

Flushed Wharf to Wharf racers wave to photographers as they head down the home stretch into Capitola.

Cheering gets it done for Wharf to Wharfers

Wharf to Wharf

7:29.02

Friends, family, volunteers make runners' jobs easy

By **RAMONA TURNER**

Sentinel staff writer

There's more to running a race than meets the eye — just ask those who cheer on the competitors.

Besides family and friends, competitors in Sunday's 30th annual Wharf to Wharf race heard it loud and often from musicians, merchants, volunteers and hundreds of others along the 6-mile race route from Santa Cruz to Capitola.

"We're here to support them," said Cary Kirk, guitarist for The Lee Maverick Band, a cow-funk outfit that was one of several musical groups performing Sunday.

But while you might think race participants are too caught up in putting foot to asphalt to hear the music, they actually are quite in tune with those who serenade them.

"They're usually cheering and yelling for us," said the band's namesake, Lee Maverick, describing what's occurred in previous races when he's entertained.

Kelly Thomas of Santa Cruz was among about a dozen young women who kept water flowing into 8-ounce paper cups on East Cliff Drive near 26th Avenue in Live Oak.

The water she poured wasn't necessarily to go inside the runners' mouths, she said.

"They just throw it on themselves," she said. "More water got on me than

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Dan Coyro/Sentinel photos

Down to the final stretch in Capitola, one woman hangs on with the finish line in view at the Wharf to Wharf race on Sunday.

More Wharf to Wharf coverage inside

MEN: Evans Rutto defends title; Aptos graduate Brett Gotcher places eighth.

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WOMEN: Kenyan Esther Kiplagat sets course record.

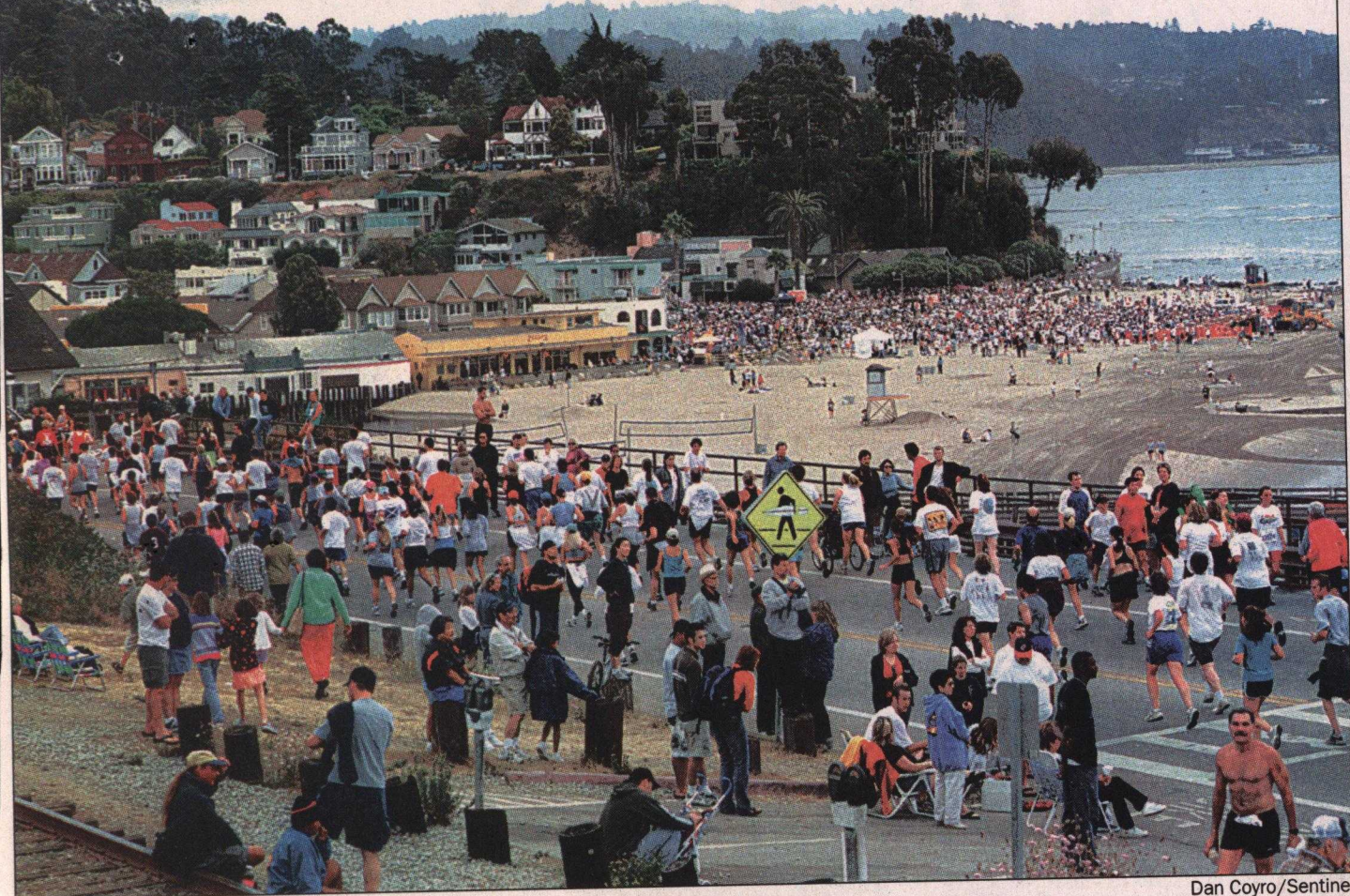
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NOTEBOOK: Fans and runners agree: The Santa Cruz-to-Capitola race is among the most beautiful and enjoyable events in the world.

