

Aptos Farmers Market hits 30

Farmers' market

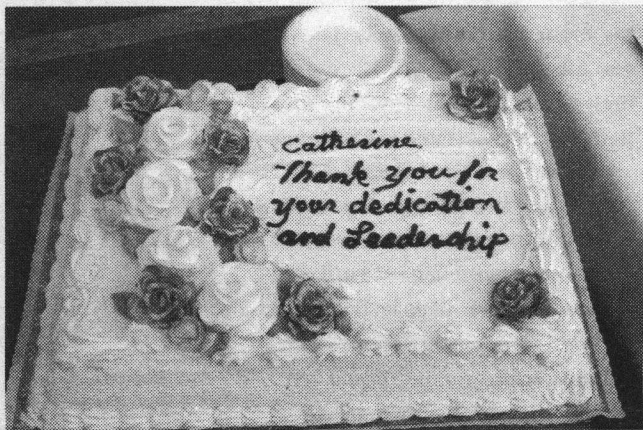
6-15-06

After 30 years of serving the Santa Cruz area with superior quality produce, flowers and specialty products, the Aptos Farmers Market, located at top levels of the Cabrillo College parking garage, celebrated its anniversary on Saturday, June 3. Guest speakers, balloons, and birthday cake highlighted the festive occasion. During the festivities, Capitola Mayor Dennis Norton and Santa Cruz County Farm Bureau Executive Director Jess Brown kicked off the event with several short speeches and acknowledgements to the farm families and specialty vendors for their commitment to the success of the market. They also spoke about the need for earth-friendly sustainable farming and the growing demand on the part of Santa Cruz Area community for exceptional quality in their daily cuisine.

"The Aptos Farmers Market has been embraced by the Santa Cruz Area community and has become the Saturday morning event," Market Manager Catherine Barr said. "People come not only to buy next week's food and flowers, but also to chat with old friends, listen to wonderful musicians playing bluegrass, and learn cooking tips and trade secrets from area master chefs. The vendors are a large family, supportive and dedicated to one another, pitching in to help during hard times of illness and family problems. We've even had a wedding celebration here."

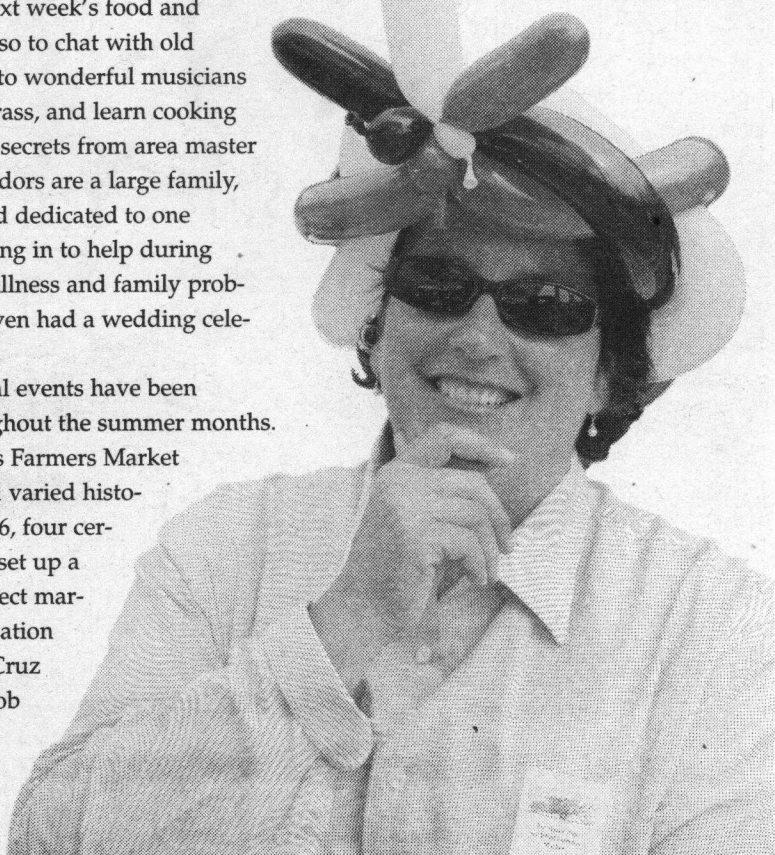
Additional events have been planned throughout the summer months.

