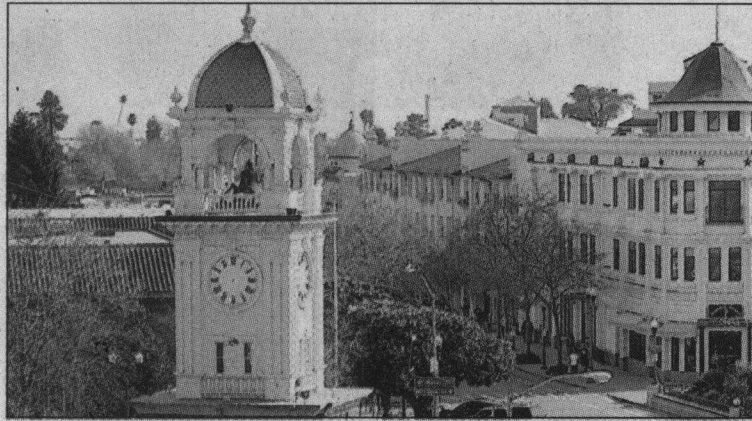


Time stands still downtown



DAN COYRO/SENTINEL

The hands of the Town Clock in Santa Cruz have been removed for repair.

By J.M. BROWN

jbrown@santacruzsentinel.com

SANTA CRUZ — If you're downtown and forgot your watch or phone, you might look at the Town Clock and wonder whether time is standing still.

No, the clock just has no hands, on all four sides, for the next couple of weeks.

The Santa Cruz Parks and Recreation Department removed the mechanical workings of the iconic landmark to replace them with electronic components. Director

Dannettee Shoemaker said the \$12,000 project is contained within the city's capital improvement plan.

Historian Geoffrey Dunn said he noticed the clock's hands were gone Monday while taking his mother to lunch downtown. He said he often looks at the clock because he doesn't wear a watch.

"I noticed it immediately," he said. "I look at the time there all the time."

The clock, which sits on a brick tower at the intersection of Pacific Avenue and Water Street, has

such a strong sense of place, visitors might assume it is an original feature of the historic downtown area. It sits across from the 1912 post office and is often the location-of-choice for public protests or celebrations.

But the Seth Thomas clock from 1900 first sat atop the Independent Order of Odd Fellows building on Pacific Avenue south of Cooper Street. For many years, the clock's chimes were silenced due to complaints, Dunn said.

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CLOCK

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It was taken down in the mid 1960s, acquired by the city and placed in storage for more than a decade. It was brought out of retirement in 1976 and placed in a new plaza, where a gas station once stood, to celebrate the country's bicentennial.

"It's a really important part of the community," Dunn said. "It's been an iconic figure my entire life even though it was stashed away for many years."

Meanwhile, the clock's hands are in good hands.

"They are in a safe place and will be installed as soon as the work is complete," Shoemaker said.

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