

Good cheer prevails amid the Wharf to Wharf runners as they crest the hill on East Cliff Drive on Sunday morning.

BILL LOVEJOY/SENTINEL

# RUNNERS ALL SMILES SUNDAY

Wharf-to-Wharf 7-25-11

**MORE INSIDE**

Director: This year's race was one of the fastest, with many coming close to records

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**ON THE NET**



■ Kenyan Silas Kipruto finishes on top in the men's race; Oakland's Magdalena Lewy Boulet wins women's, **C1**

■ Chip timing system not without flaws, **C1**

**SANTA CRUZ** — Sunday's 39th annual Wharf to Wharf was a fast race this year and, as always, a sure-fire way to raise money for young athletes.

Cheers and music could be heard from blocks away as the throng of Wharf to Wharf runners snaked its way from Santa Cruz to Capitola during the well-known event.

And while numbers of participants and money raised were not yet tallied Sunday afternoon, race director Kirby Nichol said it was a fast pack this year, with more than one runner coming very close to

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busting course records.

There were no serious injuries or health problems, he added. (One woman fell, but was not believed to have suffered serious injuries, authorities said).

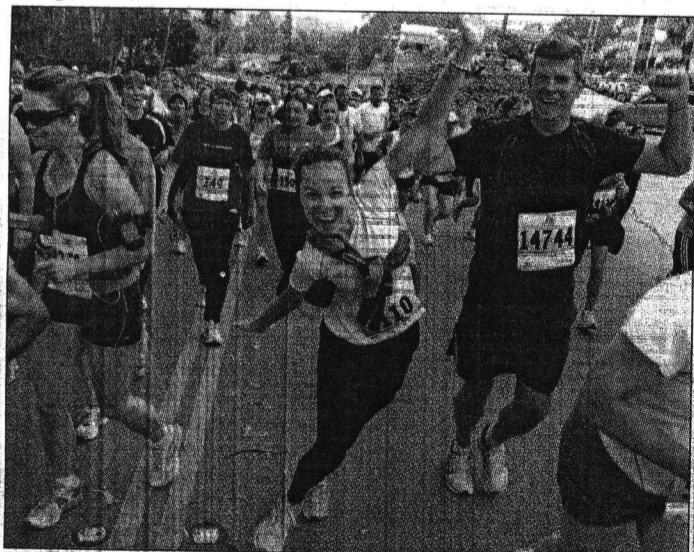
"They went home healthy



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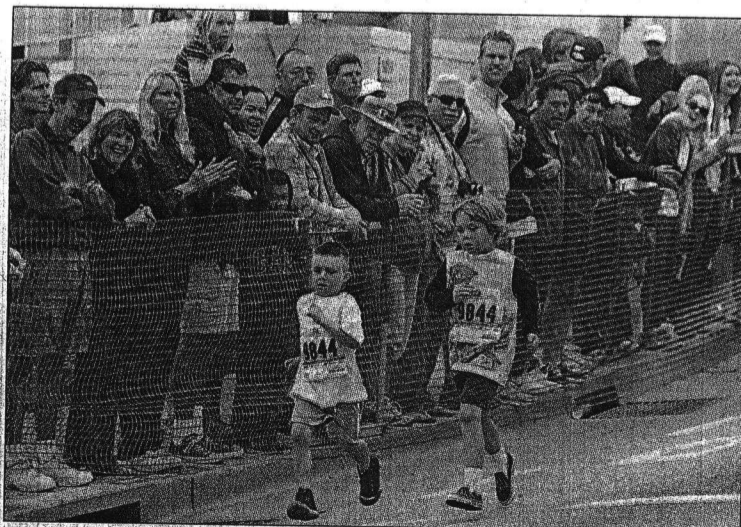
Some runners stopped to get a snapshot taken with the Great Morgani on Sunday.

SEE RACE ON A2



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Anne Blair of Billings, Mont., and Kelly Burch of Redding enjoy their Wharf to Wharf experience Sunday.



