

# Shortest Parade long on laughs

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**APTOS** — It seems the World's Shortest Parade gets a little longer every year, but that was fine Saturday for a record crowd estimated at 15,000.

People crowded onto the railroad trestle in Aptos Village 10 rows deep, and the lines along Soquel Drive weren't much better as the sun-splashed, beer-guzzling, holiday-mood crowd soaked up the 26th annual World's Shortest Parade.

Parade mistress Lucile Aldrich of the sponsoring Aptos Ladies Tuesday Evening Society said afterward that the parade is in no danger of losing its billing since it is named for its short, one-street route rather than how long it takes.

This year's rendition lasted 52 minutes and featured the usual zaniness that can only accompany this hometown tradition.

Where else, for example, would you encounter:

- A Lance Little Plumbing float featuring a flatbed truck of toilets? Signs decorated the red, white and blue-decked entry — "Your sewage is our bread and butter — join the movement."

- A band named "Contraband" that featured camouflaged-uniformed contras playing music and the sign "Kansas is our Central America."

- Santa Claus sitting on top of a van playing "When the Saints Go Marching In," on a trumpet.

- A family of "moose," complete with cardboard antlers. A sign on their truck read, "All moosed up and nowhere to go."

right, Tim and Lindy Brien and their children sit back to enjoy the Aptos festivities; below, Art Soto, left, Gary Sampson and Terry Sutton dig into onion-chopping duties at Harvey West Park.



Then, of course, there were traditional entries.

The Flea Patrol made its fourth consecutive appearance. Members of the patrol — talcum powder cans in hand — made periodic spurts into the crowd, shaking their powder on unsuspected heads and looking for fleas. A bunch of clowns, namely the "Three Generations of Clowns," won first place in the best costume category.

Which brings us to the unusual

judging of this parade. Judge Ralph Sanson, a former Aptos supervisor who's judged off and on since 1967, was constantly running into the parade route yelling, "What's your name? What's your name?"

Judges resort to such tactics since, unlike other parades, Aptos' parade requires no registration. Judges have to go to unusual means to get names of potential parade-winners. Assisting Sanson were Gina Bushee and Frank Leal.

Skipper Kendall, in charge of the judges, said, "People were telling me that this was the best parade yet.



Photos by

Pete Amos

But then, they say that every year.

"This is the best parade I've ever come to," said Norma Kimber of Watsonville. "I just love the spirit of everything. It's so genuine. There's nothing fake about this parade."

