

SC County Fair opens today

Fairs - 2000

Volunteers,
residents, staff
prepare for event

By JON CHOWN

OF THE REGISTER-PAJARONIAN

Drinking beer at 9 a.m. on a Saturday? It was just one of the many jobs that a host of volunteers were busy at over the weekend in preparation for today's opening of the Santa Cruz

County Fair.

Keith Weyrauch of Hollister was one of the beer drinkers — sipping stouts, ales, porters and pilsners while judging the entries at the Home Brewing department. Weyrauch has been judging beer at the Santa Cruz County Fair for more than 10 years.

"I look forward to it every year," Weyrauch said.

But Bob Desantis, his judging partner for the day, said it's not always wonderful.

"Judging beer can be a risky hobby sometimes," Desantis said.

Weyrauch agreed.

"Back in the day, we used to run into a lot more problems than we do now," he said. "Home brewing has improved and the beer that is entered has improved, but if somebody makes a mistake, we're the ones to find out."

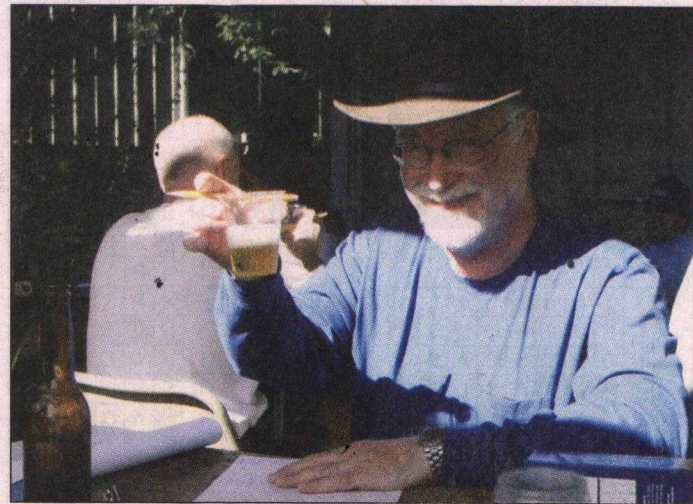
With cases and cases of beer to judge, the dozen or so judges were busy for hours. Mia

Bossie, chairwoman of the Home Brewing department, said there were 131 entries this year, far more than ever before.

"That's why we feed everybody," Bossie said, pointing to the barbecues, which had ice chests full of chicken waiting beside them.

Tony and Judy Souza, co-chairs of the Home Arts Department, were also busy Saturday as cakes, cookies, jams, jellies,

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Keith Weyrauch of Hollister judges a beer entry Saturday at the Santa Cruz County Fairgrounds.



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ABOVE: Miranda Sampson (left), 10, and her twin sister, Arielle, work on a garden Saturday at the Santa Cruz County Fairgrounds. **BELOW:** Judy Souza (left), co-chair of the Home Arts department, receives baked good entries from JoGene Vega of Watsonville on Saturday. Also pictured, turning in home-baked bread, are Cherice Titus and Robert Ingalls of Aptos.

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bread and other delectable dishes were brought in before Sunday's judging.

"Oh my goodness. Look at that!" Judy Souza said as JoGene Vega showed up with a coffee/bourbon cake covered in chocolate and roasted almonds. "That looks like it's going to get a prize."

Vega also brought in peanut clusters and peach turnovers. She said she has been entering baked goods for the past three years, ever since her apple pie placed third at the fair.

"It's just so much fun, I don't know why I didn't do it sooner," Vega said. "I entered this cake last year and won best of show. I almost fainted. So I thought I'd try it again."

Right behind her in line, Cherice Titus of Aptos brought in a bounty of breads. She entered cinnamon rolls, cinnamon bread, 10-grain bread, white bread, whole-wheat bread and more.

"It's a family tradition," she said. "I've been entering stuff in the fair for years. All my family enters stuff. My nieces are in the apple pie contest."

In the Floriculture department, young and old alike were



preparing exhibition gardens. Inside the building, Bettie Crandall of Aptos was arranging a flower display as part of the commercial exhibit for Corralitos Gardens. Outside, 12-year-old Kelsey Waugaman was helping 10-year-old twins Miranda and Arielle Sampson put one of their three gardens together.

Diane Sampson, the twins' mother, said her girls were excited about creating their gardens.

"Home Depot let us borrow all the plants and it was so much fun," she said. "They were so generous."

Miranda Sampson, who was busily digging soil and burying pots, said preparation for the gardens began about three weeks ago.

"We spent awhile planning it, but now we're kind of just doing it as we go along," she said. "This is our first time, but we're doing good."

• After a weekend of work and more on Monday, residents, volunteers and fair staff had the fairgrounds ready for the annual event. There will be an opening ceremony today at 11:50 a.m. at the Rodgers House before the fair officially opens at noon.

Bettie Crandall of Aptos arranges flowers while preparing the exhibition garden for Kevin Larkin of Corralitos Gardens Saturday in advance of the Santa Cruz County Fair, which opens today.

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