's fiery-eyed ambition and a shameless contempt for those who can't make it in this society. Williams has much more than the arena on his mind. At first, I think his social critiques are digressions, but then I see he's spouting raw pro-arena rhetoric. According to Williams: Pro-arena forces are the can-do people; anti-arena forces are the whiney accountants from hell.

And Williams feels the country's going to hell in a handbasket, its "moral fiber" unstrung and frayed. His perspective comes from spending the first 40 years of his life observing this country from Canada, appalled that US athletes he played against knew how many home runs Babe Ruth hit, but couldn't name famous scholars.

Williams spent the past 30 years in the South Bay trying to get his kids a good education while managing his own business. The '60s were especially perplexing. "Black is beautiful," he says. "What is that?" He'd get government contracts to hire minorities, have the high school counselors send the kids to him, and then reel in horror at their utter lack of preparedness. They didn't

bring pens to interviews. They didn't look him in the eye. They didn't want to work.

"They couldn't even do the little things," Williams says.

How does he rate San Jose as a sports town?

"Something's missing here," he says. "We have no one to identify with." That problem could be solved with a team, and he figures the Golden State Warriors would come down here. He'd love to see hockey here, too. "Hockey's great, but basketball's number one. An arena will hook us up with the NIT and other college basketball tournaments. Nothing else up here's large enough [to host them]."

The arena would house more than sporting events—which arena supporters continually point out because they need the votes of nonsports fans—but it's not rock fans, circus fans or convention seminar fans working supermarkets or buying those snazzy Cheers shirts. It's sports nuts like Williams, and it's easy enough to see why.

Frequent trips to the Oakland Coliseum to cheer on the neighboring team is a discouraging hassle. But driving up to Shoreline Amphitheatre to see a concert now and then is no big deal. Nor is going even further to the Coliseum to see the circus.

San Jose is so close to everywhere else that it makes little sense to build an arena for anything but a sports team. The \$100 million price tag is an outrageous sum to pay for the privilege of being 30 minutes closer to the Ice Follies. But it's not too much to pay for the pleasures of rooting and booing the home team in a crowded arena or watching Brent Musburger say, "San Jose goes up on top" on TV.

So much of our identity has to do with what others think about us. When other parts of the country start thinking of San Jose as a major league city, then in many ways it will be.

The forces calling for Measure H's defeat either diminish the importance of image or can't grasp it. They're either dog paddling in the murky sea of "fiscal responsibility" and "no blank check" or venting their most powerful pleasure suppressants. A recent anti-arena editorial in the Libertarian newsletter began, "This June 7, San Jose residents will have an unusual opportunity to stop local government dead in its tracks. . . ."

Such vision. Contrast that with Ernie Williams's simple dream of riding the trolley to the arena, sitting amidst neighbors wearing San Jose red and gold (or whatever) and cheering on the home team.

Besides, voting no on Measure H is a vote for Williams having to lug his oxygen tank all the way to Oakland just to watch a ballgame.

—Craig Carter

Silicon Valley Scramble

Republicans split in Konnyu-Campbell race; Demos hope to oppose battered congressman

12th District

San Mateo County Supervisor Anna Eshoo's last-minute decision to join the race for the Democratic nomination to oppose either incumbent Representative Ernest Konnyu or his challenger, Stanford Law Professor Thomas Campbell, caused activist attorney Robin Yeamans to withdraw from the race, endorse Eshoo and refocus her sights on the state Assembly seat currently occupied by Republican Chuck Quackenbush.

Once thought to be the odds-on favorite to win the nomination, Eshoo, a veteran insider in Democratic party politics and a one-time aide to Lt. Gov. Leo McCarthy, has found it relatively easy to raise campaign cash—including \$60,000 she loaned her own campaign—but harder to generate enthusiasm on the grassroots level. Thus, even the *Peninsula Times Tribune*—which covers Eshoo's home county of San Mateo and usually can be counted on for sympathetic coverage—has changed its rating of the race from an initial virtual lock to a "toss up."

In recent weeks, Eshoo has taken the gloves off and has begun to criticize her main challenger, Esalen Institute Director Jim Garrison, as something of a carpetbagger. According to Eshoo, in addition to having no record in an elected public office, Garrison has "never voted in the district."

Garrison, an Oxford graduate, admits he moved his legal residence from his family home in San Jose to Mountain View in order to run for Congress. However, it appears he has been able to deflect much of Eshoo's criticism on the residency issue by pointing to his experience in negotiating international cultural and business exchange agreements, an activity that frequently, he says, found him on the road and away from the 12th District on election day. However, since he also did not vote in Mountain View's recent city election, Eshoo partisans charge that Garrison's commitment to electoral matters—other than his own candidacy—remains questionable.

Garrison and Eshoo disagree on numerous issues, most notably, an international peace conference, including the Soviets, on the

Middle East (Garrison opposes Soviet involvement while Eshoo favors it) and allowing the president to have line-item budgetary veto power (Garrison opposes the idea while Eshoo supports a modified version).

Environmental activist Gary Bond also entered the race late and has sought to distinguish himself by creating citizen task forces on a variety of issues. With little in the way of campaign cash, Bond has been trying to get a grassroots message across. Saying that there is a level of expertise in the 12th District that should be tapped by a representative who listens to the voters, Bond pledges to involve his constituents in making policy recommendations in areas where they can make a contribution to the process.

Another candidate, attorney and former television newscaster Sylvia Simmons, however, tried one of the more original campaign tactics to be attempted in a local congressional race. Faced with insufficient funds and a desire to get her views across, Simmons contracted with Pacific Bell for her own "976" number which, for \$2, voters could call. Unfortunately for Simmons, the idea flopped as voters seemed unwilling to pay to hear a recorded political speech. Despite credible showings at candidate debates and forums, Simmons is still mostly

unknown to the district voters and her 976 number has, according to Pac Bell, been disconnected.

The fifth candidate in the race, accountant and immigration attorney Ernest Macias, says he is the "most conservative" candidate in the contest. "As a businessman, I am used to looking at the bottom line," Macias says, adding that he would be reluctant to establish new social programs "without first finding out what the people can—and should—do for themselves."

Macias says that "government officials are not doing a good job of accounting to the public," and says he is "just tired of the waste and fraud and abuse," prevalent in the federal government. Admitting that his long-shot candidacy is "on the abstract side," Macias says he has "had a lot of fun," is "learning a lot" and making new friends.

On the Republican side, moderate insurgent Thomas Campbell, a Stanford law professor, is taking on controversial conservative Ernest Konnyu. Konnyu, a staunch supporter of President Reagan, Konnyu drew promises of a challenge from predecessors Pete McCloskey and Ed Zschau after reports appeared in the *Mercury News* that charged him with making sex-related comments to female employees and a female lobbyist, a set of accusations that



Ernest Konnyu



Tom Campbell