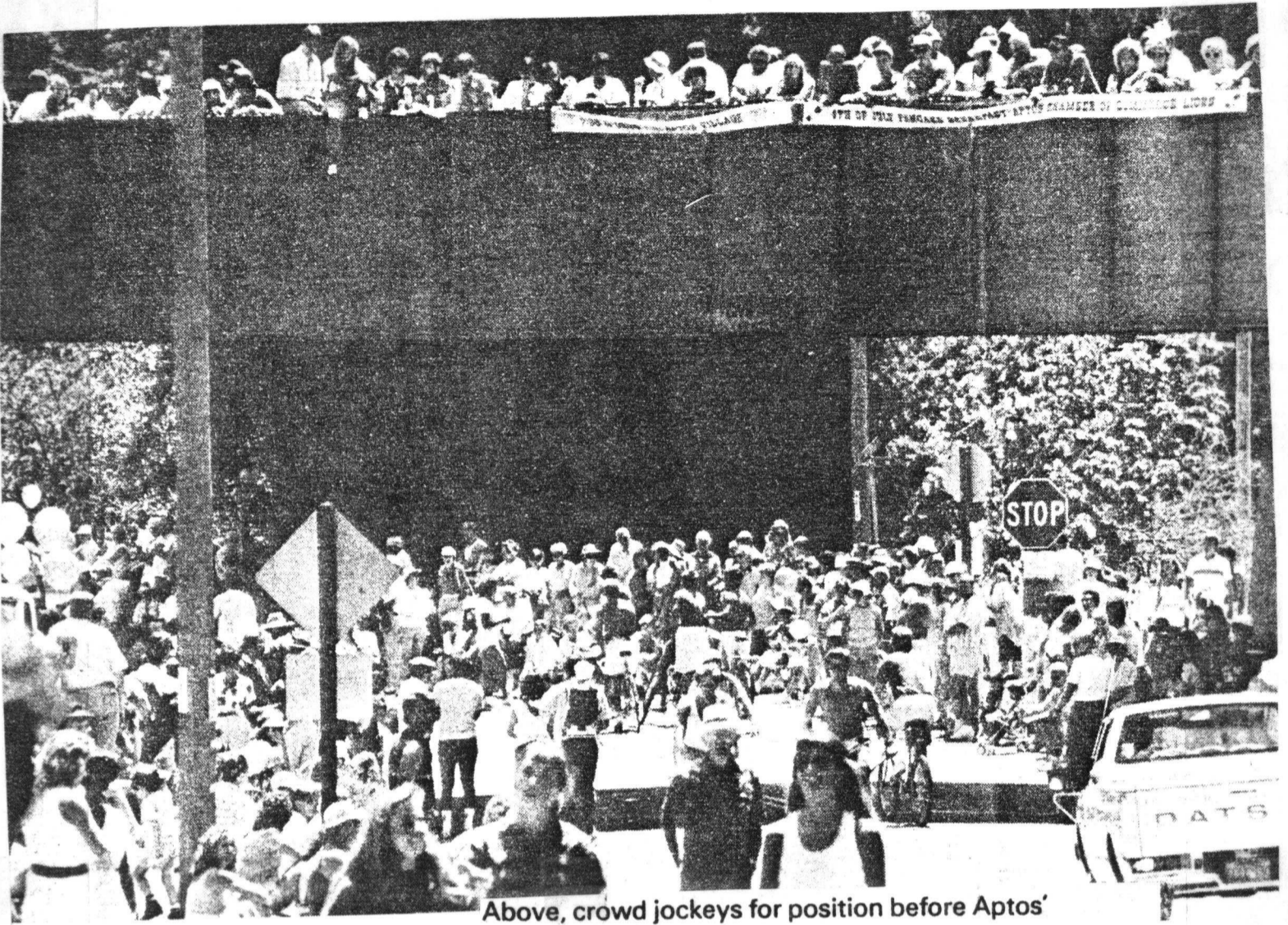
Loretta Fitzgerald, 90, of Kentucky — viewing her first World's Shortest Parade — added, "It's very impressive. I love the old-fashioned cars."

There was literally dancing in the street afterward as a parade entrant — rock band "The Solution" — continued to play to the delight of the crowd. Others made the long trek down into Aptos Village Park where

