



Michael McCollum

Stephanie Nelson, 9, of Capitola decorated her bicycle with flags for Thursday's parade in Aptos, which attracted thousands of spectators.

'World's Shortest Parade' draws 15,000 in Aptos

By LANE WALLACE

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APTOS — More than 15,000 people turned out Thursday for the 35th annual "World's Shortest Parade," a title that hasn't been applicable for years.

"We're getting third-generation people," said Karen Hibble, co-executive director of the Aptos Chamber of Commerce. People whose parents brought them to the early parades are now bringing their children, Hibble said.

"There were lots of new people, new kids and new dogs," Hibble said. The parade followed its usual route down Soquel Drive to Aptos Village Park for a post-parade festival.

The admission charge for that



The Aptos parade has traditionally welcomed anyone who wants to enter, putting the title 'World's Shortest' in doubt.

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Michelle Margo of La Selva Beach makes a sale of Old Glory just before the Aptos parade's start. Many spectators

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festival, called a Day In the Park, is up from \$1 to \$2, but there are no piles of money at the offices of the Chamber of Commerce, which sponsored the event.

The higher admission charge and fees from parade entrants are necessary because of rising costs, said John Hibble, co-executive director of the Chamber of Commerce.

"The days of no insurance requirement and free park rental are over," Hibble said.

The parade and Day in the Park are no money makers, Hibble said.

"It's a labor of love. We do it because it's such a great event," Hibble said.

The parade, known as the "World's Shortest Parade," draws about 15,000 annually for its run down Soquel Drive from State Park Drive to Aptos Village Park.

It's only in the last few years that

there's been entry fees for the Day in the Park and the parade. There's a fee of \$1 per parade entrant, up to \$10 per group, and \$10 for each car or horse.

Proof of insurance is required for equestrian and auto entries, John Hibble said, and the chamber has its own insurance costs.

Hibble said he was gratified that most people paid the fees without complaining.

The chamber took over the parade six years ago from the Aptos

Ladies Tuesday Evening Society, which started the parade in 1962. Before the chamber got it, there were no fees for the park.

The chemical toilets "cost more than the park rental," Hibble said.

Hibble said he was pleased with the parade, but would have liked to have seen more bands. The chamber pays bands to be in the parade, but there's a limited budget.

Results of the judging of parade entries were not available this morning.