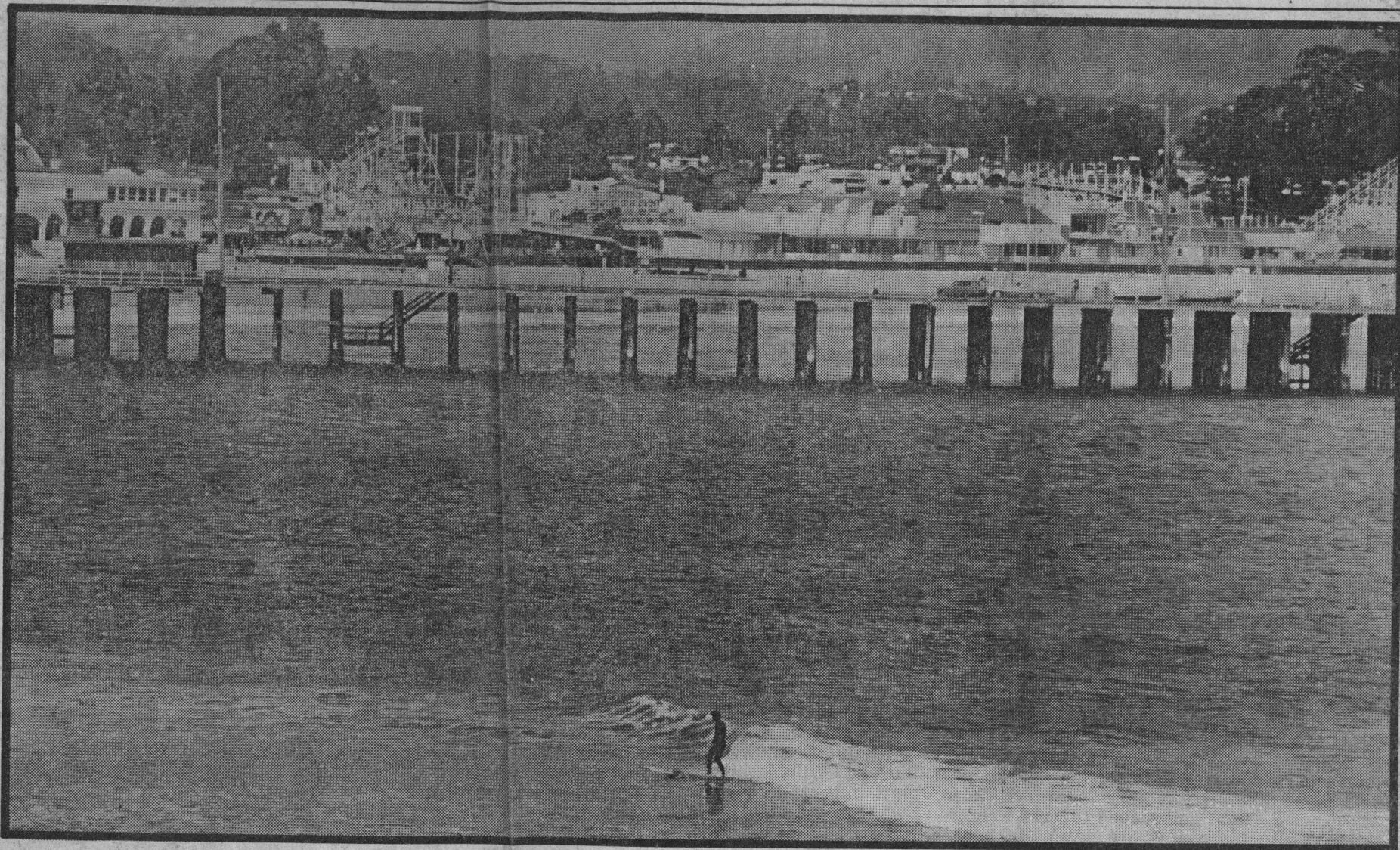


Weekend

Events • Dining • The Lively Arts • Coming Attractions



A surfer waits for the big wave by the Santa Cruz Municipal Wharf and the Atlantic City-type boardwalk

