

# Hey, where's the bells? ✓

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4-26-84

SANTA CRUZ — Hey. Where's the bells?

"People look at the carillon and are really surprised. They expect to see a lot of bells," says Civic Auditorium manager Don Ricker.

There are no bells.

The melodic chimes heard every noon and 5 p.m. are made electronically.

The carillon is housed in side-by-side metal cabinets. One houses the electronic board and hammer and the other the controls, amps, pre-amps and the piano-style music rolls.

"It's really a pretty ugly piece of equipment for all the pretty music it puts out," he says.

There's also a keyboard, on which Sylvia McDonough plays Christmas music. McDonough has been the first and only official city carillonneur. The rest of the year the music comes from the rolls, which are set on a timer to begin at noon and 5 p.m. Three songs are played each time, broadcast through a giant speaker atop the auditorium.

The carillon plays "Auld Lang Syne" on New Year's. And, it put on special performances at about 3 and 8 p.m. on April 15 when a power outage fouled up the timer.

"You never think of this piece of equipment when the power goes out," Ricker confesses.

The carillon has been ringing out pleasant little tunes since it replaced twice-daily horn blasts atop the auditorium in 1963. The City Council accepted the carillon as a gift in 1963 after denying the Santa Cruz Art League a permit to install it at its headquarters in a residential neighborhood.

As manager of the Civic Auditorium, Ricker is the official keeper of the bells, er, carillon. He takes that duty seriously, for, as he says, a number of workers downtown still depend on the music to tell them when to go to lunch and when to quit work.

He and maintenance man, Jerry Louis, are in charge of changing the music rolls. There are about 60 or so tunes on the rolls the two men change about once a week.

"Anyone who has lived in Santa Cruz for more than two years has heard every song," says Ricker.

Since Ricker admitted to being in charge of the music, he was asked to face the music and explain why "Autumn Leaves" was played the day before the start of spring.

On the door on one side of the carillon cabinet is a chart for changing the music rolls. "When it's 'Autumn Leaves' turn to play, 'Autumn Leaves' plays, be it winter, summer or fall," says Ricker.

Ricker says he has never received a request for a song to be played. But, he does get some complaints, probably from grumblebugs who don't like the bells fouling up the sounds of transit buses and fire engine sirens.

He did get a very nice offer a week or so back, he says, from a resident who wanted to buy some new music for the carillon. New tunes can be added onto the end of the music roll for about \$20 from an outfit back East.

Ricker has the catalog of songs available. Lots are university alma maters. Many are church songs.

Since Ricker says he's never received a request, here's one: "I Can't Get No Satisfaction."



Don Ricker with carillon