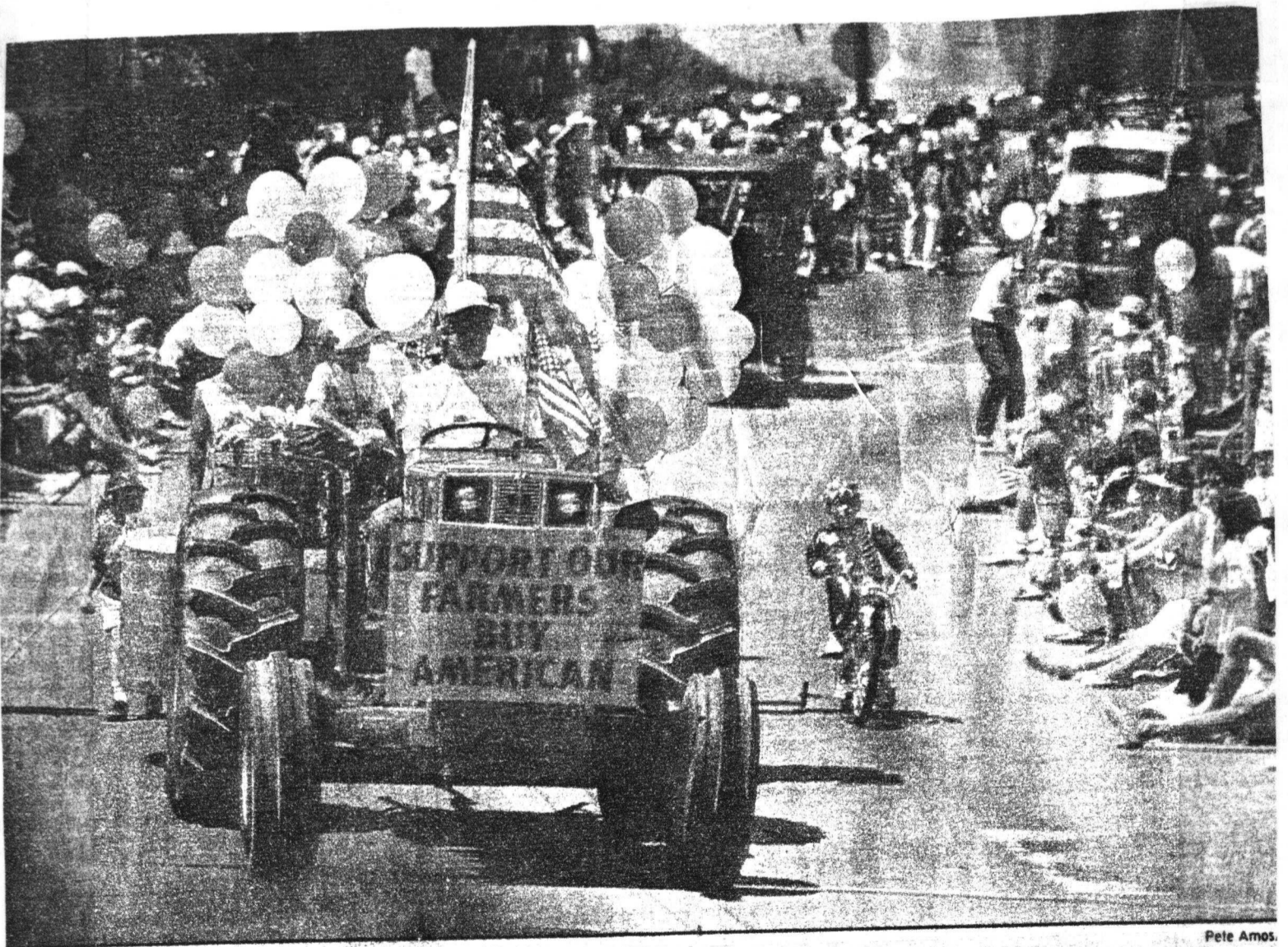
food booths were greeted with long lines. Veteran parade-watching children munched happily on bagfuls of candy thrown from parade entrants.

Winning entries are:

**GROUP:** Special Olympics, Capitola-Soquel Springers and the Rath family; **FLOAT:** The Unusual Ensemble, Escuderos and Baby in a round rubber float; **COSTUME:** Three Generations of Clowns, Uncle Sam on a big-wheel cycle and Moose Madness; **CAR:** Railton, Model T Raceabout and a 1908 Cadillac touring car; **HORSE:** Chapparal, Corral Pioneers; **EQUESTRIANS:** Kristen deGhetaldi and Kate, Lindsay and Megan Ramaekers and their mothers; **PET:** Brown rabbit, dalmatian; and small, gray-brown dog.



Above, crowd jockeys for position before Aptos' parade;



Pete Amos.

It was an all-American day in Aptos as a red white and blue representation of folks and farms

trailed and trailed a load of local broccoli down the parade route.