

Carnival Week ends on quiet note

By ALLISON BLAKE
STAFF WRITER

PROVINCETOWN — They stood, all facing the street — a crowd of maybe 200.

Parading down the street from the west was an occasional leftover from the costume ball held earlier in the evening — a drag queen or costumed sort, reveling into the late night after a smashing masquerade ball.

From the east, familiar local faces peered from behind windshields as they drove down Commercial Street.

Pacing the street, police officers asked people to step back onto the sidewalk.

Then the night was pierced by what would become a shrieking familiar sound in the next hour.

"Don't TOUCH me!"

It was Tom, said somebody. Silver spangles adorning an off-the-shoulder basic black gown, brunette curls and rouged cheeks. Arms open to all, he swept down the street. Applause. He stopped, faced a police officer, and grasped his hand. He shook it.

"Hey," he called to onlookers. "Do what these guys say. It's for the best."

And he swept along: "Don't TOUCH me!"

At 1 a.m. yesterday at Spiritus Pizza, the scene of last weekend's clash between the post-bar crowd and the state and local police, the predominantly gay gathering was — eating pizza. Talking to friends. Carnival Week had ended with the costume party.

Almost everyone was talking about last weekend. Newspaper stories from different papers had been memorized. The Boston television stations had been in town that day. Everybody knew. Occasionally, there was somebody who had actually been there.

"See the cops telling people to get on the sidewalk?" said one guy, pointing. On Friday, those cops made the same request. "If they didn't, they'd arrest them. It was just over-reaction. They put them in handcuffs and led them away like common criminals."

He said he'd been one of those ar-



One of the paraders from the masquerade ball brings a message to onlookers in front of Spiritus Pizza on Commercial Street in Provincetown during the final night of Carnival Week. STAFF PHOTO BY RON SCHLOERB

Cape-tip summer officer fired for anti-gay remarks

PROVINCETOWN — Amid high tensions created by recent conflicts between the Provincetown police and the gay community, Police Chief James J. Meads Wednesday fired a summer officer for yelling anti-gay epithets.

"I was appalled at his actions, and as such, I fired him," Meads said yesterday.

Dismissed was Nando Kral, who Meads said is about 21 and a Wellfleet summer resident. Kral, out of uniform, was cited during Wednesday's early hours for two separate incidents of discourteous and rude and disorderly conduct — a criminal

action, said Meads.

Kral "yelled anti-gay remarks — just a lot of nonsense" at three men in one of the instances, said Meads. He did not have complete details of the other incident.

Kral was with three companions, and officers investigating complaints of his behavior did not know at the outset that they were tracking a summer police officer, said Meads.

"The victims felt that what I did was sufficient and do not want to press charges," said Meads.

Meads said Kral was not present at last weekend's confrontation

between the police and a largely gay crowd outside Spiritus Pizza that many observers say was prompted by harassment from inexperienced police officers.

With the enormous influx of tourists Provincetown sees each summer, the additional 16 summer officers hired annually are invaluable to the department, said Meads.

About half of those are young, inexperienced people, some with one week's training. Regular training would take the entire season, said Meads.

"When you come into a town as

crowded as this, with the activities, it's frightening, initially," Meads said of most young officers.

As for Kral: "Off-duty, as far as I'm concerned, he was harassing a couple of citizens of the community."

Attempts to reach Kral were unsuccessful. A Provincetown Police Department spokesman said that the department had no phone number for Kral, and that many seasonal officers do not bother with the expense of hooking up a phone just for the summer.

— A.B.

rested, but didn't want his name used in the paper.

Two guys in low-cut black gowns with red net collars strolled by.

Across the street at a restaurant called Mazeltov, Town Manager James Jeffers could be seen keeping a casual eye on things through the picture window.

It was getting close to 2 a.m.

A "bride" and another man dressed in a black corset dress ran by. "Drag race," somebody yelled. A few laughs.

Selectmen Betty Steele and Dolores deSouza skimmed the crowd's edge, walking along just inside the street — first Steele, then deSouza — before they were almost separated by an impromptu circle dance begun

by the bride.

"The crowd here is well-behaved," said Provincetown Police Officer Fernando de Souza. The police, he said, were conducting themselves professionally.

"I think things have calmed down," Police Chief James Meads said yesterday. The seven police offi-

cers stationed at Spiritus all week were to be reduced to two during the rest of this week and four on the weekend.

Finished with his meal at Mazeltov, Jeffers walked by and was asked what he was doing.

"Getting pizza," he said. He winked, puffed on his pipe and walked on.