

Homeless

# Homeless vacate vigil

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SANTA CRUZ — Homeless activists holding a peace vigil downtown vacated the strip of sidewalk Wednesday evening they had occupied to protest the city's camping ban.

The group, organized by homeless activist Robert Flory, had been on a stretch of sidewalk on Pacific Avenue near Cooper Street for two weeks.

Police gave some of the activists they caught sleeping more citations Wednesday for violating the city's anti-camping ordinance before the protesters vacated the vigil site.

"I think they got more tickets this morning and this afternoon,

but after that I haven't seen them," said police Sgt. Andy Crain.

Downtown merchants and shoppers had complained to police about the World Peace Vigil, which began the Wednesday before Christmas.

Police cited the activists for violating the camping ban when they fell asleep. As long as they were awake, the protesters were not breaking any laws while asserting their First Amendment rights, police said.

The camping ban was enacted in the 1970s to prevent people from sleeping in cars, parks, or public areas in the city.

Activist "Won Ton" Dave Jacobs and Flory were joined by several other homeless people in their protest.

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