

Local



Shmuel Thaler/Sentinel

Hundreds of classic cars jam Main Street in Watsonville Saturday for the 'Twilight Cruise.'

Beach Street Revival brings out fans of classic cruisin'

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WATSONVILLE — Hundreds of cars and thousands of people let the good times roll at Saturday's Beach Street Revival.

Centerpiece of the three-day event was the Saturday evening "Twilight Cruise" down Main Street. Townspeople and visitors gathered in the town square to watch some 500 classic cars rev by in a ritual reminiscent of the '50s and '60s.

Along the route, families sat on their front steps to watch. Teens and youngsters stood in clumps, appraising the merits of the souped-up metal steeds passing by.

A man strolling arm in arm with a woman pivoted suddenly to follow a sleek red car with his eyes.

"Man, that is nice," he said.

Watsonville Mayor Todd McFarren issued a proclamation praising

the revival because it "turn(s) the clock back to a happier time in history when "cruisin'" Main Street was the center of the social scene."

The festival was originally started in Santa Cruz in 1977, and was a mainstay until the event moved to Watsonville last year.

"We got too big for Santa Cruz," said long-time festival organizer Bobbie Nelson. "We outgrew the benchlands" at San Lorenzo Park, where the event had been held.

The event continues at the Santa Cruz County Fairgrounds today with final car judging and finals in the trivia contest and lip-sync contests. Also scheduled are the selection of Miss Beach Street Revival, the finals in the "Mr. Hot Rod/Hot Bod" contest and live entertainment from the musical group Daddy-O.

Festival organizers say next year's Beach Street Revival will be in July, to capitalize on better

weather and longer days, and to give more families a chance to come.

Nelson's 8-year-old son Marc has been a part of Beach Street Revival since he was an infant in his car seat in his mom's 1934 Buick.

The DeLaveaga School third-grader said he likes the revival better in Watsonville because he can walk around at the fairgrounds and see all the cars before the cruise starts.

"I couldn't see that much in the back seat of the Buick," he explained.

And he knows exactly what car he wants, someday, when he's twice as old as he is now, when it's his turn to cruise.

"Marlene's '55 Chevy," he said without hesitation, proudly showing off a car whose baby-blue jacked-up hood is still higher than his head. "But I want bigger dice."