The Aptos Farmers Market has a long and varied history. In June 1976, four certified farmers set up a non-profit, direct marketing organization for the Santa Cruz community. Bob Harris,



Manuel Netto, Nick Pasquel and Jerry Thomas realized that if small farmers could sell directly to the local consumer and bypass the unprofitable wholesale route, small farms could remain financially viable and avoid being taken over by corporate farming or farm land being sold to commercial developers. The newly founded Monterey Bay Certified Farmers Market in Aptos was initially

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open from June through November, but eventually grew into a year-round market with several more locations added. The market has had its challenges over the past 30 years. One summer at the height of the farmers market season, the Cabrillo College parking lots (where the markets were held) underwent a massive construction upgrade, which adversely affected patronage and sales at the market. In 2001, the market moved to its present location on the top levels of the Cabrillo College parking garage, and its growth and popularity have increased steadily. More than 3,500 shoppers attend the MBCFM markets each week. It is also a very popular tourist destination throughout the year. The Aptos farmers market offers an unmatched selection of top quality seasonal produce and flowers from

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small regional farmers, many of which are certified organic and using earth-friendly sustainable farming methods. In addition, a wealth of other specialty products offered include artisan breads, cheeses, eggs, handmade chocolates, preserves, fresh fish, oysters, gourmet sauces and pasta, freshly baked pastries, fair trade coffee and teas. This popular, open-air market is requisite shopping for many of our local chefs and health-conscious consumers who appreciate connecting with their food sources.

The Monterey Bay Certified Farmers Market (MBCFM) has also grown to include three other markets: (1) Monterey Peninsula College on Thursdays, from 2:30 p.m. to 6 p.m.; (2) The Barnyard in Carmel, on Tuesdays from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.; and (3) the market at the Northridge Shopping Mall in Salinas on Sundays, from 8 a.m. to noon. To become a vendor, all farmers must be state certified producers and be approved by the MBCFM Board. The board is comprised of nine members including Catherine Barr, who has served as Market Manager for the past 14 years. There are approximately 90 farm families from California, of which 75 percent represent the tri-county area.

Aptos is famous for not only its sixty-plus specialty vendors, but also for the lively knee-slapping, hand-clapping bluegrass music provided by Farmers Market String Band. And, as any great community

resource, the Aptos Farmers Market donates up to three free spaces a week to help local charities such as Hospice, Girl Scouts, SPCA and local schools. No longer a place just to shop on Saturday morning, the Aptos Farmers Market is where one meets up with friends and neighbors, enjoys a cup of java or chai, and does the weekly marketing to the rhythm of blue grass classics. The Shop with the Chef program (second Saturday each month, May through October) features local chefs from the area's finest restaurants who tour the market with a class to shop for fresh ingredients that will be used in their cooking demonstration.

Visit the market's website at www.montereybayfarmers.org

The Aptos Farmers Market is open on Saturdays from 8 a.m. to noon, and is located at top levels of the Cabrillo College parking garage, 6500 Soquel Drive, Aptos, Calif., 95003.

Upcoming special events:

July 3: Farmers Market Bag Give Away. There will be an Aptos Farmers Market 30th anniversary canvas bag give-away to customers. Supplies are limited and customers should see their favorite vendor to get one.

July 8: Shopping with the Chef Swing Time Café. Antonette Wood worked for 20 years at Clint Eastwood's Hogs Breath Inn in Carmel. She has also worked at Pacific Grove's four-star Mobil rated bed and breakfasts, Seven Gables and Grand View Inns. Before opening Swing Time Cafe in Watsonville, she was the Prepared Foods Team Leader and Head Chef at Whole Foods Market in Monterey.

Aug. 5: Aptos Farmers Market Magnets and Cookbooks Give-Away. Free to customers, Aptos Farmers Market magnets and cookbooks comprised of favorite recipes and innovative cooking ideas will be given away by the vendors.