Santa Cruz: A splendid city by the sea built 'for all the people' to enjoy



By Darla Miller
Staff Writer

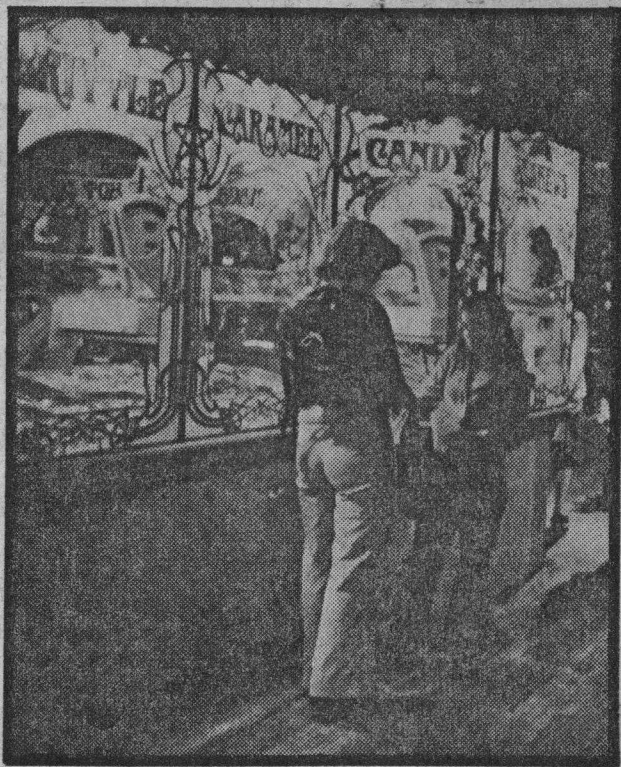
SANTA Cruz used to be a lazy little resort town where tourists flocked each summer to join the mobs on crowded beaches or wait in lines for rides on the Giant Dipper at the Boardwalk.

After Labor Day, the town looked as if the population had been wiped out by the plague. All that remained were sad-eyed senior citizens immersed in their own memories and equally mo-

