

CELEBRATION!

Thousands mark rebirth of downtown

By LARRY O'HANLON
Sentinel correspondent

SANTA CRUZ — With bagpipes, clowns, a marching band and thousands of celebrants, Santa Cruz officially reopened its downtown Saturday. Mayor Neal Coonerty started the dedication ceremony on the post office steps following a parade up Pacific Avenue.

"I want to extend to you a welcome to the new downtown Santa Cruz," said Coonerty. "Those are sweet words."

Coonerty recalled the 15-second, 7.1-magnitude earthquake that brought much of downtown tumbling down on Oct. 17, 1989. Then he recounted the years of work that have brought the area back to life.

Celebrants came from all over to join in the celebration. Local businesses opened booths on the streets and music boomed from four outdoor stages at various locations along Pacific Avenue.

"We're opening our street with our son

walking on it," said Paul Bush, whose 16-year-old son Robert plays saxophone and marched in the Santa Cruz High School marching band. Even Paul's father, Jesse, was at the parade, welcoming the opening of streets and sidewalks that they helped shape as workers for Granite Construction Co.

Martha Kaufeldt, a native of Felton, came with her husband, Barney, and sons Kris, 3 and Kurt 10. She used to work at a downtown store before it was closed by quake damage.

"I used to work here; I have an interest in the street opening up," she said.

While most celebrants were local residents, many weren't.

"We're just visiting and lucky to be here for the celebration," said Sherrie Mattson of Menominee, Mich. She and three friends flew to California on Friday, and were soaking up the sun and sounds downtown.

Bagpipe players from San Francisco's Stewart Tartan Pipes and Drums recalled coming

to march in Santa Cruz's 200th anniversary in 1991.

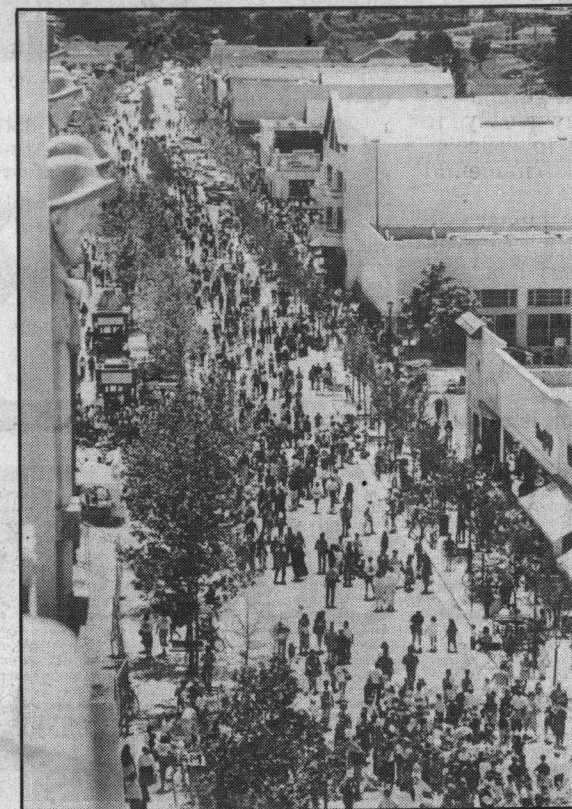
"It was just ruins," said piper George Kreider. At that time the pipers couldn't march up Pacific Avenue, because of the reconstruction work. They marched up Cedar Street instead. Saturday the pipers led the parade. They noticed a difference in the Santa Cruz people, too.

"The natives don't seem as stressed out today as they were then," Kreider said.

Gale and Dave Goodman of Santa Cruz watched the celebration from their usual seats, sipping espresso outside Cafe Milano on Pacific Avenue.

"We've watched (downtown) as it's changed," said Dave.

"We used to go to the Java House but moved over here as things got better," he said.



Celebrants looked like ants from high atop the Palomar Inn.

