

mall Santa Cruz Shows New Style

By DON WILSON
Staff Writer

SANTA CRUZ — The first-time visitor to this resort by the sea would have a hard time believing that this used to be the town where old folks came to retire.

Or where young folks came to play in the surf and fide on things at the boardwalk.

Santa Cruz used to be that kind of town.

To some extent it still is, but the downtown visitor would have to look hard to find the evidence.

Old-timers remember when the Hip Pocket book store first cracked the hard shell of conservatism that had prevailed. "Regular" citizens were shocked and dismayed at some of the types of magazines and books found in the store, and at some of the paintings, sculpture and photography that graced the Hip Pocket art gallery at the back of the store.

Some more knowledgeable people even went so far as to claim that the faint aroma of marijuana could be detected in unventilated corners.

And when Hip Pocket manager Peter Demma acquired a bigger-than-life-size nude, copper statue of a man and a woman and had it installed over the door of the store, a flap of major size ensued.

A little old lady, whose room in the St. George Hotel was right over the Hip Pocket's door, was outraged at the constant view out her window of the nude statue. The management of the hotel reportedly lowered her rent \$5 a month to make up for it.

Ron Boise, the sculptor, finally took his statue away, not because of public pressure but because the Hip Pocket people hadn't paid him for it.

It's an even bet that that same statue wouldn't stir any comment at all today.

The book store has given way to a record shop.

Pacific Avenue is now "the mall."

Trees, dogs, itinerant musicians and foot-loose teenagers now line the street.



NEW LOOK — Pacific Avenue in Santa Cruz has become "the mall," and visitors find it pleasant stroll,

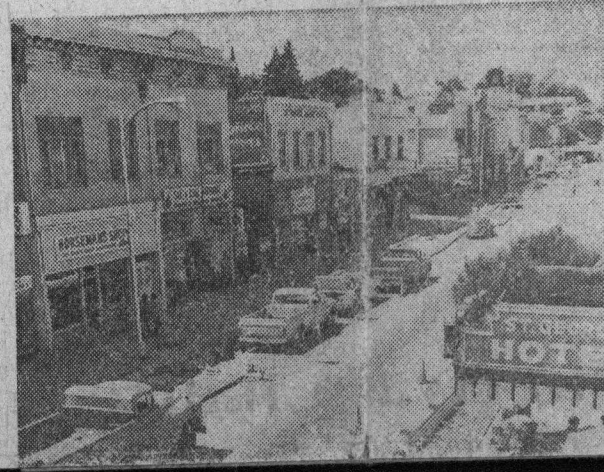
amid an interesting new mixture of people types, language types and general attitudes.

It also is typical of the younger ragged hippies — "new" Santa Cruz that John Lawrence is a rhythm man and vocalist with the group. Lawrence is an ex-convict who came to Santa Cruz to work with various youth projects and still does volunteer work with the county's juvenile hall.

"Only somebody who's been there can tell you where it's at," Lawrence was fond of telling youngsters. He warned them of the pitfalls ahead of them if they tried any of the various faddish

The language of the street has changed, too, with bits of the prudish mingled with bits of hip language and a little bit of plain obscenity apparently thrown in as much for effect as for communication.

Merchants along the mall appear for the most part to be happy, with a few noticeable exceptions. A lot of the new inhabitants of the mall are penniless, but a lot of



“vibes” roll over the mall.

McCaslin is somewhat typical of the new look of downtown Santa Cruz. He was a high school teacher who “got so uptight” he couldn’t teach any longer. He dropped out of his job and hid out in the Santa Cruz Mountains for about a year, playing his xylophone for recreation.

Now, McCaslin has a musical combo called “Warmth” (“Summertime All Winter” is its theme) and he plays every day at the sidewalk cafe at the Cooper House — a “today” shopping center built out of the old country courthouse.

muggings and others) that kids are “into” these days.

Now, he’s a regular with “Warmth” and says the group is getting ready to “cut a record.”

And to the first-time visitor to Santa Cruz, Lawrence doesn’t seem at all unusual.

That visitor wouldn’t realize that there was a time when downtown Santa Cruz was peopled with little old ladies and little old men in tennis shoes and walking chairs. The little old people are still there today, but they’re just one of the layers of people types, intermingled with younger modish lawyers,

them aren’t — and the ones who have money seem to spend it.

In fact, merchants just past the end of the mall toward the beach are complaining that nobody comes down that way since the other end of the mall has become so active.

Old-timers are fond of telling first-time visitors that Santa Cruz “has really changed in the past few years.”

But other old-timers realize that everything Santa Cruz used to be is still here — just one of the layers in a conglomerate pile of all of the new things.



THEN AND NOW — When construction on Pacific Avenue mall in downtown Santa Cruz began five years ago (above) city was pretty staid and conservative. Now, mall has been completed (below), and not only have trees grown, and the street changed, but so have attitude and appearance of community.



WARMTH — Don McCaslin, schoolteacher converted into professional band leader and xylophonist, plays daily at Cooper House sidewalk cafe in Santa Cruz. McCaslin is typical of change which has swept over beachside city.

