

'It's simply the same thing over and over again.'

— Chris O'Hanlon, ABC

Catalyst faces ABC discipline

Liquor license suspended over frequent police calls

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SANTA CRUZ — The Catalyst nightclub downtown will lose its liquor license for 20 days because of what the state Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control considers an "abnormal" number of police calls.

In a negotiated settlement between Catalyst owner Randall Kane and the ABC, the business can remain open but can't sell alcohol for 20 days starting April 23.

As part of the agreement, the business' liquor license could be revoked if the ABC takes another enforcement action in the next two years.

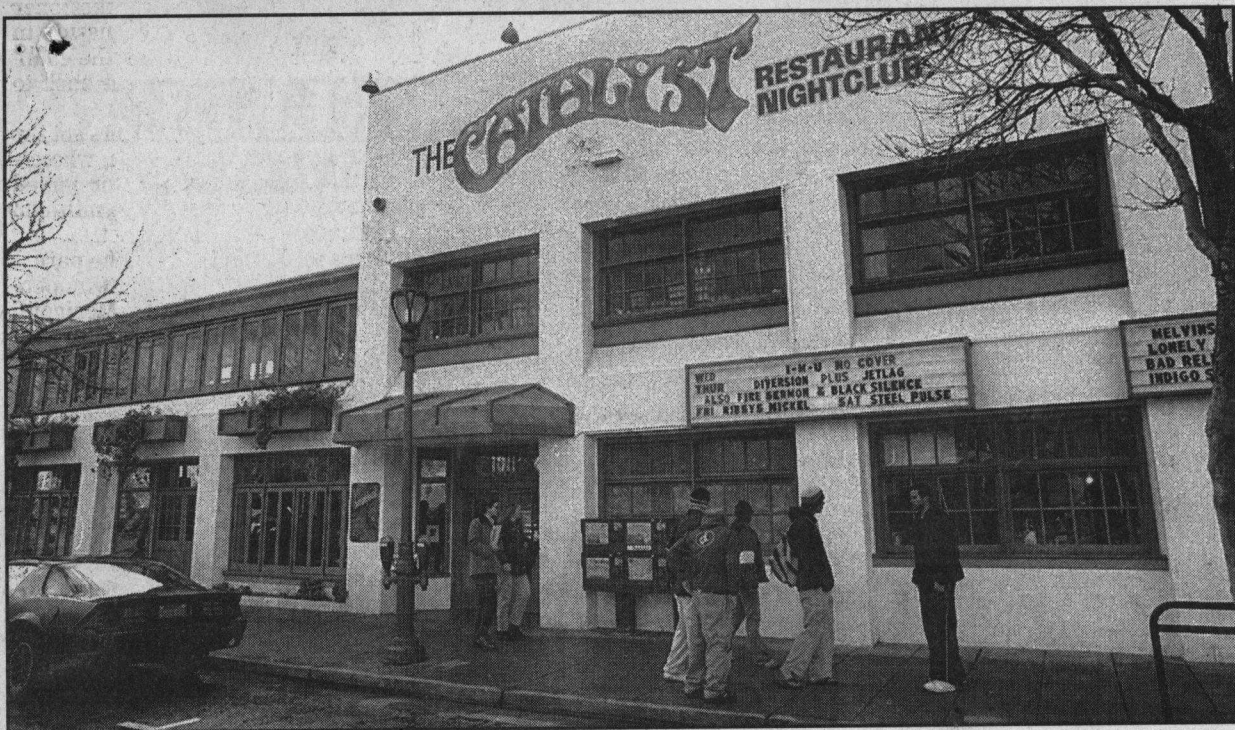
Chris O'Hanlon, ABC's district supervisor, said Santa Cruz police have responded to the Pacific Avenue club too many times for reasons including public drunkenness, fights, assaults, crowd control problems and noise.

"It's simply the same thing over and over again," O'Hanlon said.

Kane and employees would not comment Wednesday but patrons denied there were any unusual troubles at the Catalyst, which features local bands and touring acts. The patrons said Kane is quick to call police when problems arise and doesn't attempt to hide anything.

O'Hanlon said the Catalyst accounted for 131 police

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Dan Coyro/Sentinel

The Catalyst will remain open during the suspension, but alcohol won't be sold.

Catalyst

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calls from September 1996 to January 1999. There were more police reports mentioning the club but the Catalyst wasn't responsible for all of them, he said.

When police are called to a business with a liquor license, officers are required by state law to forward reports to the state. When enough reports are gathered, the ABC can initiate an investigation.

O'Hanlon said he initiated the investigation but that it was supported by Police Chief Steve Belcher.

Kane agreed to the settlement rather than go through a hearing before ABC's state appeals board. The state agency had sought a 35-day suspension. Kane requested the suspension not start until April so it would not affect acts already booked.

O'Hanlon said he was not sure why the Catalyst was attracting more problems than other businesses but that Kane needs to do something about it.

"It may simply be the type of people it attracts, the large numbers or even the culture there," he said. "Something has to be done there."

"They will have to take care of it and that means maybe hiring more people to watch what's going on," said O'Hanlon, who took over as ABC district supervisor about a year ago.

The Catalyst is a downtown cultural landmark, which has hosted some of popular music's biggest acts and cult favorites over the years. Last year Alanis Morissette opened her national tour there. Other past performers include rapper Ice-T and rockers Chuck Berry, Melissa Etheridge, Pearl Jam and Los Lobos.

In the next few months, scheduled performers include the Violent Femmes, Bad Religion and Superbooy.

Kane has been a well-known lo-

cal figure since opening the club in 1968. In a 1991 Sentinel article, he said, "I love the Catalyst. It's the canvas I paint on."

O'Hanlon said Kane is a "good man" but that doesn't excuse the problems.

O'Hanlon said he is more aggressive than his predecessor. Since he became supervisor a year ago, his office has attempted to suspend or

revoke seven or eight alcohol licenses in Santa Cruz, Monterey and San Benito counties.

"Sometimes these reports of problems continue to collect over the years," O'Hanlon said. "And depending on the staffing level and priorities, you can't get to them all. But when I came here a year ago one of my priorities was to get these dealt with."



Kane