

Capitola may ask Navy back

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CAPITOLA — A move is on to invite a Navy ship back to Capitola for the Fourth of July, but there's an effort by peace activists to prevent it.

The Capitola City Council will hold a public hearing Thursday night on whether to invite the Navy back for a second Independence Day. Representatives from the Resource Center for Nonviolence will attend in hopes of convincing the council to reject the Navy.

Last year, Capitola hosted the 300-member crew of the USS Francis Hammond when the Santa Cruz City Council majority refused to extend an invitation after pressure from the peace community about inviting a "warship" to Santa Cruz. Capitola was immediately supported by the cities of Watsonville and Scotts Valley in a tri-city welcome to the Navy.

Capitola Mayor Jerry Clarke, who spearheaded last year's visit, is asking fellow council members to approve the visit based on last year's success. He said there were "absolutely no problems," noting that Hammond Cmdr. David Klich told him afterward that the Capitola visit was his crew's most delightful port visit.

Resource Center for Nonviolence spokesman Doug Rand said that it will be an uphill battle to convince council members to not invite the Navy. He said, however, "There are people in Capitola who have concerns about welcoming a warship into our port, and endorsing military recruitment with local tax money."

Capitola spent approximately \$12,000 on last year's visit, most of which went to rent shuttle craft to ferry visitors from Capitola Wharf to the Hammond and back. Some

money also was spent on welcome banners and a reception. Scotts Valley, which hosted a softball tournament and barbecue, contributed \$9,500; Watsonville chipped in about \$2,000.

Rand said spending money on a ship visit would be "an irresponsible use of money, especially in light of the earthquake." But Mayor Clarke said the city would not be spending as much this year, and even planned to ask the Navy to pay for the shuttle craft.

Last year's visit proved to be an economic bonanza for Capitola and merchants reported business up by 15 to 20 percent. Nearly 4,100 people either toured or, because of rough seas, cruised past the Hammond during the three days it was open to the public.

Rand described last year's council action as "railroading" the Navy in since an advertised public hearing was not held.

Thursday's council meeting will begin at 7 p.m. in the council chamber at City Hall.