JOHN WILLIAMS/SENTINEL

The crowd at the finish line cheers on two young finishers that stopped the clock at 35:29. The two, wearing identical numbers, didn't start the race, but still enjoyed crossing over the finish line at full speed.

# RACE

Continued from A1

and smiling," Nichol said. "And from a speed standpoint, it was one of the fastest ever."

He said a the crowd enjoyed a marriage proposal on the race stage before the 8:30 a.m. start.

"That was a big crowd-pleaser," he said. "We had a phony Rookie of the Year award to set the scam up; and I was hoping she would say 'yes.' She did, and her door prize was a diamond ring. That was pretty cool." New this year was a chip timing system that tracked each runner's time and had some people complaining about discrepancies (see the story in the Sports section), and prize trips for two to the Wharf2Wharf race set for January in New Zealand.

"That captured a lot of people's imaginations," Nichol said.

Some 15,000 racers were expected, in a race which draws many unregistered runners. Nichol said he thought participation was in line with past years.

"We're pretty happy," he said. "Any time you can take that many people and move them along the ocean without serious injuries, that's a blessing."

The race course is about six miles; runners Sunday enjoyed cool, overcast weather.

"Thank heavens," said Debi Dorr of San Jose, who participated with her daughter, Amy. "It's been really hot in San Jose."

Dorr said she was pretty excited by her first go at the race, and that she signed on because it sounded healthy and fun.

"The musicians are a big draw, and just the people watching in general," she added. At the start line in Santa Cruz, runners and walkers streamed down from areas around the wharf as the excitement built and the area between



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**Johnny Chavarria of Salinas brings his own style of patriotism to the Wharf to Wharf race Sunday.**

the wharf and the Boardwalk filled, sand-to-sidewalk, with people. Music blared; people cheered and hooted.

All but a baby or two seemed to be having a great time.

Tiffany Pace, an Aptos High graduate who now lives in Las Vegas, was on hand for her first Wharf to Wharf in 20 years, she said.

"I'm excited," she said, as her friend, Colleen Fanning, deemed Santa Cruz "gorgeous."

Nearby, a group of about 20 sported bright-gold Golden Geezers T-shirts for the race.

Gail Greenwood of Aptos said three generations of "geezers" were represented, ages 5 months to 65 years.

Greenwood started participating about five years ago, with Sheila and Steve Epler of Roseville, and then families of both joined in. The little racers were 5-month-old Aspen of Los Gatos, Evalyn, 2, Quinten and Makenna, both 5, and 6-year-old Kylee.

"About three years ago, we

said, 'Let's do the whole shebang, wouldn't it be fun?' " Greenwood said. "So here we are."

As the geezer group headed off, a cat, a bunny and a devil strode by (young women, actually).

Linda Fisher of Scotts Valley was one of several drummers at the first music spot, one of more than 50 along the route. Fisher, 62, played with Jim Grenier's Hands on! Drumming Events near the levee at the eastern end of the Boardwalk.

"It was a blast," she said, about an hour after the 8:30 a.m. race began.

"It was so much fun playing," she continued. "This is the first year I've been good enough to (look up and) watch the runners go by. What a treat; they get so excited and are so happy. It just feeds you."

Volunteers were out in full force, even picking up trash after the race.

Crystal Ramirez, 16, and Estephany Naranjo, 17, who

are on the Watsonville High track team, were busy rolling up some temporary fencing along Beach Street.

Both said they were sidelined with leg injuries, but found it fun to cheer on their teammates and it was motivating to see other runners.

"There are some crazy characters out there; it's not boring," Ramirez said.

"Yeah, there is always something new to see," Naranjo added.

After the race, Pajaro Valley school district school bus drivers and others ferried racers from Capitola back to Santa Cruz. And while there were inevitable traffic tie-ups, no problems were reported, Capitola police Sgt. Cliff Sloma said.

"Everything went real smooth," Sgt. Cliff Sloma said. "We did our best to keep things moving afterward."

Last year, the Wharf to Wharf donated more than \$300,000 to local youth sports organizations, Nichol said.