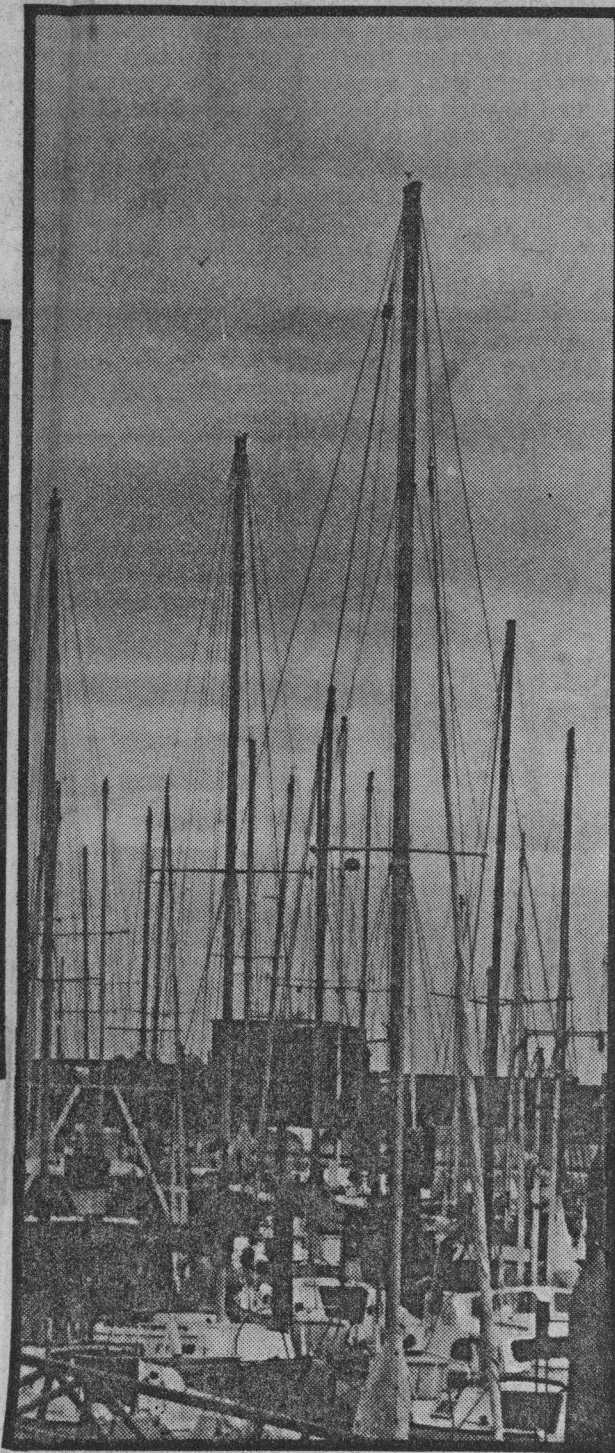


At the Cooper House in the downtown area, visitors can eat a hearty lunch in the outdoor cafe and listen to the lively band.

Photographs by Richard Wisdom



Inside the Cooper House, the former county courthouse, there are quaint shops. The mall is decorated with stained glass, hardwood floors and lots of plants.



rose merchants trying to get through the slack months without crying.

If you were craving excitement, you could go to the bowling alley on Pacific Avenue or the roller rink way out on Seabright Avenue. Or you could cruise the drag — Pacific Avenue — in your souped-up car, looking for action.

If you wanted a book, you could go to Don's Plaza Stationery and comb the small stack of best sellers or the two dozen titles from The Modern Library. A racy foreign movie? Well, once a year the Omega Nu Ladies sponsored a festival of them at the Rio Theater, but that was about it.

As for music and drama, it was strictly home-grown and mostly bad. The only street musicians played for the Salvation Army, though

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occasionally an organ grinder might get off the Greyhound Bus and play a few bars before realizing he had the wrong town.

Going out to dinner wasn't very adventurous. Busiest places in town were the Coast Creamery and the Five Spot — and, of course, the perennial Santa Cruz Hotel.

All this began to change in 1965 when the University of California at Santa Cruz accepted its first students.

Slowly, young people started coming to Santa Cruz, attracted by the beautiful climate and the intellectual ferment on the campus, built among towering redwoods on the 2,000-acre Cowell Ranch.

A new spirit blossomed in Santa Cruz. Young people discovered a treasure trove of historical lore and unmatched natural beauty which the locals seemed bent on dismantling and selling off, piece-by-piece.

Priceless Victorians were being torn down to make way for concrete monstrosities. Cherished landmarks were falling so franchise burger stands could rise. It rankled the students and it soured the more nostalgic old-timers.

At first there were sharp clashes between the old and the new attitudes in town. The pro-growth locals feared their city would be turned into a radical enclave, filled with surfers, bikers, and dopers. Some of these fears remain, but the atmosphere is much mellowier today.

Quietly, a common bond has grown up between the long-haired youngsters and the white-haired oldsters. They all wanted to preserve the simpler ways of the past, and they shared a need for a diversified area where they could eat, shop or be entertained without spending a fortune.

Local businessmen gradually have come to appreciate this new attitude and have helped create the new Santa Cruz for the people.

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While there is more to do in Santa Cruz than sit on the beach, people still come to Santa Cruz for the beaches. Hundreds of boats in the Yacht Harbor can attest to that.

Santa Cruz — it's mellow marvelous, merry

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Downtown

CENTERPIECE of the new downtown is the Pacific Garden Mall, which stretches from Cathcart Street in the south to the Plaza at Mission and Water streets to the north, following the route of the original Pacific Avenue.

Though it's still possible to cruise that part of the drag, it's better to do it on foot. Traffic is one-way and there's only one lane. It's all calculated to get you out of your car and onto the street.

And that's the beauty of the new Santa Cruz. All through the downtown area, you'll find the young side-by-side with the old, enjoying the warm atmosphere of a town that now has something for everyone.

