

'Everyone is coming' to demonstrate in S.C.

Demonstration

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Activists plan several events over weekend

By **DAN WHITE**
SENTINEL STAFF WRITER

SANTA CRUZ — Some claim war is inevitable. But in Santa Cruz this weekend, peace will be inescapable.

You likely won't be able to walk 10 feet without seeing one of the roughly 1,000 water-proof red white and blue yard signs being distributed. They read "Peace is Patriotic" on one side and "NO WAR" on the other.

And you may not be able to cross a street without running headlong into hundreds of peace demonstrators, some dressed in funeral garments.

Organizers for Saturday's "Monterey Bay Peace March and Rally" in Santa Cruz are aiming for a huge turnout, and event treasurer Ruth Hunter said they're going to get it.

"We're expecting to draw a couple thousand people at least," said Hunter, who was passing out fliers on the event at the Mission Street New Leaf store on Thursday. "Everyone is coming. It's just the mood of the city."

Santa Cruz, of course, was a hotbed for peace activism long before the prospect of another war with Iraq. Skeptics may wonder how a protest in the middle of a peace-loving town could possibly influence world events. But Hunter empha-

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Rachel Castro, right and her sister Camille spend Thursday afternoon on West Cliff Drive giving out cookies for peace and spreading the word about Saturday's peace rally in Santa Cruz.

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Peace

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sized that the Santa Cruz rally is part of a carefully coordinated international effort — with rallies planned for London, Bangkok, and Helsinki, Finland, among other international cities.

"We're just one of many, many who have set up a rally, because not everyone can go to Washington, to San Francisco or New York."

The Santa Cruz Peace Coalition and the Resource Center for Nonviolence are sponsoring the local rally.

The local rally begins at 11 a.m. Saturday at the county courthouse. Among the many expected participants is a group called Women in Black, whose members will wear black and walk in silence "to signify the mourning that will happen if we turn to war," said swimsuit model-turned-radical-feminist Ann Simonton. The group will meet prior to the rally, between 10:30 and 10:45 a.m., at the Riverfront Cinema.

The peace protesters will march from the courthouse parking lot starting at noon. They will head down Water Street toward Mission Plaza park, where there will be music, speakers, food and dancing.

It's not the only area peace event.

In La Selva Beach, marchers will "walk for peace" starting at Triangle Park at noon Saturday, part of an event featuring meditations, prayers, petitions, music and art.

Even on Thursday, people were getting a head start on the weekend activities. On

West Cliff Drive at noon, Katy Ousler hoped people would give peace, and her oatmeal cookies, a chance.

A Westside nanny, she and her young charges were handing out the crispy treats made of flour, baking soda, salt, shortening, sugar, egg, vanilla, "love, good intention and innocence."

She and the kids, who were handing out hand-made, heart-shaped peace messages, may be out on the street again today.

Also Thursday, the Sustainable Living Center on Laurel Street presented a "What If? Festival" with speakers talking about "practical community alternatives" if the nation goes to war.

Activities will continue into next week.

On Tuesday the Santa Cruz City Council will hold a town hall meeting about a war with Iraq from 6:30-8:30 p.m. at the Del Mar Theatre.

Congressman Sam Farr is the featured speaker.

Santa Cruz has already made one national splash on the peace front. The City Council, in September, was the first elected body in the nation to oppose a U.S.-led war on Iraq.

Many of the peace protesters consider Saturday a preamble to protests in San Francisco on Sunday, expected to draw thousands.

Some Santa Cruzans, however, are taking part in peace protests far afield.

Santa Cruz Vice Mayor Scott Kennedy split town to be part of a delegation rallying in Washington, D.C.

Kennedy paid his own way to be part of a "cities for peace" conference with 30 oth-



Twins Elena, left, and Rachel Castro approach a pedestrian on West Cliff Drive with the gift of cookies for peace as their sister Camille and nanny Katy Oursler watch.

Shmuel Thaler/Sentinel

er representatives, from big cities like Chicago and tiny towns like Silver Plume, Colo. The group, however, did not succeed in its attempt to get an audience with President Bush.

"Bush is out of town," Kennedy said in a phone call from the nation's capital. "The

White House didn't arrange for anyone to meet us, but we will have a briefing with congress members. I'm not meeting with Sam Farr, though. He'll be in Santa Cruz."

Contact Dan White at dwhite@santa-cruz.com.

Monterey Bay Peace March and Rally

WHAT: A rally and march against a U.S. war with Iraq.

WHEN: 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday.

WHERE: Participants will gather starting at 11 a.m. at the county courthouse, 701 Ocean St. in Santa Cruz. March to nearby Mission Plaza will begin around noon; speakers and rally at 1 p.m. The afternoon rally includes children's activities.

INFORMATION: Call 423-9707.

Neighborhood Walk for Peace

WHAT: Event includes meditation for peace,

inspirational prayer, literature, petitions, music, art. "Bring a poster, banners, smiles and ideas," organizers say.

WHEN: Walkers will gather at noon at Triangle Park. The walk to the La Selva Beach bluff starts about 1 p.m.

INFORMATION: E-mail jankeith124@hotmail.com.

Town hall meeting

WHAT: A town hall meeting organized by the Santa Cruz City Council. Subject: "War on Iraq?" Congressman Sam Farr, D-Carmel, will speak.

WHEN: 6:30-8:30 p.m.

WHERE: Del Mar Theatre, Pacific Avenue, Santa Cruz.

INFORMATION: Call 420-5030.