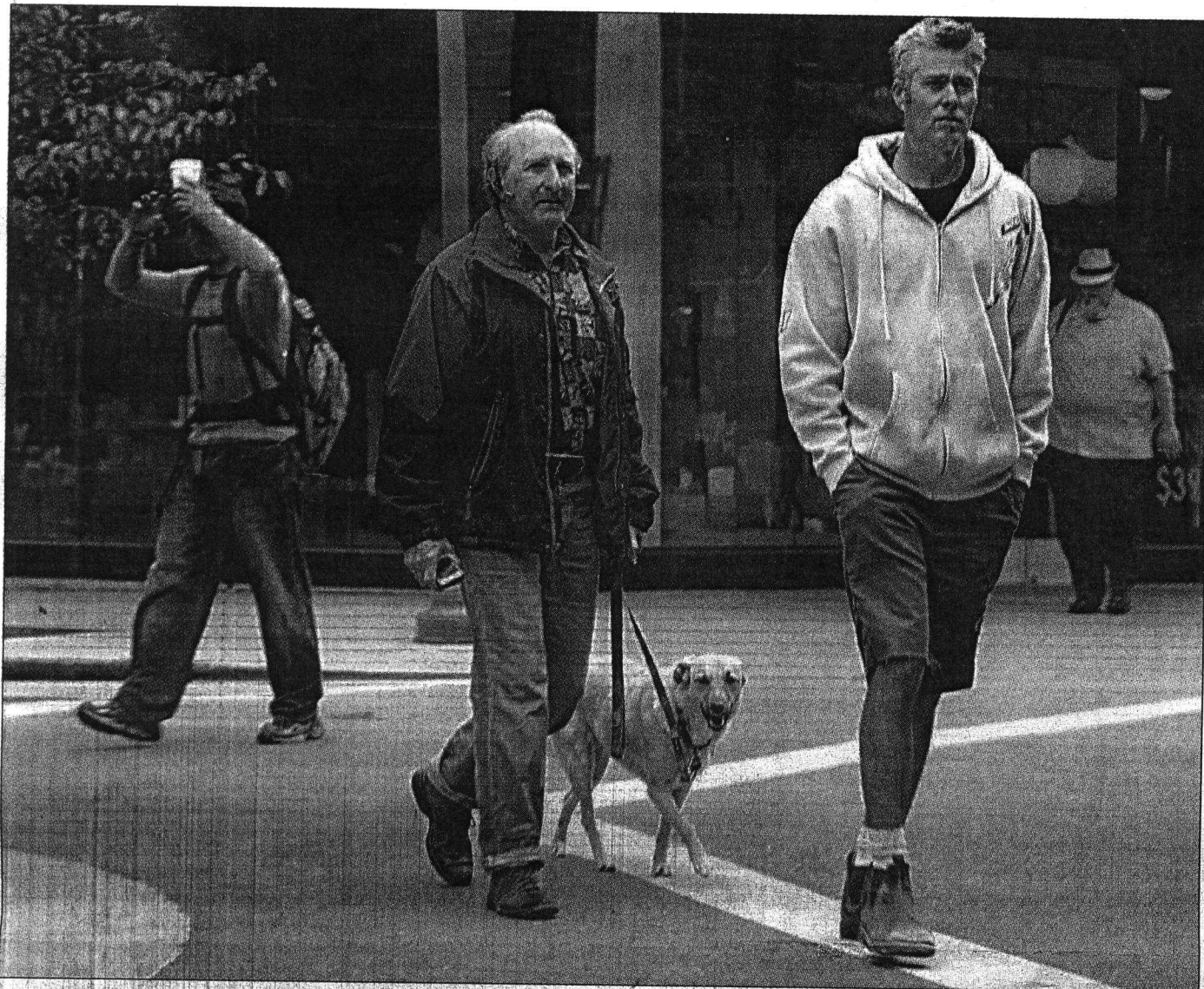


# Dogs legally return downtown

Police issue a few warnings about panhandling, tying dogs to posts



DAN COYRO/SENTINEL

Thursday was the first day in 35 years that dogs are welcome in downtown Santa Cruz.

