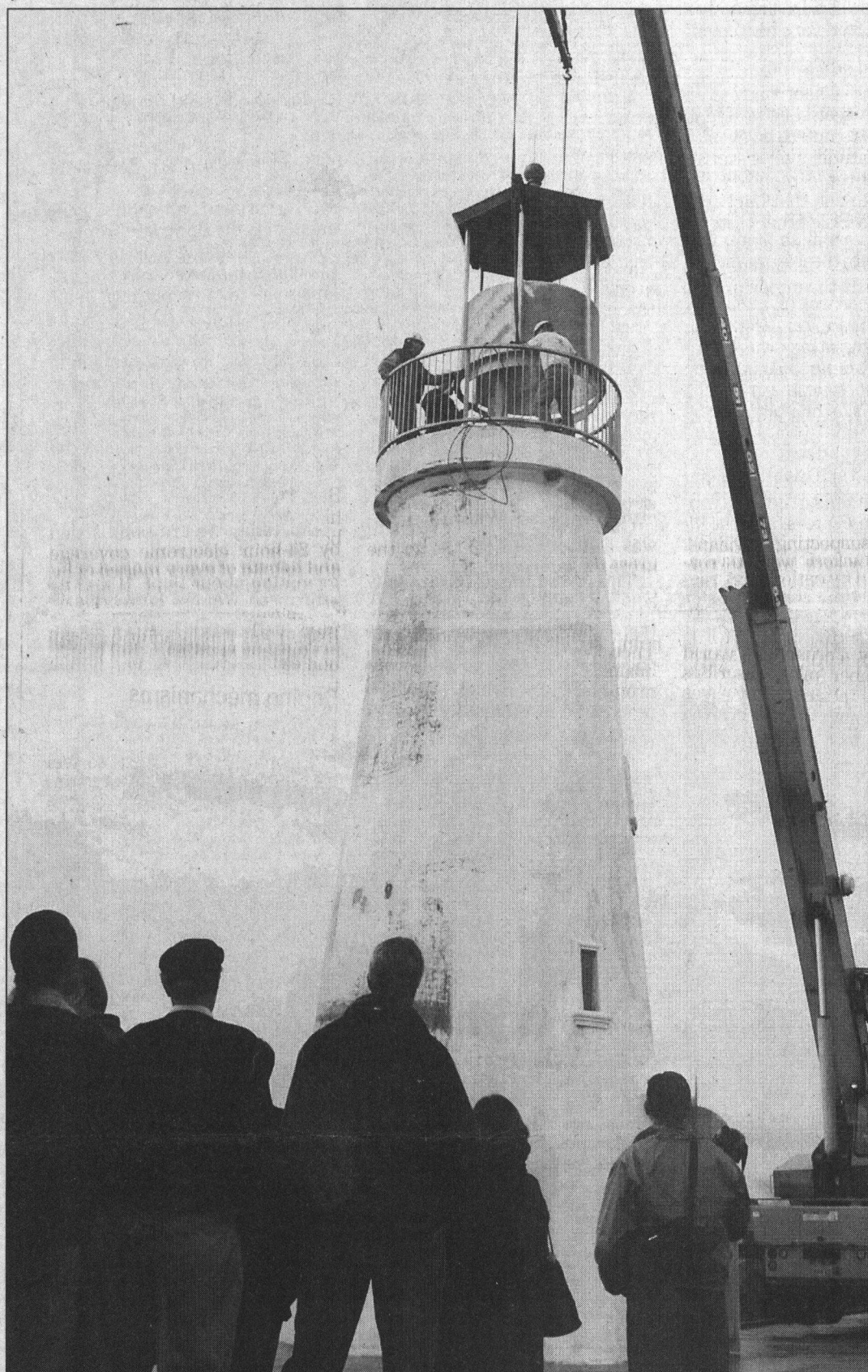


# A SANTA CRUZ LANDMARK



KAREN T. BORCHERS — MERCURY NEWS

A crane lifts the copper roof onto the lighthouse Thursday at the Santa Cruz Harbor. The green light and the electric foghorn will be installed Monday, and the paint will come soon after that.

