

TOWN CLOCK SJM 3-20-91 1B

# Time running out at Town Clock?

## Zero hour may be nearing for remnant of campers, officials warn

By Paul Rogers  
Mercury News Staff Writer

What began as a legitimate peace protest at Santa Cruz's Town Clock has degenerated into a 24-hour campsite for vagrants, say city police, parks officials and municipal leaders who are looking for ways to clean up the familiar town monument.

The half dozen people who have spent the last two months sleeping outside the clock, at Pacific Avenue and Water Street, argue they are exercising their constitutional rights to free speech and assembly.

But Santa Cruz officials, and several hundred residents who have flooded City Hall with complaints, call them freeloaders.

"The issue isn't free speech," said Jim Lang, city parks director "It's whether one group can use a public

facility to the exclusion of others."

During the Persian Gulf war, it was common to see throngs of protesters assembled at the clock waving signs or chanting slogans at passing motorists.

Police rarely confronted the demonstrators, many of whom were local high school or college students. But since fighting stopped two weeks ago, the only people remaining have been disheveled men lying barefoot under the clock, garbage piled high around them. Patrol officers have begun issuing citations and have made several arrests — for illegal camping, creating a public nuisance and littering.

Lang said Tuesday that his department has worked 600 hours patrolling the clock, removing lean-to shelters and throwing away rotting food left by people there. Rangers performing those functions normally would be maintain-

ing Harvey West Park, DeLaveaga Park or the Pogonip, he said, noting that the "clock duty" has cost the parks department about \$5,400.

Employing rules already in place at most other city parks facilities, Lang last week drew up a regulation that would prohibit anyone from assembling at the Town Clock between the hours of 9 p.m. and 8 a.m.

Monday night, however, the proposal died for lack of support from the city's Parks and Recreation Commission.

Lang and others, including Deputy Police Chief Mike Dunbaugh, now are calling on the city council to pass a similar rule.

"We're just asking that the Town Clock be allowed to be what it's supposed to be — a public monument," said Dunbaugh. "Not a place for people to lie around 24 hours a day, seven days

a week, taking advantage of the community."

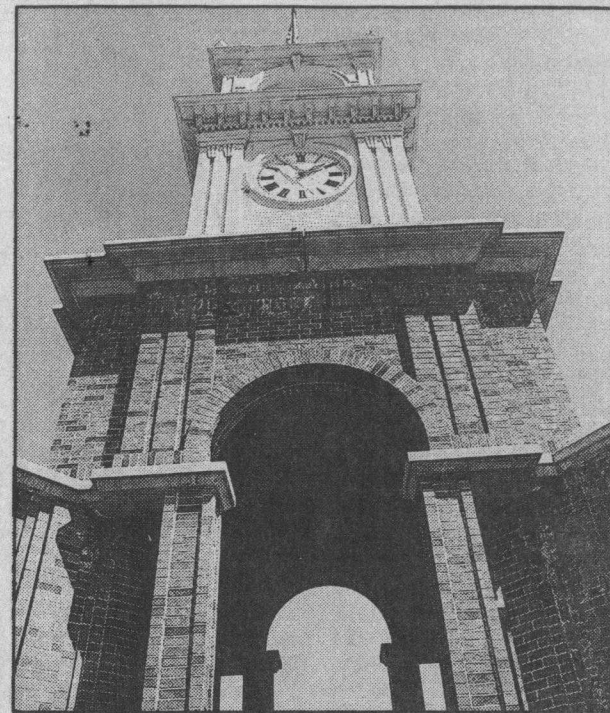
One of the regulars at the clock, "Won Ton" Dave Jacobs, 39, said he has been arrested three times and has "a pocket full of citations."

But Jacobs, a former San Diego resident and supply sergeant in the Marines, said he plans to stay at the clock until violence ends worldwide.

"I'm trying to raise people's consciousness," he said. "I have no expiration date."

Some prominent city leaders, however, say Jacobs' time is up.

Mayor Jane Yokoyama said that at the next council meeting on April 9, she and council members Neal Coonerty and John Mahaney will introduce Lang's resolution establishing park hours.



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**CURFEW CONTEMPLATED** — Like other city parks, the Town Clock may close at 9 p.m.