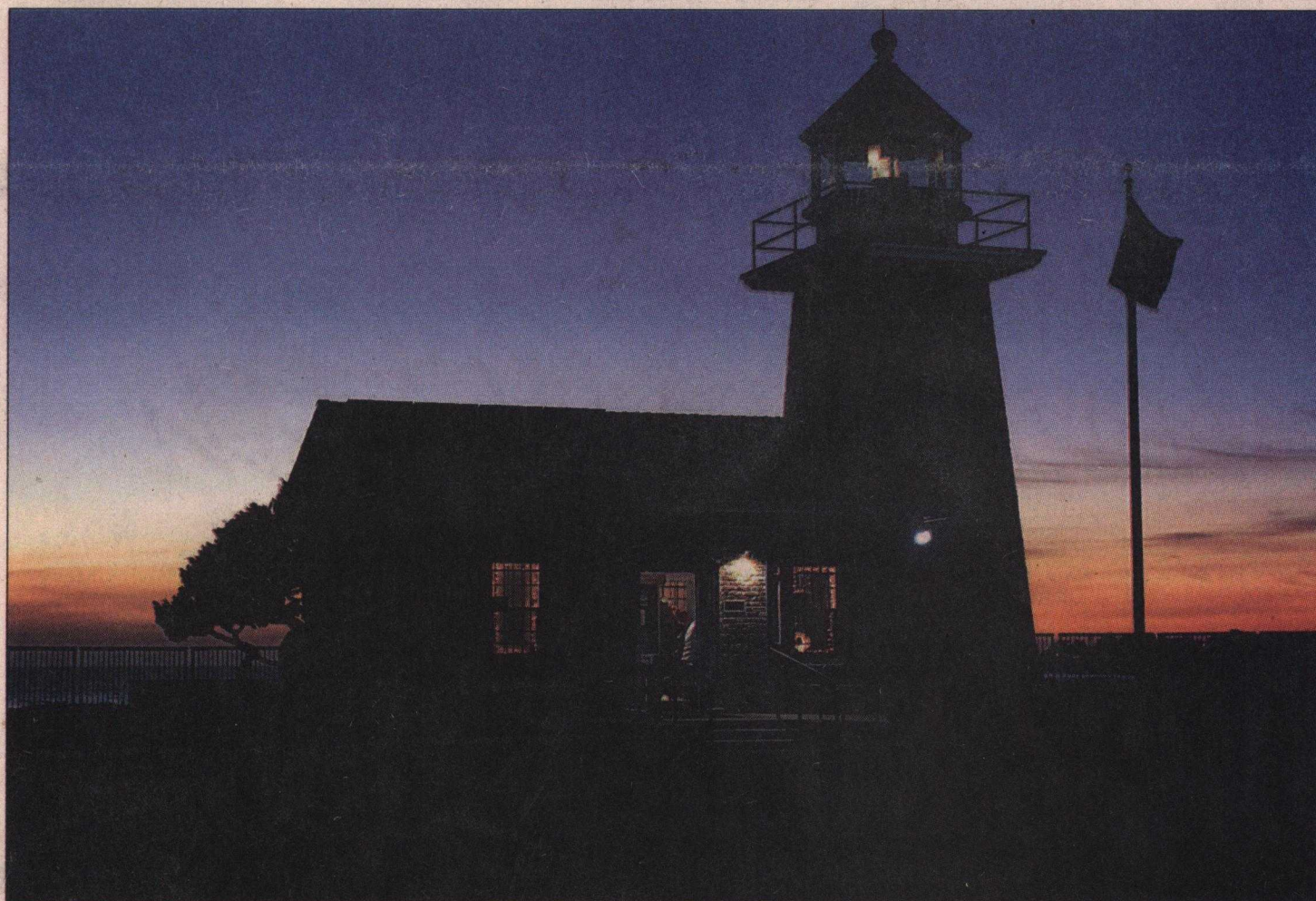


# SHINE ON

Solid beam light replaces flashing beacon owned by Coast Guard



SHMUEL THALER/SENTINEL

A new solid beam beacon shines from atop the Mark Abbott Memorial Lighthouse on Thursday at dusk.

