

# FAIRS Better parking, rides make fair successful

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WATSONVILLE — The 1986 Santa Cruz County Fair will be remembered as the one from which the wild woman was ousted.

The fair itself is history, having closed Sunday after nearly breaking last year's record 65,000 attendance.

The fair had improved parking and a good carnival before and after the wild woman. But also it had a couple of power outages and one rainy day.

"On Friday we were down about 1,200 from last year's 3,200 because of the rain but on Saturday we had almost the same attendance as last year," Fair Manager Gil Mello said in a telephone interview. Sunday, he said, the crowds were heavy but he didn't think they would make up for the rainy Friday and break the 65,131 attendance record.

It was unclear how well the wild woman drew at the gate but cov-

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erage of her in Thursday's Sentinel, including a Page 1 color photo of the snake-draped woman in her side-show cage, was too much for some. They said such an exhibition degraded women.

Mello banished the show, and she was gone by Friday.

"But I may bring her back next year," he said Sunday. "Otherwise, some Sentinel reporters will have nothing to do."

Mello said the Butler Amusement Co. of San Jose "did a real good job" with the carnival despite the blaring publicity of the wild woman exhibit.

He said the parking this year was aided by the Watsonville Jaycees and local high school students.

"They parked (cars) so fast we had a jam at the admission gate," Mello said. "Then the carnies lent us one of their portable ticket booths to sell more tickets."

The fair had two power outages. Saturday night's darkened the fairgrounds for 90 minutes. Wednesday,

the horse show was dark for about the same time.

"Maybe they could have used miner's lamps," Mello said.

The junior livestock show — at which children cry when their pet livestock is auctioned — saw \$113,000 change hands. Last year's stock brought \$106,000.

One fairgoer had a bad end to his day. Joseph Paterno Faiella of Santa Cruz told officers he was beaten and mugged by a group of Mexican males in a remote area of the parking lot after midnight Saturday. He lost his jacket, wallet and \$35 to \$40.

Although Sunday's receipts hadn't been tallied, Mello estimated that about 65,000 attended the six-day fair, which grosses about \$600,000.

"It was a good fair and I enjoy bringing the fair to Santa Cruz," Mello said. "And as for Friday's bad weather it probably cost us the record but then fair managers have a unique ability to use bad weather as an excuse for poor attendance."