Anniversary ring

Public invited to play the bells as carillon turns 30

By TRACIE WHITE
Sentinel staff writer

IT'S BEEN 30 years since the city of Santa Cruz first heard the music of the carillon bells peal out over the downtown from the roof of the Civic Auditorium.
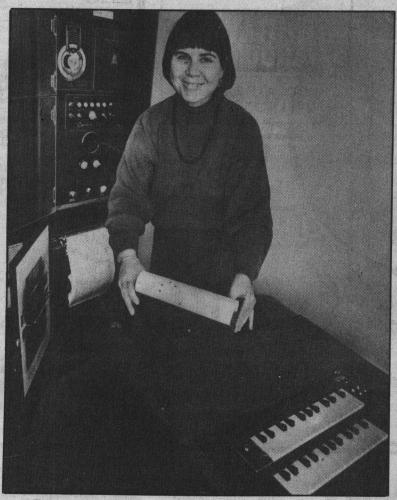
Since that first day, the bells have become an integral part of downtown Santa Cruz. Everyday at noon and 5 p.m., the bells still entertain. They've become so much a part of the city that people sometimes forget they're even there, said Judith Panick, assistant manager of the Civic Auditorium.

As a gentle reminder, and in honor of the 30th anniversary of the dedication of the carillon bells, the city will open the bells up to the public for half an hour on Friday.

From noon to 12:30 p.m., those who are "musically inclined" are invited to play the carillon bell keyboard (which is much like a piano keyboard) and entertain the community with their favorite tunes.

"The people who do notice them, really do pay attention," said Panick, who added that the only complaints the city has received over the years have occasionally been that the bells are too loud. When they turn them down, a number of people call to say they can't hear them. When they change the tunes people call to make their own requests.

The carillon bells aren't actually bells. It's a sound system called the "Schulmerich carillon" that has a double piano-like keyboard that plays 50 bell-like sounds in all. It can be played by hand or electronically. The up-

Judith Panick is opening the carillon to the public.

per keyboard is composed of English bells; the lower half of harp-like bells.

The $8,000 system was donated to the city by H.C. Timberlake, an Easterner who missed the sound of the bells when he moved out west. He gave them to the city in honor of his uncle and aunt, Mr. and Mrs. Smith N. Tiffany, longtime Santa Cruz residents.

Almost all music is adaptable to the carillon except fast numbers or those with heavily developed harmony.