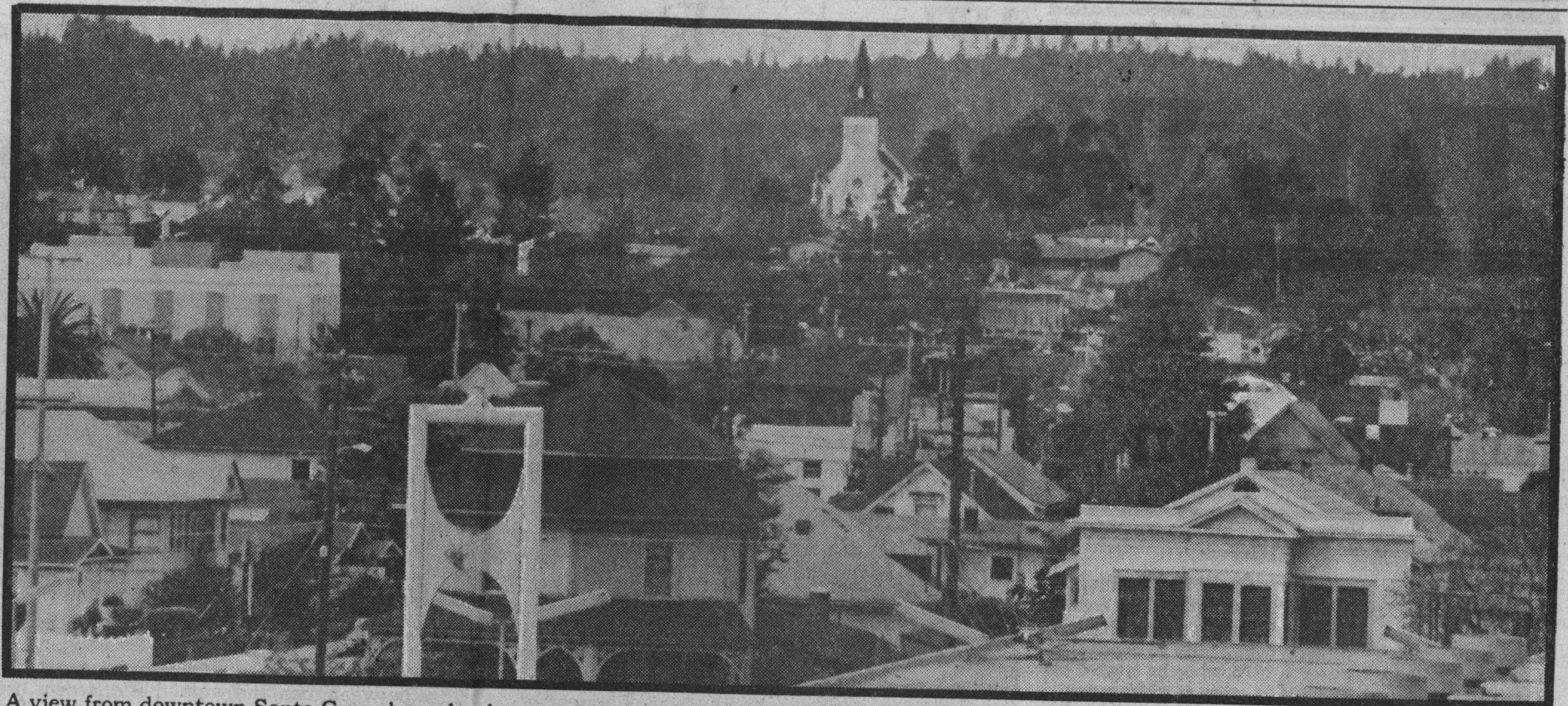
Gone are the Coast Creamery (now a commercial glass shop) and the Five Spot (now a finance company). Instead of the austere bowling alley on shabby lower Pacific Avenue, there's now The Catalyst, 1011 Pacific Ave., a mammoth restaurant-nightclub where dress is informal, food prices are low and the entertainment ranges from the hottest new rock and country groups to such big names as Ray Charles and Chuck Berry.