*Pacific Avenue*  
 By J.M. BROWN  
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## IF YOU GO MUTT STRUT

**WHAT:** Woofers and Walkers encourages dog owners to shop downtown  
**WHEN:** 5-8 p.m. today  
**WHERE:** Pacific Avenue and side streets



DAN COYRO/SENTINEL

A vagabond and his camo-garbed dog amble down Pacific Avenue on Thursday, the first day dogs are officially allowed in downtown Santa Cruz in 35 years.

SANTA CRUZ — Thursday marked the first day in 35 years dogs were legally allowed downtown.

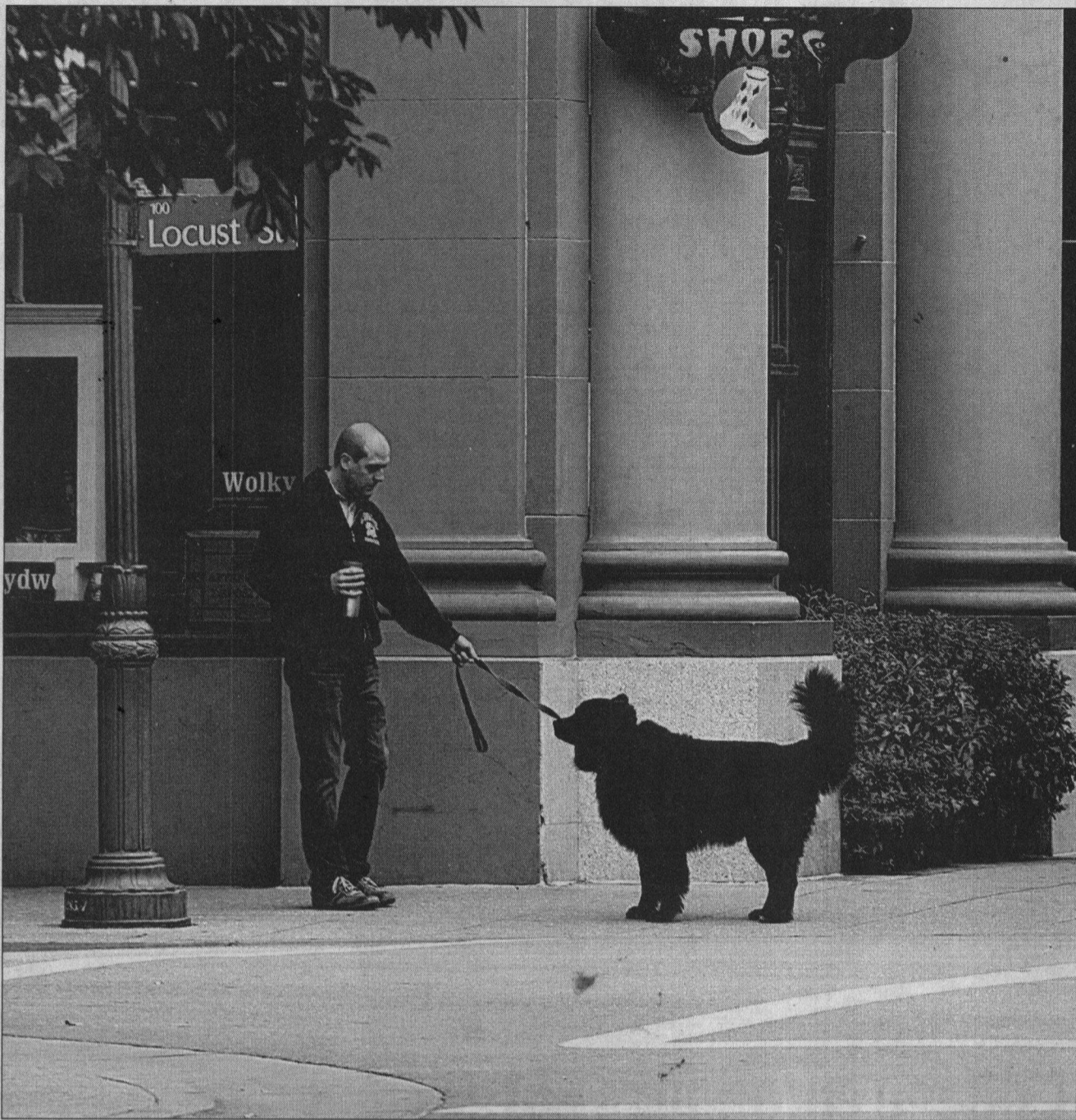
But the beginning of a three-month trial period came and went with little fanfare. Several dog owners admitted to bringing their canine companions downtown long before Thursday's expiration of 30-day waiting period since the City Council lifted the ban in July.