Lighthouses

By SHANNA MCCORD

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SANTA CRUZ — The flashing light atop Santa Cruz's iconic lighthouse has been replaced with a single incandescent bulb that shoots a sweeping beam of light at five-second intervals 16 miles across the Monterey Bay.

The 35-watt bulb encased in glass, and made in New Zealand, is aided in power by a Fresnel lens to allow the navigational light at Mark Abbott Memorial Lighthouse to be seen from greater distances.

"This is great," longtime resident and former city employee Joe Hall said. "It returns a tradition to Santa Cruz."

The return of a solid beam at the West Cliff Drive lighthouse was celebrated Thursday with a gathering of city leaders, Rep. Sam Farr, community members and the two longtime Santa Cruz residents who largely orchestrated the switch in lighting styles during the past two years.

While Live Oak residents Bill Simpkins and Jim Thoits spearheaded the effort to get a solid beam back because it's more attractive and historically fitting, it was Farr who convinced the U.S. Coast Guard to give up ownership of the light — a move necessary for the change to take place.

"(The lighthouse) is an incredible tradition going back over 100 years," Farr told the small crowd

gathered in front of the lighthouse at sunset on Thursday. "It's a symbol of safety. It also symbolizes bringing together this community."

The city owns the brick lighthouse, which houses the Santa Cruz Surfing Museum and is depicted in the city's official logo.

The lighthouse was originally

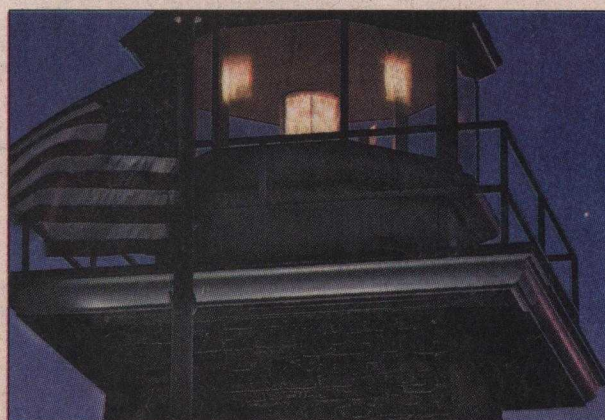
SEE LIGHT ON A4



LEFT: Rep. Sam Farr, who spoke during the dedication of the new lighthouse beacon, was instrumental in returning a solid beam to the Santa Cruz landmark.

BELOW: The planet Venus rises at right, as the new solid beam beacon shines from the Mark Abbott Memorial Lighthouse on Thursday.

SHMUEL THALER/SENTINEL







SHMUEL THALER/SENTINEL

Santa Cruz Mayor Lynn Robinson speaks at the dedication of the new lighthouse beacon Thursday.

## LIGHT

Continued from A1

constructed in 1868 with wood and torn down 80 years later, getting rebuilt with red brick.

But the Coast Guard had owned and maintained the actual light, and had replaced the solid beam with a flickering light two years ago, which caught the eyes of Simpkins and Thoits.

The two lighthouse enthusiasts, both recreational sailors who were also instrumental in raising money to build Walton Lighthouse at the Santa Cruz harbor, were disappointed to see the blinking light.

"It was horrible," Simpkins said. "It was just this flash."

They were met with support by the city's Parks and Recreation Department about getting the solid beam back on West Cliff Drive.

Parks Recreation Superintendent Carol Scurich worked with the Coast Guard and it agreed for the city to take ownership of the light and keep it in working order.

"It's alive, it's moving," Simpkins said. "I've done a lot of sailing and a lot of times I see this light from the ocean. There's something romantic about it."

Thoits, who has served on the harbor's port commis-

sion, said he was pleased the switch was made.

Despite all the modern navigational technology available for mariners, a lighthouse is still a necessary tool, he said.

"If your GPS goes out, what do you do? You need another aide to navigate," he said. "This is what a lighthouse should be."

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