Where once a large grocery store prospered, there's now the gigantic Bookshop Santa Cruz, 1547 Pacific Garden Mall, where you're free to squat and read contentedly for hours. Though Don's Plaza Stationery is gone (renamed Plaza Books/Paper Vision and moved to 1111 Pacific Garden Mall), there now are dozens of book stores including one for comic freaks (Cymbaline at 1101 Cedar) and another for Trekkies and sci-fi fans (Atlantis Fantasyworld at 707 Pacific Ave.).

Movie theaters abound, including two that specialize in foreign and offbeat fare; The Nickelodeon, 210 Lincoln St., and The Sash Mill, 303 Potrero St. The New Santa Cruz Theater is gone, but in its place are the Old Theater Cafe (102 Walnut Ave.) and several small shops.

Entertainment abounds all over Santa Cruz. Big name acts play the Civic Auditorium, The Catalyst or, occasionally, the Theater Del Mar, a 1930s style theater (about to be divided into three separate movie theaters), as well as scores of small clubs.

How diverse is the offering? Well, The Salvation Army still plays on the streets, but each day finds competition from at least half a dozen street musical groups on the mall, ranging from simple folk and jazz to esoteric medieval ensembles.



A view from downtown Santa Cruz shows lovely green hills and an old church steeple

Cocoanut Grove, the refurbished beachfront dance hall on the Boardwalk.

Efforts to recapture the old glory of Santa Cruz have become positively contagious. Just about every week another mundane downtown building is taken over by the army of local craftsmen and designers and reshaped into a masterpiece of wood, used brick, stained glass and hanging plants.

Dining out

Dining out can be fun in Santa Cruz. There are scores of restaurants that are as much a treat to the eye and ear as they are to the palate.

Probably the most beautiful example of the new Santa Cruz esthetic is the Santa Cruz Hotel Bar and Grille, located upstairs over the venerable family-style Santa Cruz Hotel at Cedar and Locust streets.

This is a showplace room furnished with authentic 1900-era antiques, dominated by a massive skylight of bevelled glass and windows that scatter rainbow patterns of light over the rich woods and lush plants surrounding the diners.

This kind of atmosphere has been created at the new Lulu Carpenter's (1545 Pacific Garden Mall) — from the bleak surroundings of what used to be an insurance office.

Most Santa Cruz restaurants of the new era offer a relaxed, casual atmosphere, carefully prepared foods that are more often than not natural and organic, and an ambience that's warmly reminiscent of the town's good old days.

Even the inexpensive, family-style chain operation called The Old Santa Cruz Railway Co. (123 Washington St.) exists in the carefully restored real Santa Cruz railroad depot, immersed in authentic reminders of the town's early days.

Most local restaurant owners would admit it's nearly impossible to make it with a modernistic, aluminum and plastic decor in today's Santa



Young folks gather downtown and sing on the street corners

— Photos by Richard Wisdom

structure dating back before the 1906 earthquake, it was saved by a daring entrepreneur in 1970.

Now it has become the vogue to spare a solid old building by subdividing it into small shops, retaining the old world look. A good example is the I.D. building located at the corner of Locust street and the Pacific Garden Mall.

Formerly a bank, shoppers now browse for jewelry in the original bank vault at the I.D.

Broadwalk brings back the memories of Atlantic City in the 1940s. The oldest structure on the Broadwalk, the clown-faced Fun House, built in 1893, was torn down in 1971, making way for an electric motor scooter and other modern kiddie rides. Today's most popular attractions are the Wild Mouse and Logger's Revenge, which was built last year.

Among the freshly discovered pleasures of Santa Cruz is Victorian house gawking — there are beautiful examples of magnificent restora-

ties in colorful costumes.

Don McCaslin (a former school teacher from Fremont who dropped out of his job, preferring the more relaxed way of life in Santa Cruz) leads his lively band each day at the outdoor cafe at Cooper House, the former county courthouse at the corner of Cooper Street and Pacific Garden Mall. From 11:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. his musical vibes can be heard all over the mall.

