

# Huge traffic jam snarls Beach Street

□ '50s-style souped-up car display on the benchlands — **Page A2**

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**SANTA CRUZ** — "They've had their chance to do their thing, and we want to get it under control before it gets out of control," said Santa Cruz Police Sgt. Tom Vlassis as he stood in the chill night air outside the Beach Boardwalk and surveyed the increasingly noisy crowd along Beach Street Saturday night.

It was shortly after 10 p.m., and Vlassis was preparing to give the order to his officers to barricade the streets leading to the city's bay-front pleasure palace, where thousands of bystanders had been lining the sidewalks for several hours to

gawk at passing cars, trucks, motorcycles and assorted "cruiser" bicycles.

The traffic, which had moved at a snail's pace all evening, was beginning to show signs of gridlock.

Despite the large crowds, and traffic recalling the Boardwalk's 1973 and 1974 4th of July celebrations, police did keep the unofficial reveling which accompanied the 7th Annual Beach Street Revival "under control" — at no small cost to the taxpayers.

In anticipation of the crowds and the traffic, Police Chief Jack Bassett deployed 15 officers on Beach Street Saturday night. On a normal Saturday evening Bassett's department relies on five to eight officers to patrol the entire city.

"The city is spending a lot of overtime this evening to try to maintain sufficient

control so people aren't hurt," said Lt. Mike Dunbaugh, who said the officers assigned to police the traffic and milling crowd were "doing a hell of a job."

Police originally planned to close Beach Street at 11:30, but moved the closure up an hour and a half. "The street became a safety hazard," Dunbaugh said, "There was no way emergency vehicles (fire or ambulance) could get into the area. There was no place for anyone to go and that's why the street was closed early."

Police kept the street closed until all of the "cruisers" had cleared the area.

Dunbaugh indicated city lawmen were keeping a lid on the situation with numerous arrests and even more numerous traffic citations.

He said that Friday night, officers had issued citations for 166 traffic violations

and made 25 arrests, all in the Beach Street area and mostly "alcohol-related."

"Tonight, we'll clear easily 200 traffic violations and I imagine we'll clear 50-60 alcohol-related arrests," he said.

Nevertheless, Dunbaugh said this year's Beach Street Revival was "10 times better controlled than last year's," when revelers engaged in fights, broke windows and a fire hydrant and tossed bottles and beer cans at police. "We haven't received any citizens' complaints that we haven't been able to take care of; last year there were many we could not handle," he said.

Despite assurances by Revival organizer Rick Petersen that there would be no "cruising" by '50s and '60s auto enthusiasts this year, Beach Street was jammed with vehicles for most of the evening. Most of the cars were not vehicles which had been on display at the car show earlier in the day, though a few of those were scattered throughout the slow-moving procession.

Spectators came from near and far for this year's Revival. Among the hundreds of people lining the sidewalk was Harold Hill, 42, of Fairfield, who said he had driven to Santa Cruz for the day.

"I like the cars, and it's my era," he explained.

Hill, a jet mechanic who has been to three Revivals and is readying a '55 Chevy for next year's, said he loves cruising.

"It's the neatest thing — to show off what you've got."

Santa Cruz resident Dean Trevthan, 30, watched the passing cars for a while before going to the '60s dance at the Coconut Grove Ballroom. Trevthan pronounced this year's Revival "more mello; better controlled" than last year's.

"This," he said, "is like the old days; it's fun."