Pat Galea strode Pacific Avenue with 4-year-old sibling Pomeranians Zsa Zsa and Osito on Thursday. Although she lives near Frederick Street Park, where dogs are allowed off-leash, she enjoys walking her babies downtown with a leash and will carry waste collection bags to hand other dog owners.

"If everyone acts responsibly, then there is no reason this shouldn't become permanent," she said.

Police spokesman Zach Friend said officers verbally warned a few people about panhandling with a dog and tying a dog up to a post while shopping — two things outlawed by the new rules. No citations were issued.

Dogs were banned on Pacific Avenue and side streets in 1976 amid complaints of out-of-control dogs. But the Downtown Association, which



DAN COYRO/SENTINEL

A dog owner tries to coax his pooch along Pacific Avenue on Thursday, a first in 35 years.



DAN COYRO/SENTINEL

A man tries to keep track of his rambunctious rat terriers in the patio of Santa Cruz City Hall on Thursday, the first day dogs have been allowed downtown in 35 years.

## DOGS

Continued from A1

represents more than 500 merchants, pressed the city to loosen the rules, saying Santa Cruz was missing out on badly needed sales tax revenue from die-hard dog lovers.

The council agreed to allow dogs if they are licensed, leashed within 3 feet of their handler and not in the presence of more than one other dog. They are not allowed at night and their waste must be cleaned up.

The changes will become permanent in late November unless the council votes to reinstate the ban because of problems. In the meantime,

the city has decided not to permit stations containing donated waste collection bags until the trial period is over.

That's left Whitney Wilde, founder of Woofers and Walkers, to supply bags directly to merchants. She's surveyed businesses to determine which are dog-friendly — she said about 80 percent are — and hopes to place stickers in their windows to alert dog owners that their animals are welcome inside.

Wilde has encouraged dog owners to come downtown from 5-8 p.m. Friday to shop and dine, circulating fliers for what she called "Mutt and Strut." Dell Williams Jewelers and other businesses already have put out water bowls or treats for passing pooches.

## SANTA CRUZ DOG ORDINANCE

Santa Cruz's new rules on dogs on Pacific Avenue and feeder streets are:

- The ban will be lifted for a three-month trial period for the downtown area bounded by Water, Laurel, Cedar and Front streets, and including the Town Clock and Scope Park.
- Dogs must be tethered to a leash no more than 3 feet from handlers, and dogs are restricted to one per leash.
- Dogs must be under the control of their owner.
- Dogs may not be left unattended or tied up outside; any dog left unattended may be taken immediately by police or animal services authorities.
- Dogs may not be in the company of more than one other dog.
- Dogs will be allowed only from sunrise to sunset.
- Dogs must display collar tags demonstrating they have been licensed and vaccinated against rabies as required by the county.
- Panhandling, carrying signs or collecting signatures with a dog is not allowed.
- Violation of the rules may result in a citation, and any subsequent violation committed within 48 hours will constitute a misdemeanor.
- Rule change does not affect dog ban in effect on some beaches and the Santa Cruz Municipal Wharf.

SOURCE: City of Santa Cruz

"If it works, it's going to be great," said Emily Bernard Coonerty, who works at the jewelry store and is president of the Downtown Association board.

With all the foot traffic and other activity that exists downtown, dog advocates hope to avoid incidents of aggression, like a mauling that occurred Aug. 15 when the ban was still in place.

A woman was carrying a puppy in her arms on Pacific Avenue when she reached

down to acknowledge a pit bull, whose owner she knew, Friend said. The pit bull lunged at the puppy, causing two lacerations to the puppy's face.

The puppy was treated at an animal hospital and the pit bull was quarantined by the county's animal services agency. The pit bull's handler was cited because the animal wasn't licensed.

"It was everything we don't want to happen," Wilde said.