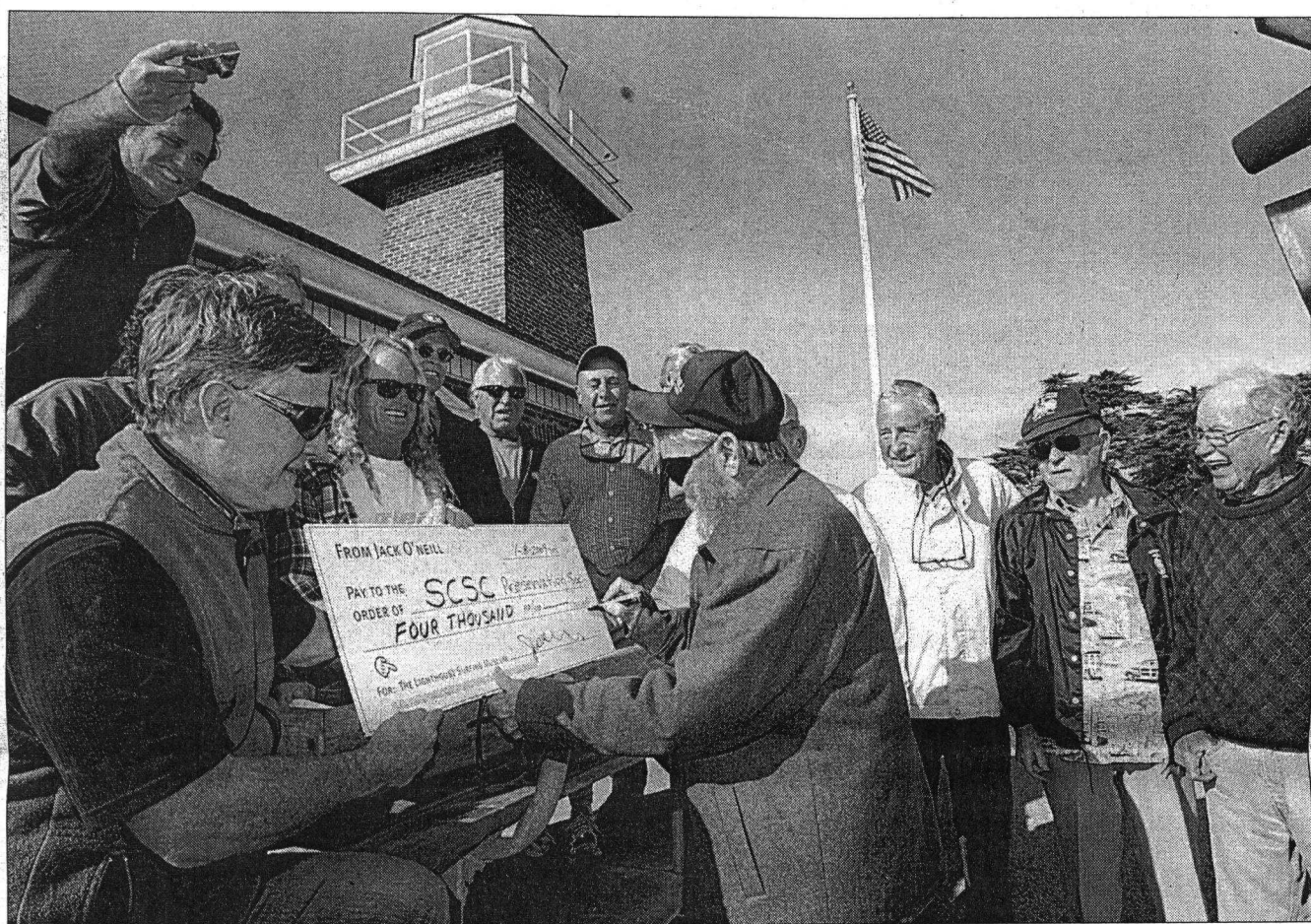


'Surf City Santa Cruz should have a surf museum.'

JACK O'NEILL, WETSUIT PIONEER



Dan Coyro/Sentinel

Jack O'Neill signs a \$4,000 check to the Santa Cruz Surfing Club Preservation Society, whose members aim to keep the Surf Museum open in the wake of city budget cuts.

Good news for city museums, centers

Money comes through to keep doors open after city budget cuts

By GENEVIEVE BOOKWALTER
SENTINEL STAFF WRITER

The Beach Flats Community Center, Harvey West Pool, Surfing and Natural History museums and Teen Center likely will be saved from closing.

"We are really, really excited," said Danettee Shoemaker, director of the city's Parks and Recreation Department. "I am cautiously very optimistic."

The museums, community and teen centers and pool all were jeopardized late last year as the city struggled with ways to remedy a \$7 million deficit. City leaders told residents they had less than one month to raise money to save their favorite facilities, as Santa Cruz no longer could afford to fund them.

