

Hundreds attend 'The Last Annual Watt Barbecue'

By JOHN McNICHOLAS
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James Watt probably would have enjoyed it.

About 200 people sat in the sun on Capitola Beach and along the seawall. They listened to music, and to politicians and community representatives speak out against offshore oil drilling at a gathering dubbed by its organizers "The Last Annual James Watt Barbecue."

People walked about, read literature from tables set up along the beach, drank beer and enjoyed the afternoon.

Some tried to dunk a James Watt lookalike, who sat above a tank of water and taunted the "liberals."

It was part of a statewide day of protest against the current plan to open up almost the entire California coastline to oil drilling; a protest against Watt, the Department of Interior he heads and the environmental policies in general of the current administration.

Under Lease Sale 73, 9 million acres offshore would be offered for lease in September, 1983.

From San Diego to Point Arena in Mendocino County, the League for Coastal Protection sponsored similar gatherings today.

In Santa Cruz, the barbecue was organized by Save Our Shores.

Assemblyman Sam Farr, D-Monterey, said the picnic was to "keep the grassroots organization together, to continue the pressure on the secretary and the president."

Also speaking were Rep. Leon E. Panetta, D-Monterey, County Supervisor's Chairwoman Robley Levy, and Lou Moensch, manager of Zelda's Restaurant. Karen Dlaney spoke for Save Our Shores.

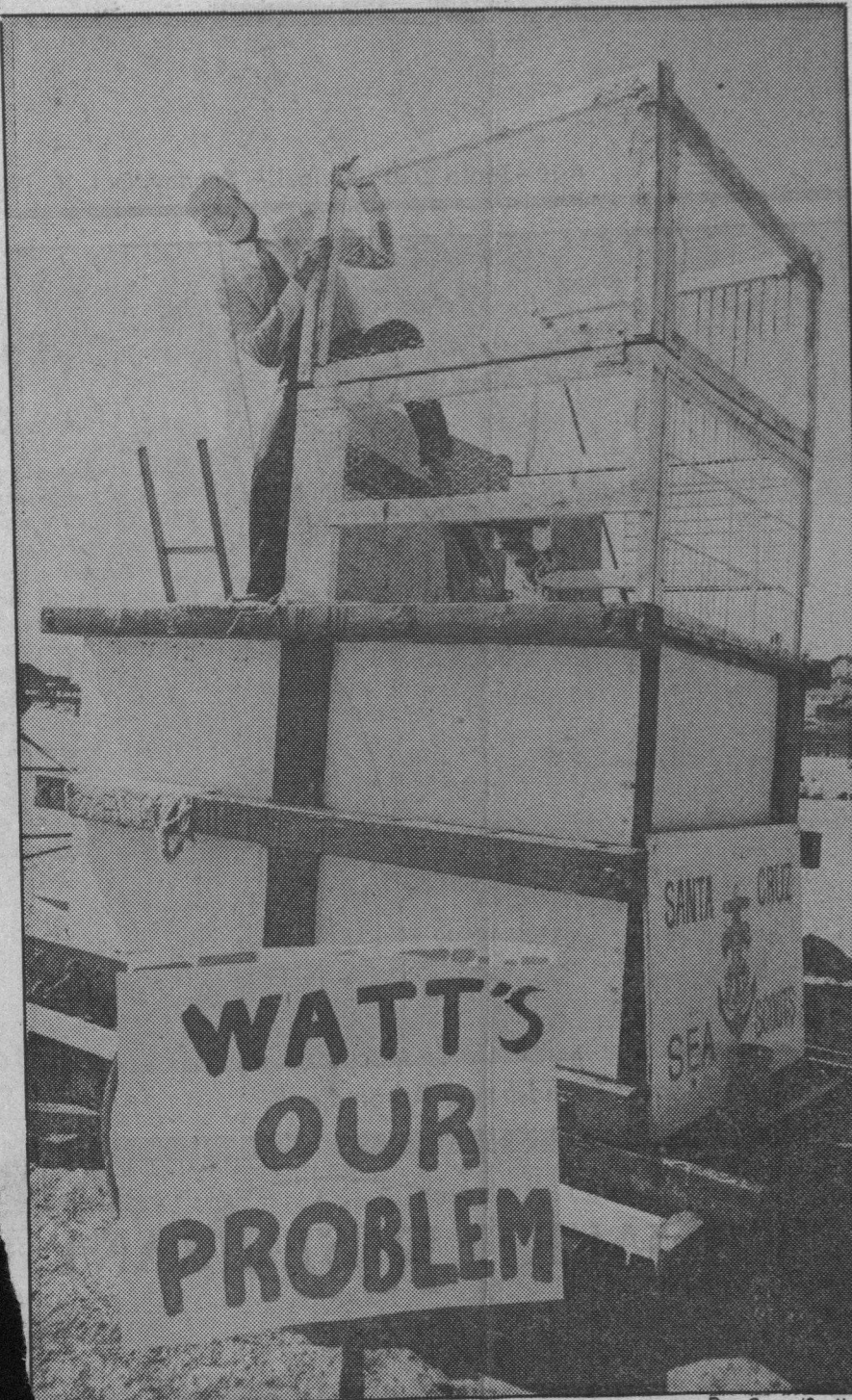
Bob Garcia, former Capitola City Councilman, noted the opposition of local governments along the coast was unanimously against The current plans for offshore drilling. Some would support drilling, he said, if it were safe or necessary. It isn't an "irresponsible fringe group of eco-freaks" opposing it, he said. Possible damage from spills, as well as from the rigs themselves, will be economic as well as environmental.

Chambers of commerce, tourist boards and other usually politically neutral groups have also come out against the current plan to open up the coast to drilling, Garcia said.

"But the most important opposition is the grassroots opposition."



The Redwood String Band provided musical entertainment



Dan Coyro/Sentinel

Tom Cormen manned the "Dunk Watt" booth