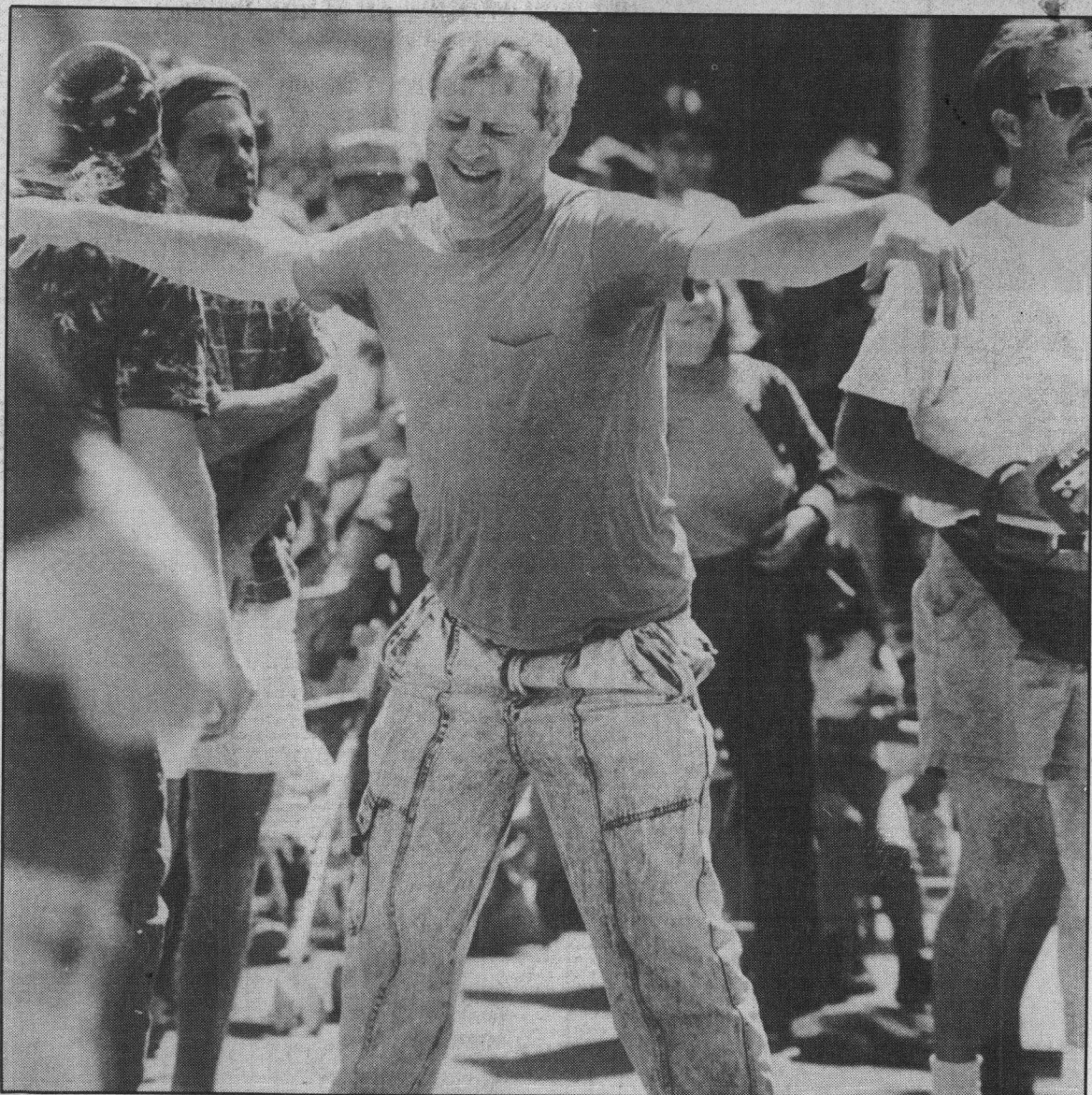
Dan Coyro/Sentinel





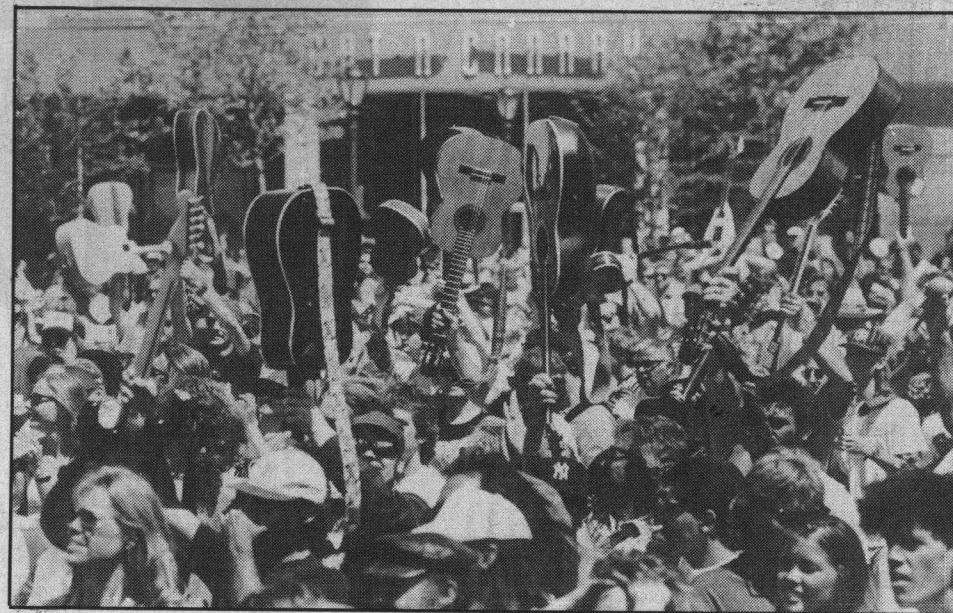
Stilt-man Rock Lerum towers above the crowd on Pacific Avenue.

Shmuel Thaler/Sentinel



Unidentified dancer cuts loose to the sounds of Spang-a-Lang.

Shmuel Thaler/Sentinel



Hundreds of guitarists mounted brave assault on world record.

Dan Coyro/Sentinel

Close, but no guitar (record)

SANTA CRUZ — The fourth annual "Shake, Rattle and Roll World Record Event" attracted 467 guitarists — plus accordionists, drummers, trumpeters, flutists, and scores of other musicians — to downtown Santa Cruz on Saturday.

The musicians gathered at Pacific Avenue and Cathcart Street, strumming "Shake, Rattle and Roll" for more than an hour. The Cool Jerks musical group set the pace and invited local talent to step up to the microphone and improvise.

But it was not enough.

Santa Cruz set the record for the most guitars playing the same song simultaneously in 1990 with 532 guitarists. The record was overturned in 1991 in Columbus, Ohio, by participants who strunged

together 545 guitarists.

When the guitarists learned they were 79 guitars short of the record, there was a moment of disappointment. Organizers blamed the large number of other events Saturday for this year's shortage, but the guitarists weren't discouraged; many said they'd be back next year.

Guitarist No. 104, Wyatt Hilyard of Santa Cruz, has been attending the event all his life. At age 3, he was probably the youngest guitarist present. His parents David (guitarist No. 105) and Darrie Hilyard of Santa Cruz towed Wyatt about in a red Radio Flyer wagon.

Guitarist No. 357, Rose McFarlane, said the event was "more subdued this year."

Larry O'Hanlon