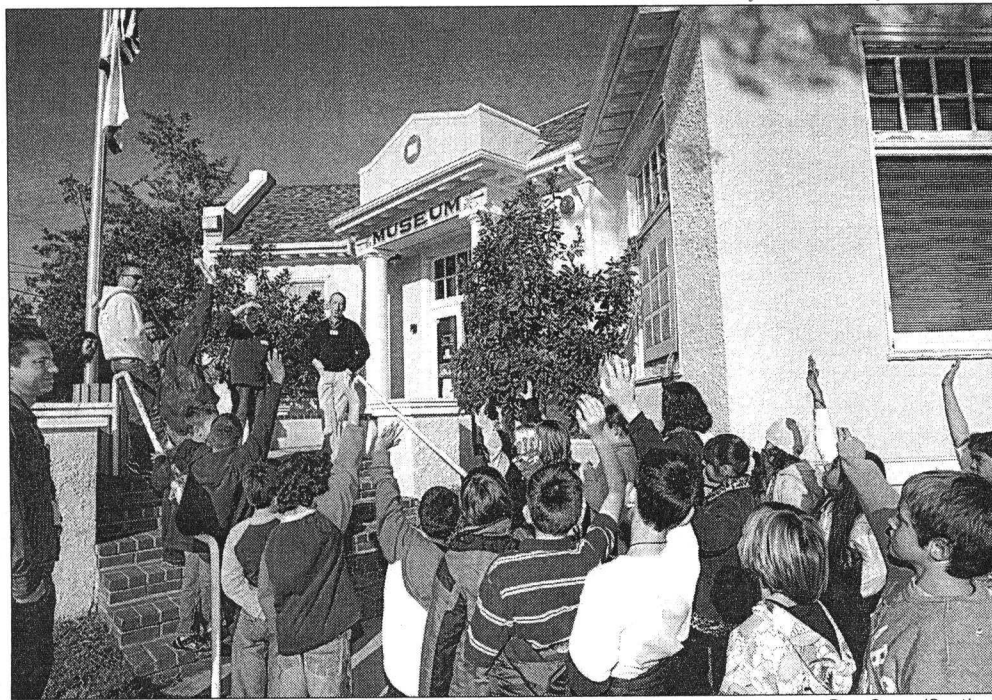
While Shoemaker would not release details of the proposals Thursday, she said community members have stepped up and likely will rescue most, if not all, of the facilities. The City Council will review those plans on Tuesday and decide where to go next.

"It's going to be absolutely crazy, yet remarkable, that so many people have come together with so much energy that we can salvage the programs," Shoemaker said.

For example, Thursday, wetsuit pioneer Jack O'Neill wrote a \$4,000 check to the Santa Cruz Surfing Club Preservation Society, which is leading the effort to save the Surfing Museum in the Mark Abbott Memorial Lighthouse.

"They were running out of money and I wanted to help them stay open," O'Neill said. "Surf City Santa Cruz should have a surf museum."

At the Natural History Museum, operations director Lise Peterson said the Santa Cruz



Dan Coyro/Sentinel

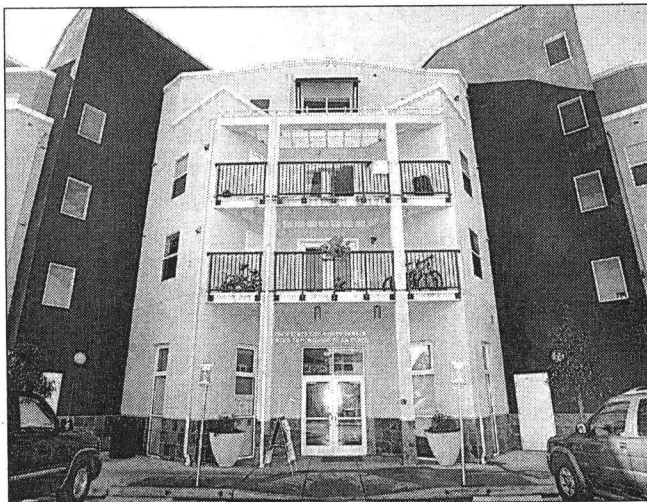
School kids line up to enter the Santa Cruz Natural History Museum on Thursday. Lise Peterson, operations manager for the museum, says the facility will be getting help to stay open despite budget cuts.

Museum Association hopes to take over and run the favorite school field-trip destination.

And at Beach Flats Community Center, community liaison Reyna Ruiz marveled at the number of people and groups who are helping the center keep its doors unlocked and after-school programs going. When city leaders cut funding last month, she said, the center didn't even have an advisory board to accept donations.

Now, a board is being formed and the center is considering a partnership with Mercy Housing and The Boys and Girls Club of Santa Cruz, Ruiz said.

"We're about to celebrate our 15-year anniversary in March," Ruiz said. "And you know what? I'm optimistic that we'll be around another 15."



Dan Coyro/Sentinel

The Beach Flats Community Center may partner with the Boys and Girls Club and Mercy Charities to stay afloat in the wake of city budget cuts.