

93-year-old raises cane, lands in jail

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He won't be taking any bows for his achievement.

But Martin Henry Parr of San Jose apparently has set a record that will be difficult to break — if anyone cares to compete.

At 93, Parr is believed to be the oldest person ever incarcerated in Santa Clara County Jail.

However unsettling the experience might have been for him — Parr could not be reached for comment — there also was consternation at the jail, which, officials say, isn't set up for older inmates — even though the local jail population is mirroring the national trend by slowly graying.

In February, a typical month, 1 percent of the county jail's average daily population of 4,245 was over the age of 55, according to statistician Bill James' records.

But no one was as far over as Parr.

Placed in medical unit

"About the only place I could put him was the medical unit, given his infirmities and the fact he uses a cane," said corrections Sgt. Dave Tomlinson.

It was Parr's alleged misuse of his cane that landed him in the lockup for not quite 48 hours in the first place. According to San Jose Investigator Roger Sides, Parr was arrested Feb. 25 on suspicion of battery for allegedly taking his cane and whacking the 53-year-old operator of a licensed board and care home off Senter Road in South San Jose.

The home operator, who had agreed that day to take Parr until his social worker could find permanent accommodations, called police. Officers tried to mediate between the two, Sides said. But at one point, Parr began poking them in the legs with his cane.

'Potential for violence'

"They weren't harmful blows," the police report said, "but showed the potential for violence."

Parr was arrested by the officers, who had contacted Parr's unidentified social worker. "She said to incarcerate him," Sides said.

Deputy District Attorney Mike Adams refused to file battery charges against Parr because of his age. On Feb. 27, Parr — with the aid of his cane — left the jail for points unknown. Adams said Parr hadn't really hurt anyone anyway.