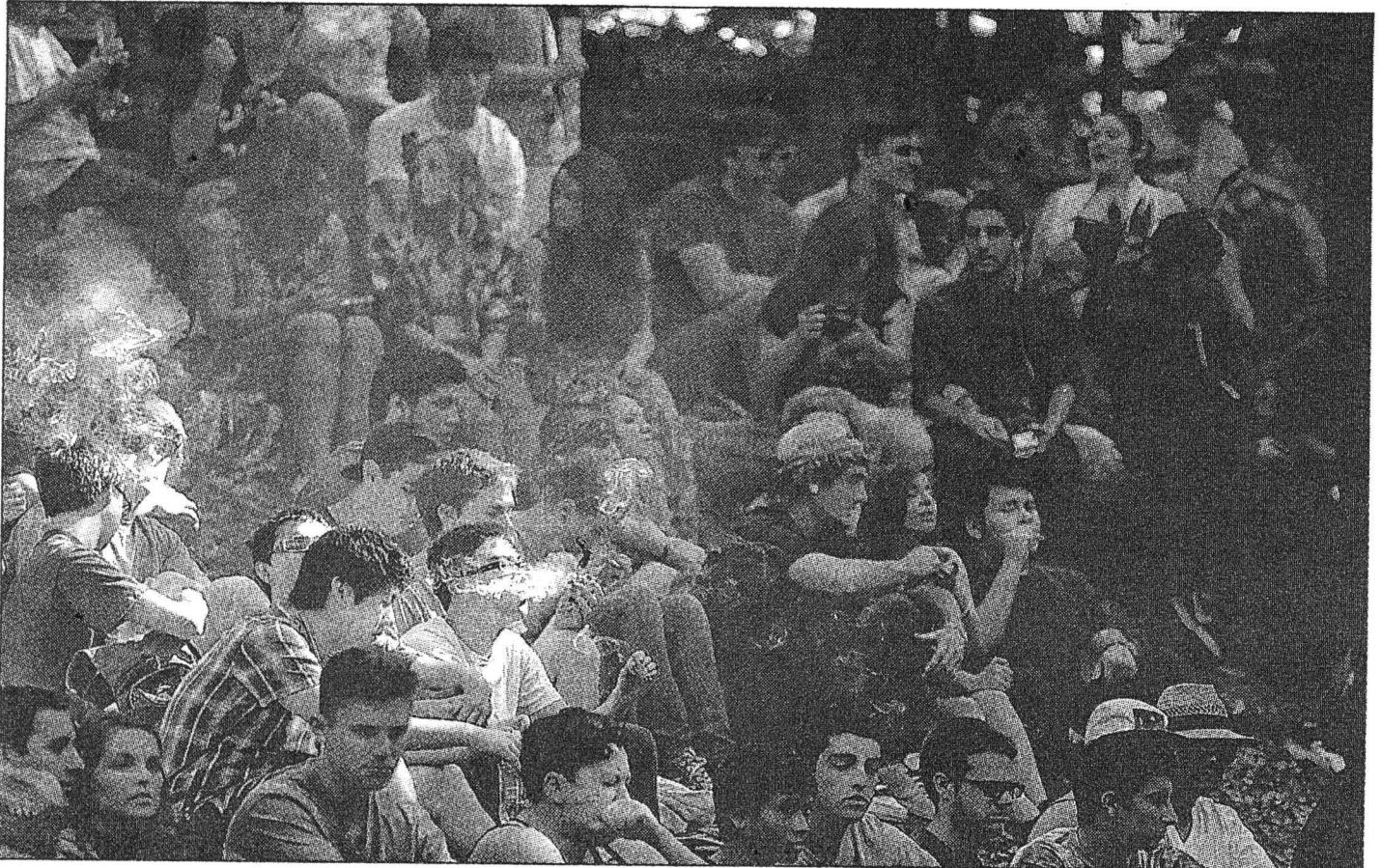


High Times

THOUSANDS SMOKE MARIJUANA AT UCSC FOR UNOFFICIAL 'WEED DAY'



JON WEIAND/SENTINEL

Visitors celebrate 420 by smoking marijuana at 4:20 p.m. Saturday at Porter Meadow on UC Santa Cruz campus.