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TOP 100: List of top 100 finishers with times.

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Dan Coyro/Sentinel

Runners crowd into Capitola as they head toward the finish line of the Wharf to Wharf race on Sunday.

Wharf

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on them."

Down on Cliff Drive in Capitola near the Union Pacific railroad tracks Fred Thompson found an unobstructed view so that he might see his wife Tricia Johnson race toward the finish line.

"This is her fourth Wharf to Wharf," said Thompson, who prefers races on the water. In the past races he chose to meet her at the finish line in his outrigger. "She's a vintage runner."

Race participants appreciate the support.

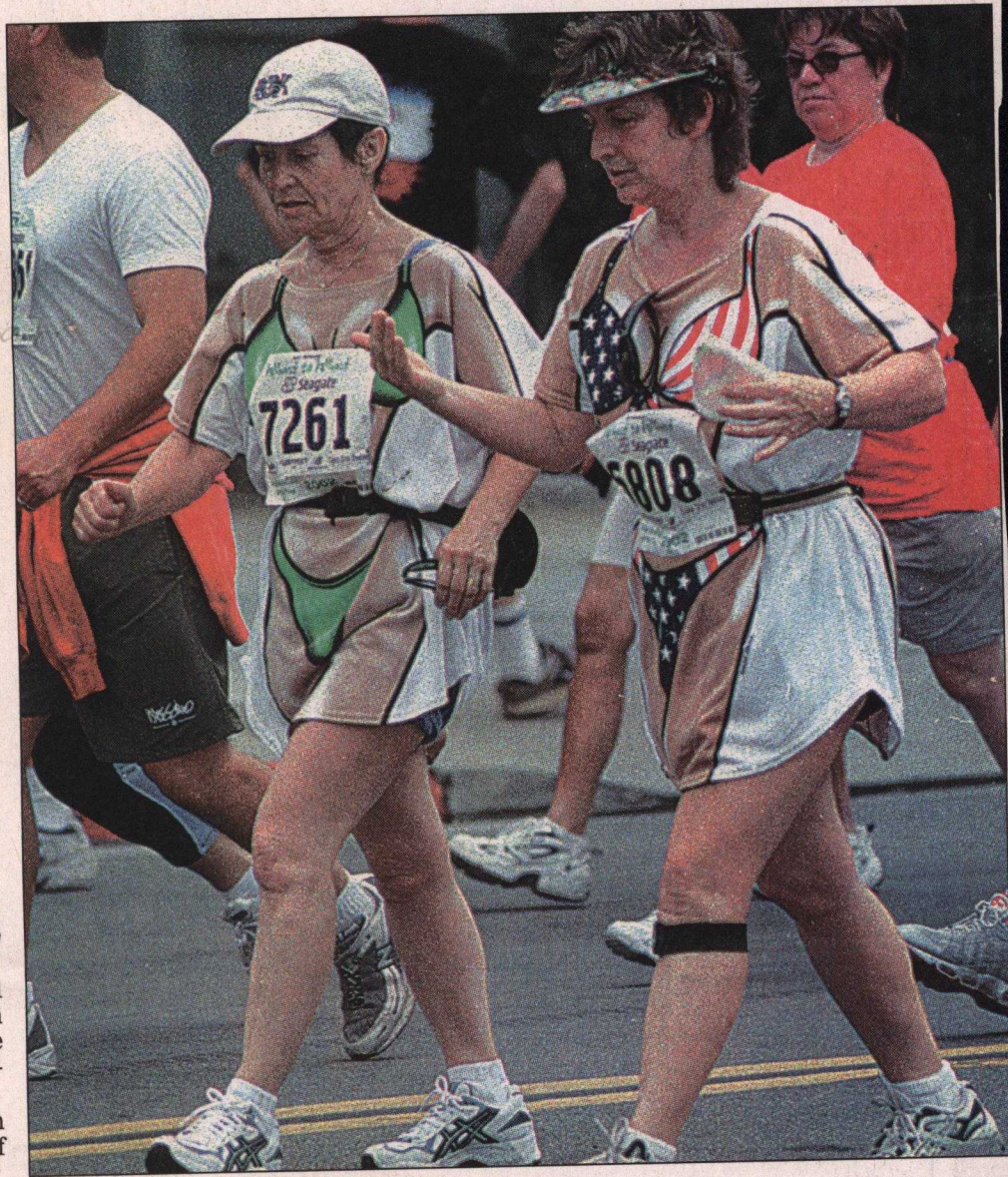
Viola Kull, 71, of Fremont ran 4 miles of the 6-mile race in 55 minutes. This was the 12th Wharf to Wharf for the avid race runner. She admitted she's slowing down, saying she has run the entire race before and her time for the abbreviated course was rather slow. But Kull still felt great afterward.

"The whole thing is beautiful," said Kull, who runs in several events around the San Francisco Bay Area and Central Coast. "There's music all the way to the finish line. There's balloons and people cheering for us."

The cheering is what kept Dan Rogers, owner of Capitola Coffee Roasters on the Esplanade, on his feet back in the mid-1980s, when there were about half the 14,000 folks who now participate annually.

"When you're in back and there's still people cheering, you feel like you're in first place because there's no one else around," he said, while recalling his finish times to be in the 40-minute range.

Rogers has been working out with plans to enter next year's Wharf to Wharf and enjoy the cheers once again.



Decked out in racy T-shirts, two participants in the Wharf to Wharf race walk the final mile Sunday.

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