Aug. 12: Shopping with the Chef



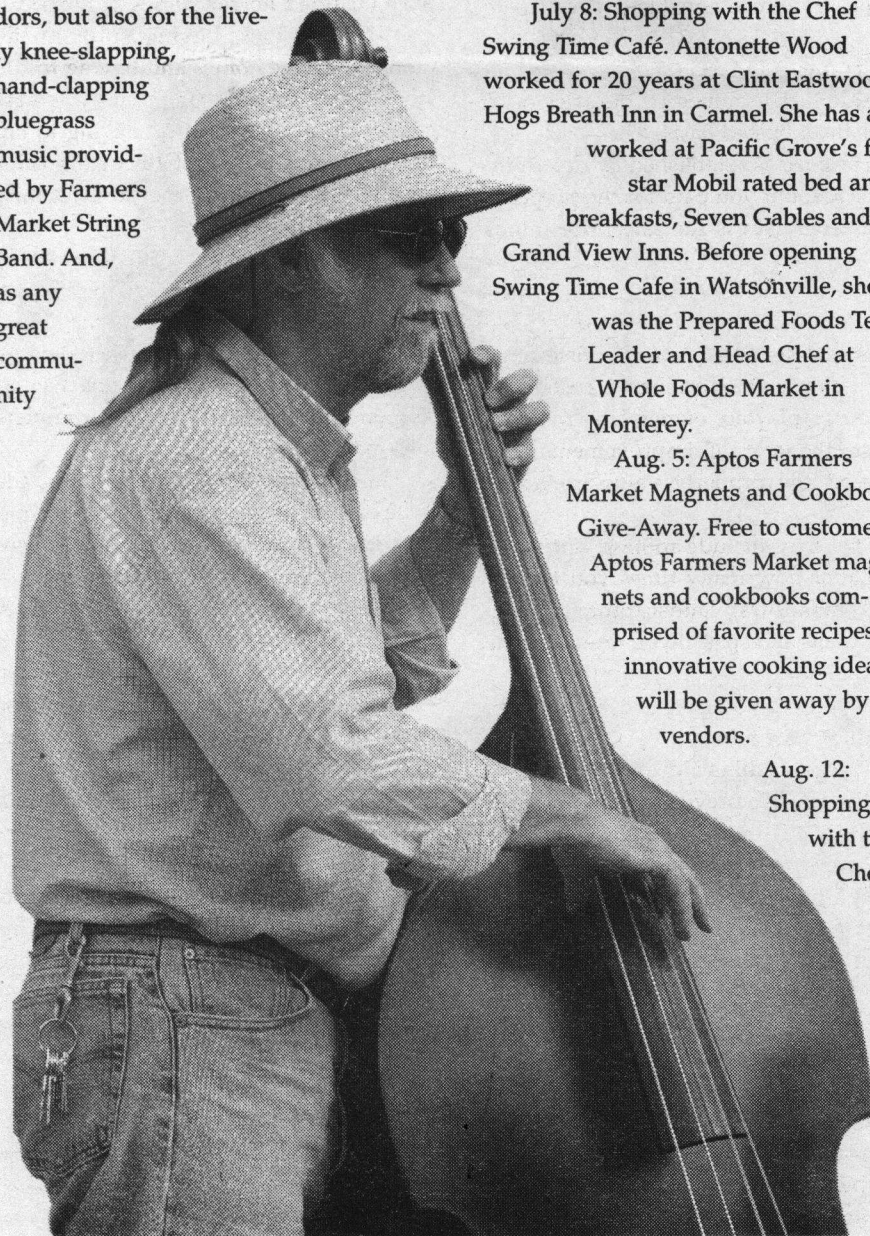
Ol' factory.

A graduate of the Pennsylvania Culinary Institute, Justin Severino was on the staff at the prestigious Manresa in Los Gatos. He has also been on staff at such fine restaurants as the Bernardus Lodge's Marinus in Carmel Valley, Bouchée in Carmel-By-The-Sea, and Ventana Inn in Big Sur.

Sept. 9: Shopping with the Chef

Gabriella

Café Executive Chef. Rebecca King developed her talent for cooking with fresh seasonal foods when working as an organic farmer in California and on the East Coast. An honors graduate of the California Culinary Academy in San Francisco, she trained at Chez Panisse restaurant and San Francisco's Foreign Cinema.



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