## Sleek, new lighthouse marking harbor entrance nearly finished

✓ LIGHT HOUSE

TOPPING-OUT RITES TOASTED BY SUPPORTERS, PASSERSBY

By David L. Beck  
Mercury News

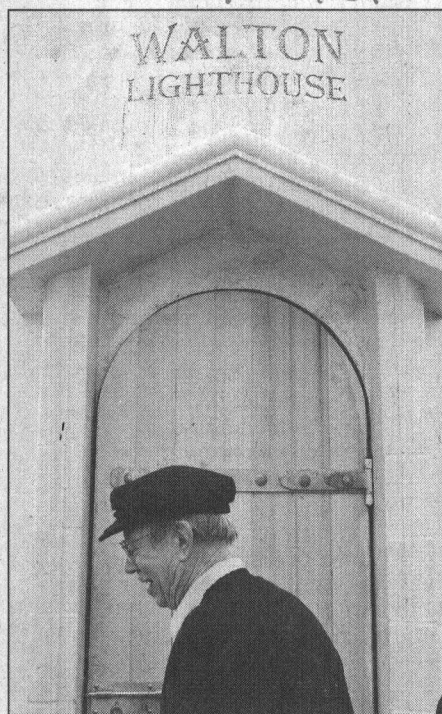
Workmen dropped the copper roof and fabricated steel frame onto the top of the new Santa Cruz Harbor lighthouse Thursday morning, then bolted it in place, all but finishing a new landmark and making Santa Cruz a two-lighthouse town.

All it needs now is a little paint. Oh — and a light.

The green light and the electric foghorn will be installed Monday by the Coast Guard, which will detach them from a nearby pole and drop them into place atop the tapered concrete cylinder at the end of the west jetty.

The paint — white, with charcoal gray at the top, light gray for the door and red trim around the walkway and windows — may take a little longer. "We need some heat," said Lou Theilen, the construction supervisor. "About four, five days of good sun" for the primer to set properly.

Harbor officials who oversaw the project, backers who helped pay for it and



Charles Walton walks in front of the Walton Lighthouse. The name honors his father, Stanley, and his brother, Derek, a seaman.



# LANDMARK | Harbor lighthouse nears completion

*Continued from Page 1B*

passersby like Michelle Ebert and her dog Acacia applauded the topping-out ceremony and toasted the project with sparkling wine in plastic cups.

"I think it's really neat," said Ebert, recalling the "old, kind of ugly thing that used to be here."

The new lighthouse actually replaces several old, kind of ugly things: a boxy skeleton on pipe legs that lasted the first three decades of the harbor, a white cylinder that looked like a water heater and rusted out in three years, and the current pole.

Santa Cruz's other light-

house, the Abbott Lighthouse at Steamer Lane on the West Side, is made of brick and contains a surfing museum. It was built by the parents of surfer Mark Abbott, who died there. At its top is a rotating white light.

The harbor light will not rotate. It will beam a green light toward the sea to mark the narrow entrance to the harbor.

The campaign for the new structure was spearheaded by Bill Simpkins, whose East Side Santa Cruz firm, System Studies, makes telephone testing equipment. Its largest single donor was Charles Walton, a Los Gatos inventor

whose best-known gizmo, the electronic ID or "proximity" card, may be hanging from a chain around your neck right now.

Walton donated "about a third of the total," he said, referring to the original \$180,000 plan for what Simpkins called "a simple shaft." Partly at Walton's suggestion, the structure became more elaborate.

Now the 450-pound Alaskan yellow cedar door leads to a 40-step spiral staircase that will permit the Coast Guard to service the light from the 18-inch walkway that surrounds it. Previous lights on the site had to be serviced from a

cherry picker.

The total cost is expected to be close to \$380,000, of which Simpkins said \$250,000 is in hand. "I'll probably be putting some more into it before it's over," Walton said.

The Port Commission donated \$30,000. More than 40 people have given at least \$1,000 apiece. "Some people," said Simpkins, "just love lighthouses."

Over the Gothic door the carved words "Walton Lighthouse" will be coated in gold leaf. The name honors Charles' father, Stanley, and brother, Derek, a seaman who died at 27 of polio. Charles and Katherine Walton keep a 29-

foot Triton-class sloop, the Galatea, in the harbor.

The project went quickly, as these things go. Permits in April. Coastal Commission and Corps of Engineers approval in August. A September construction start, with only a week or two lost to wind and waves. "We've had nothing but good vibes on it," Simpkins said.

The tower is 14 feet in diameter at the base, with walls four feet thick at that point. It tapers to an eight-foot-wide top, and its walls become proportionately thinner as they rise. It contains 100 yards of sprayed concrete, on an even heavier footing. The copper

cap and steel cage weigh about 3,500 pounds, Theilen said.

The copper roof is topped by a copper ball, or finial, from which a thin metal lightning rod protrudes. The total height from the jetty to the tip of the rod is 45 feet.

After three structures have been replaced in four decades, supporters of the new lighthouse hope this one will last longer.

"This not once-in-a-lifetime," Walton said. "This is once in a hundred lifetimes."

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