Events

By SHANNA MCCORD

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SANTA CRUZ — A giant odorous cloud billowed over UC Santa Cruz's Porter Meadow on Saturday as a few thousand people took a bong hit or two or three during an event that's evolved into an international holiday for marijuana smokers.

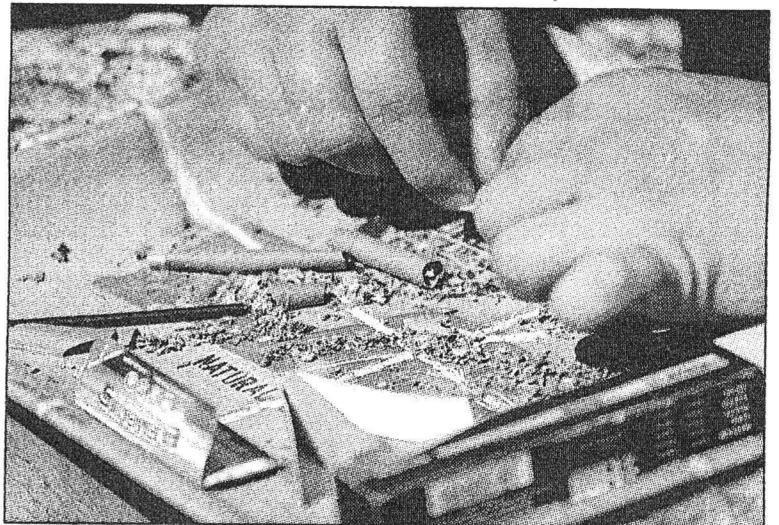
Hordes of mostly college-aged men and women streamed into the grass field in a valley near College Eight throughout the day to celebrate and consume copious amounts of marijuana on April 20 — a date some call "Weed Day" that has come to symbolize a free-for-all smokefest.

They came with their rolled joints, pipes and bongs.

"It's just enjoyable. I don't feel it harms anybody," said Mark Rowley, a UCSC freshman taking puffs off a joint. "It's just a big picnic."

Campus officials estimated up to 4,000 participated. The gathering is not sanctioned by the uni-

SEE 420 ON A2



JON WEIAND/SENTINEL

A man breaks up marijuana to be rolled in tobacco during the 420 celebration at Porter Meadow on UC Santa Cruz campus Saturday.



JON WEIAND/SENTINEL

Visitors celebrate 420 with various smoking devices, snacks and watercolor paint near Porter Meadow at UC Santa Cruz on Saturday.

420

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versity.

University officials bring in additional police officers to patrol the campus and ensure no major incidents happen.

"It's not practical for us to prevent an event this size," UCSC spokesman Jim Burns said. "Our focus has always been to have a police presence and be there for any emergency responses."

Two men were arrested — one for possessing more than an ounce of marijuana and the other for disorderly

conduct — and two people were taken to the hospital after bad reactions from taking drugs, Burns said.

About 50 citations were issued throughout campus Saturday for parking and traffic violations, Burns said.

There were about 35 police officers on campus Saturday, including many from other UC campuses, Capitola and Santa Cruz police departments and the California Highway Patrol.

The event does come with an expense for the university. Burns said the additional officers cost the university \$40,000 to \$50,000 for the day.

"It's costly," he said. "We have to pay for their overtime, their travel expenses and room and board."

The term 420 has a foggy origin, according to Urban-dictionary.com, however, those who've helped turn it into a worldwide phenomenon say it's essentially code for smoking pot.

Some say the backstory on 420 starts somewhere in San Rafael in the late 1970s, possibly police code for "marijuana smoking in progress."

UCSC junior Colleen Walsh had a simple explanation for the gathering.

Whatever the history of the event, Saturday it meant

a time to smoke marijuana.

"It means everyone comes to the meadow and smokes weed," she said. "It's sunny and everyone's in a good mood. It's like a holiday now."

Hannah Reiter, 20, baked a batch of weed cookies to honor the occasion.

"It brings people together," Reiter said. "Pot makes you appreciate things, makes you feel good."

"Celebrating is crucial to being a part of a whole, something bigger than yourself."

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