

Starting up again

Town Clock restarts; so do issues

By JOHN ROBINSON
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SANTA CRUZ — With a jump of the second-hand the Town Clock on the Pacific Garden Mall restarted Sunday evening and one vivid reminder of the Oct. 17 earthquake slipped into history.

It also was if time remained stopped, however, as Mayor Mardi Wormhoudt was shouted down by some old foes, a group of homeless advocates, while she spoke of a socially responsible vision for a rebuilding of the mall.

"How about a mall with more affordable housing?" Wormhoudt said to the crowd. "How about a mall with socially responsible lending institutions and good employment in union shops?"

"Yeah, how about it Mardi?" the protesters said breaking into a rag-tag song and holding up hand-lettered cardboard signs protesting a camping ban in the city.

Others in the crowd, in turn, started to shout down the protesters, until the mayor appealed that it was not a time for confrontation. The protesters managed to quiet down in time for the restarting of the clock.

County Supervisor Gary Patton had spoken earlier.

It was a time more for celebration than sloganeering as the restarting of the clock was a symbolic return to normal times — even though the ceremony was held in the shadow of gaping holes left by bulldozed buildings on the mall.

The clock was to restart at exactly 5:04 p.m., the time the quake hit.

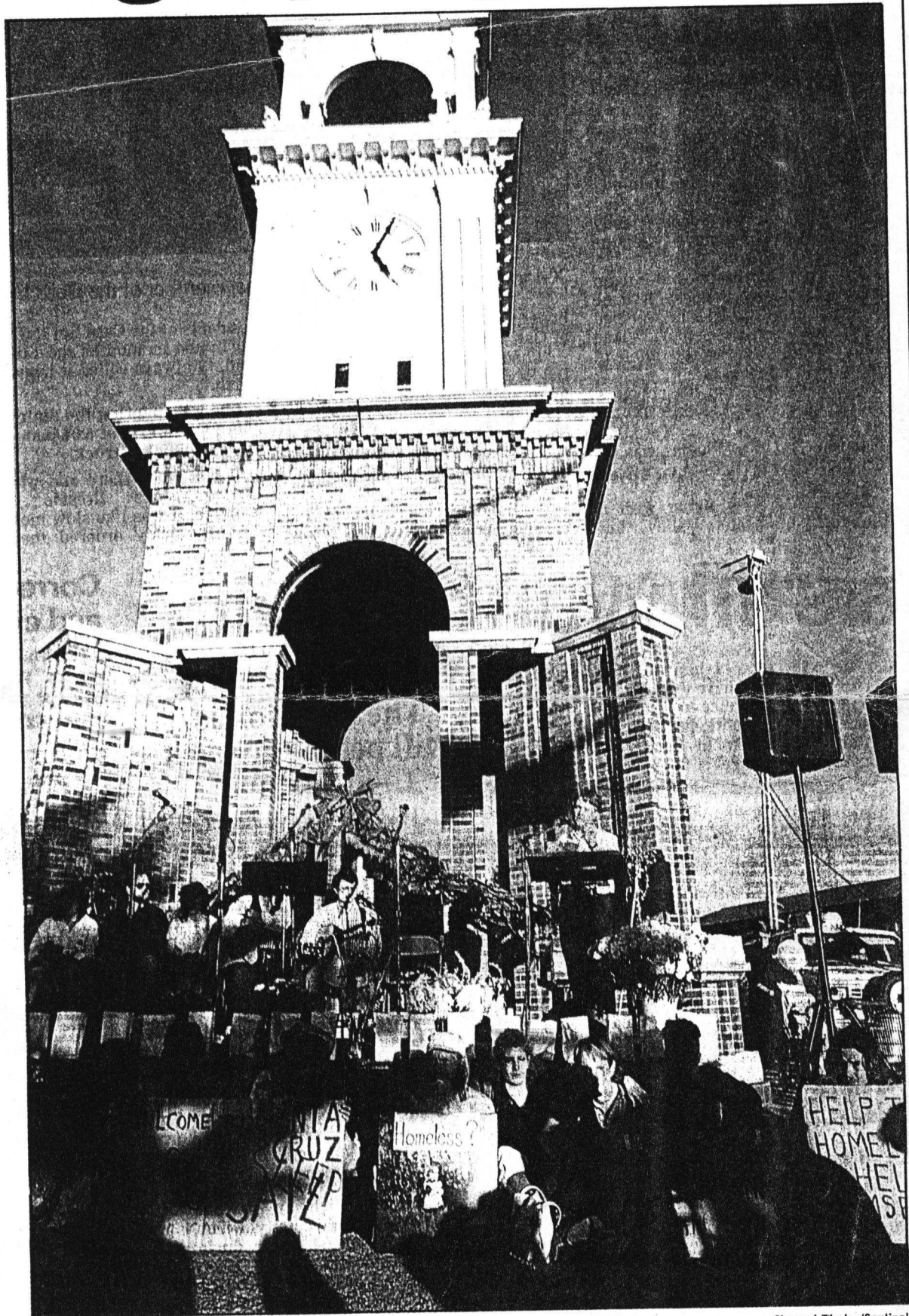
To the cheers of the crowd, Assemblyman Sam Farr, D-Monterey, stood atop the brick foundation of the clock to strike the historical moment.

A moment of drama was lost, however, due to a confusion of the exact time and Farr had to be interrupted by the event organizers who shouted to him that it was time.

"Start the clock!" Farr said and time returned to the mall.

Normalcy also was returning to the mall in other ways as merchandise was moved into the tents along Cedar Street and some business reopened along the mall for the first weekend since the quake.

Throngs of people walked a block-long section of the mall,



Shmuel Thaler/Sentinel

Mixed bag at the Town Clock — Supervisor Gary Patton, some musicians and protesters.

which was opened Saturday, to glimpse damaged shops still standing and places of demolition.

"It is excellent to be back in business," Eric Lunde, an owner of Togo's sandwich shop, said Sunday. "Business today is about half of normal but we are ex-

tremely happy with that. It's great seeing our old customers."

The question for such business owners, Lunde said, is whether customers will continue to patronize the businesses on the mall once they have viewed the damage.

With a return to business, the

city must also decide what vision will guide the rebuilding of the downtown area.

"We're not used to development, and it's not something we do well," Wormhoudt said. "When you see the all possibilities (of rebuilding the mall) it can be kind of terrifying."