

MILESTONE FOR LANDMARK

# HARBOR MARKS 50 YEARS

**Rededication ceremony:** Event kickoff offers a chance to look back at growth of facility



KEVIN JOHNSON — SANTA CRUZ SENTINEL

Port Director Lisa Ekers speaks to a large crowd at the Santa Cruz Harbor on Friday afternoon during the Harbor's 50th anniversary and rededication ceremony. Construction of the harbor began in 1961, it was opened in 1964 and, over time, it has become a 92 acre landmark.

**By Terri Morgan**

newsroom@santacruzsentinel.com

**SANTA CRUZ »** With pomp, circumstance, speeches and laughter about 250 people celebrated the 50th anniversary of the Santa Cruz Harbor Friday afternoon. The rededication ceremony, which was held on the lawn at Mariner's

Park, officially kicked off a year of events to honor the harbor's half century of existence.

Construction of the small craft harbor began in 1961 at Woods Lagoon, between Seabright and Twin Lakes Beaches. Funded by \$1.6 million in federal funds, it was opened in 1964 and has become a scenic, recreational land-

mark that draws people from all walks of life.

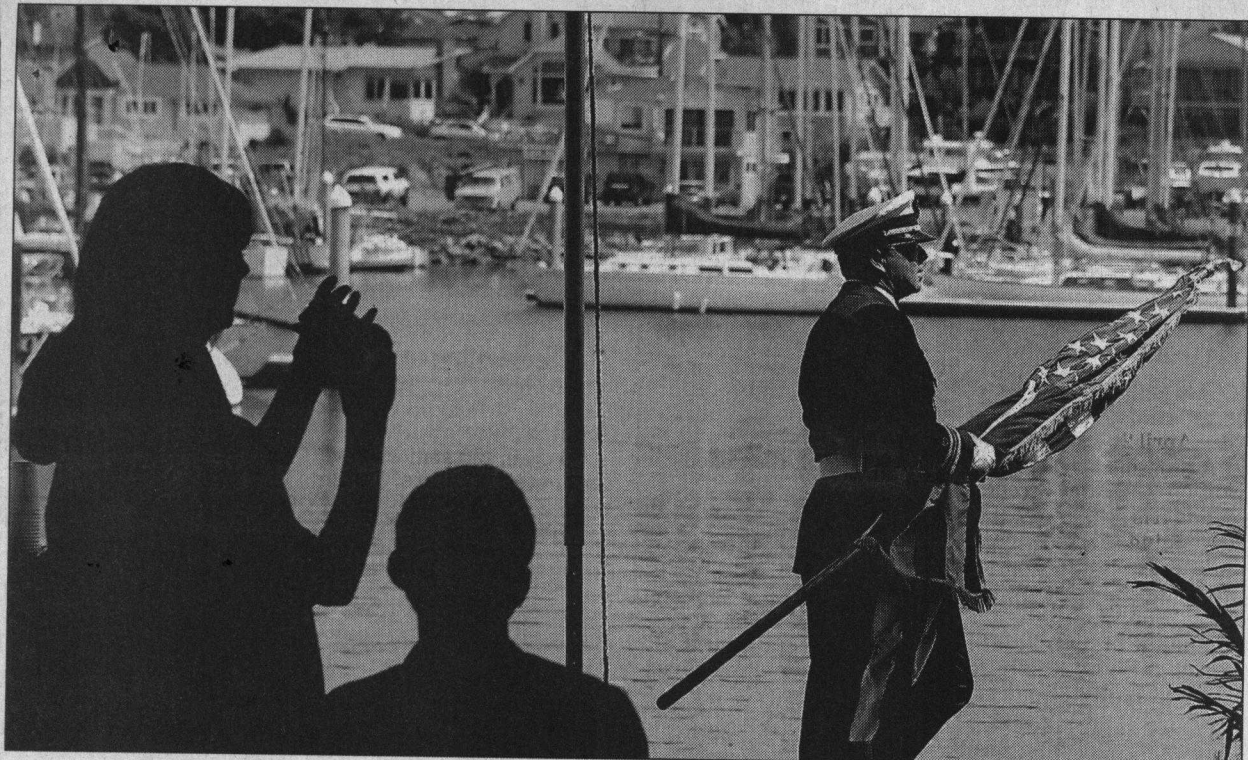
The harbor has been expanded in 1973 when the upper harbor was opened. Today, it encompasses 92 acres and has berths for 1,000 boats, including 800 permanent slips with the rest reserved for visiting vessels. Recreational, commercial and research

boats are docked at the harbor, which also has launch ramps and is home to fishing, whale watching and sailing charters, and sailing lessons.

"It was built for boats and boaters," said Stephen Reed, who is chair of the Santa Cruz Port District Commission. Now it's a des-

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Members of the Coast Guard are ready to present the colors as onlookers snap photographs with their smart phones at the Santa Cruz Harbor on Friday afternoon as the Harbor celebrated its 50th anniversary.

## Harbor

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tination for “walkers, sightseers, joggers, businesses, nonprofits, paddlers, rowers, artists, musicians and environmentalists. The harbor’s become all things to all people.”

Others agreed. Aaron Becker, who recently bought a powerboat berthed at Dock C, watched the crowd assemble from the end of the dock. A rower who works out in the harbor four or five days a week, Becker is preparing to move onto his boat early next month.

“I love the harbor,” he said. “It’s one of the best hidden secrets of Santa Cruz. It’s a great resource and its a destination for people to come and walk their dogs, bring their families and enjoy the tranquility.”

The ceremony began with five uniformed members of the Coast Guard Auxiliary formally presenting the colors. Marching solemnly into the front large white pavilion set up on the west side of the harbor to cover a temporary podium and audience seating, the honor guard delivered and set up the national, state, Coast Guard and Coast Guard Auxiliary flags. The volunteer honor guardsmen, who hailed from Monterey, Alameda and Livermore, said they were thrilled to participate in the celebration.

“We go out of the harbor all the time and do patrols (here) so it’s a chance to give back,” said Tracy Schultz.

Port Director Lisa Ekers, who introduced the speakers and dignitaries in the audience, also reminisced about learning how to sail and fish



A man walks between two clusters of docked sailboats at the Santa Cruz Harbor on Friday.

at the harbor, where she also purchased her first wetsuit and discovered surfing was not her sport.

Ekers, who provided leadership after the harbor incurred millions of dollars of damage during the 2011 tsunami, talked about the fact that the harbor has changed over the decades.

“The harbor is old and it’s new,” she said, as colorful signal flags flapped gently in the wind behind her, rigging lines clanged against the masts of sailboats and boats cruised slowly between the mouth of the harbor and their berths.

The harbor provides more than just recreation for the community. Reed, who drew laughs from the crowd when he announced he has made 480 consecutive slip payments, grew serious when he compared the harbor as an economic engine for the city. Along with slip fees, the harbor drew revenue by providing temporary berth space for more than 10,000 overnight visitors last year. He also noted the harbor has generated jobs and hosts a vibrant business community.

“There are 30 plus businesses employing almost 800 people,” Reed said.