Once a one-note town musically (Sammy Kaye dominated the airwaves of local radio KSCO), crowds now turn out for virtually anything. Country star Emmylou Harris sold out the cavernous Theater Del Mar and rock groups continually sell out The Catalyst. Two weeks ago, Les Brown and His Band of Renown sold out the old

Special events this weekend

THE University of California at Santa Cruz Committee on Arts and Lectures presents The Ridiculous Theatrical Company from New York in a production of "Camille," at 8 p.m. Saturday in the UCSC Performing Arts Center. Tickets for students and elders are \$2, \$2.50 and \$3. General admission is \$3 to \$3.50. Tickets are available at the Santa Cruz Box Office, 111 Pacific

Cruz. It also seems unlikely anybody could get by without some kind of musician on the premises.

From the yacht harbor hot spot, The Crow's Nest, where the hottest rock bands alternate nightly, to the tiny jewel box French country dining room of L'Oustalou (118 Locust St), where the nationally known novelist Peter Beagle, author of "A Fine and Private Place" and "The Last Unicorn," sings and plays the guitar each Saturday night.

At some spots, like the Caffe Pergolesi (1547 Pacific Ave.) or The Good Fruit Co. (2017 N. Pacific Ave.), diners may take solace in a poetry reading or listen to a local author like James Houston (co-author of "Farewell to Manzanar") read from a new work in progress.

Shopping

Though mainstream or "hard core" shoppers still may prefer the pickings at the regional discount emporiums or the huge utilitarian complex along 41st Avenue in nearby Capitola, the trend toward old-fashioned ambience also has spread to many merchants.

Cooper House probably is the best example, a booming shopping center stuffed into the former courthouse where Santa Cruzans once paid their taxes or took out marriage licenses. A rich stone

building or load up with imported kitchenware where Santa Cruzans once waited in line to cash their paychecks. Where loans were negotiated, shoppers now snack at the Ice Cream Bank, a busy little corner of the building that specializes in homemade soups, salads and sandwiches as well as such ice cream treats as coffee floats.

A few blocks away on Potrero Street, not far from busy Highway 1, is the Sash Mill, a complex of shops, restaurants, workshops for the many craftsmen in the area and the movie theater — all developed in the rundown shell of a former sash mill. On the same street is a former Standard Oil gas plant, soon to be an outlet for hot tubs.

Miscellaneous

Of course, the bulk of the bumper-to-bumper traffic pouring into Santa Cruz every sunny summer weekend is still bound for the beaches, though heavy storms washed most of them away this winter and it may be a month before the sand is redeposited by the waves.

There has been precious little old-fashioned restoration on the Boardwalk, where the most modern amusement devices are the rule today. Yet, the narrow streets of Beach Hill, overlooking the Boardwalk, are beginning to bristle with newly constructed Victorian-era architecture.

The smell of cotton candy on the Santa Cruz

tion jobs in pockets all over town.

Scores of weekend joggers now couple exercise with esthetic pleasure by jogging along West Cliff Drive from the Municipal Wharf to Lighthouse Point, taking in the Victorian mansions on one side and the daring surfers at Cowell's Beach and at Steamer Lane on the other. Incidentally, that lighthouse at the point is really a memorial built by Esther and Chuck Abbott, to their son, Mark, who drowned off the point in 1965. It remains the best vantage point to view the sea lions on the offshore Seal Rock.

If West Cliff Drive is crowded, jogging is just as popular at the Yacht Harbor, Twin Lakes Beach. The storms have left the beach cluttered with debris and there are some rip tides so swimming is not advised unless a lifeguard is present. But joggers can watch the surfers at the entrance to the harbor and later drop by the Crow's Nest for lunch — or Irish coffee.

No longer is this lively little resort a place where only retired people come to stay. A first-time visitor to the area would find it hard to believe the beaches and Boardwalk were the only big attractions a few years back.

Old-timers will tell you Santa Cruz has changed but all the good things it used to have are still here — the old intermingled with the new.

Weekend Events