



Underwater University

Class is now in session at Seymour Marine Center



Shmuel Thaler/Sentinel photos

Above: The Monterey Bay is reflected in a display door as the new Seymour Marine Center Visitor Programs Manager Lisa Borok fine-tunes one of the exhibits. **Top:** A monkey face eel, left, patrols one of the center's aquariums. At right, a treefish from Monterey Bay swims in one of the larger display tanks.

Research institute's grand opening set for Friday

By **ROBIN MUSITELLI**
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SANTA CRUZ — It might have lots of aquariums, but the new Seymour Marine Center opening this weekend is definitely not an "aquarium."

It's a science education center. And while fish and tanks are included, the stars of this show are scientists and researchers.

The exhibits focus on how research is done and showcase 17 programs under way at UC Santa Cruz's Institute of Marine Sciences — work on elephant seals, sea otters and whales, for instance.

Unlike at aquariums, visitors won't find

■ The Friday and Saturday grand opening includes music, food, storytelling, tours and lectures. The center is open 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday and noon to 5 p.m. Sunday. Admission is \$5 for adults; \$3 for seniors (60 and up), students, and kids ages 6 to 16. Kids under 5 get in free.

beautiful backdrop backgrounds in the tanks. Tanks here have grids to measure, for instance, how fast a sunflower star fish moves. (Not fast, is the unscientific answer.)

The look and the feel of the center is like a

research facility. Cadmium yellow steel frames showcase the exhibits. The exhibits don't just give information: they pose questions.

And while the Seymour Center features the work of world-class scientists, it also is open to students — from elementary school kids through university grad students — who want to use the facilities to study.

The shifts in focus are intentional. "Our intent was to make science human," said Julie Heffington, the center's director. "We want to have people think and feel and

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