



East Cliff Drive is filled with runners and walkers as Wharf to Wharf participants make their way through Pleasure Point on Sunday.

SHMUEL THALER/SENTINEL PHOTOS

# Rollicking race goes off swimmingly

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INSIDE**

'Happy, healthy' event  
features 55 bands,  
raises money for schools

By CATHY KELLY

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SANTA CRUZ — The 38th annual Wharf to Wharf race went off smoothly Sunday, replete with 15,000 athletes from around the world, 55 bands and a lot of other roadside encouragement.

"It's really fun, crowded, but super high-energy and entertaining," said Carol Yvanovich of Santa Cruz, who was running for the seventh time.

Yvanovich was with her brother, Dave, and his four children — D.J., 15, Austin, 12, Ali, 10, and Michael, 8 — who all promised to run the whole thing.

All ages of runners and walkers transformed oceanfront streets from Santa Cruz to Capitola into seas of jostling, bobbing, colorful contestants early Sunday. The popular six-mile race sells out months in advance and last year raised \$185,000 for local



One Wharf to Wharf participant brought a message of hope to the less physically fit on the back of his shirt.

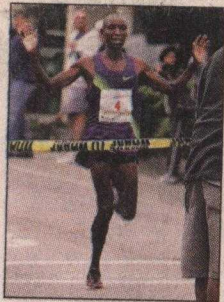
SHMUEL THALER/SENTINEL

schools.

Race organizers say they get about 1,000 "bandits" who crash the race each year, something they seem to take in stride.

The crowd was so big that it took about 10 minutes for the group of runners to pass the rainbow arch of

SEE RACE ON A2



Kenyan Shadrack Kosgei breaks away in last half-mile to win men's race; Belainesh Gebre of Ethiopia was three seconds off women's race record, B6

## ON THE NET

View a slide show and video from the race at [santacruzsentinel.com](http://santacruzsentinel.com)



Danny Bills and Dennis English play with their band The Dumpsters on Sunday for their 15th straight Wharf to Wharf race.



The Wharf to Wharf race brings out a bit of Jeff Mohr's feminine side on Sunday. The 38th annual race drew 15,000 participants.



Five-month-old Julius Gentalen, of Redwood City, takes a nap as he and his father wait for his mother Melissa to run by





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Mira Wichelmann, 8, of Scotts Valley, enjoys a slower pace at the Wharf to Wharf on Sunday.

## RACE

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balloons start line near the Coconut Grove, and the pace was slow enough for the walkers to keep step.

"Sweet Home Alabama" pounded out from some loudspeakers and several beach balls bounced above the crowd from runner to runner as cameras snapped and spectators clapped.

Near the starting line, Jenny Yeane and Lisa Cassidy volunteered erecting and guarding some temporary orange fencing at the foot of Cliff Street. Their kids are on the San Lorenzo Valley cross country team.

"It's a wonderful fundraiser and an incredible amount of people," Cassidy said. "All the sports teams come down."

The race was "healthy and happy," race director Kirby Nicol said.

One mishap came near the end of the race, though.

Demessew Tsega of Ethiopia was in the top 10 when he fell coming down the hill into Capitola and pulled a muscle, Nicol said. He was treated at Dominican Hospital and released.

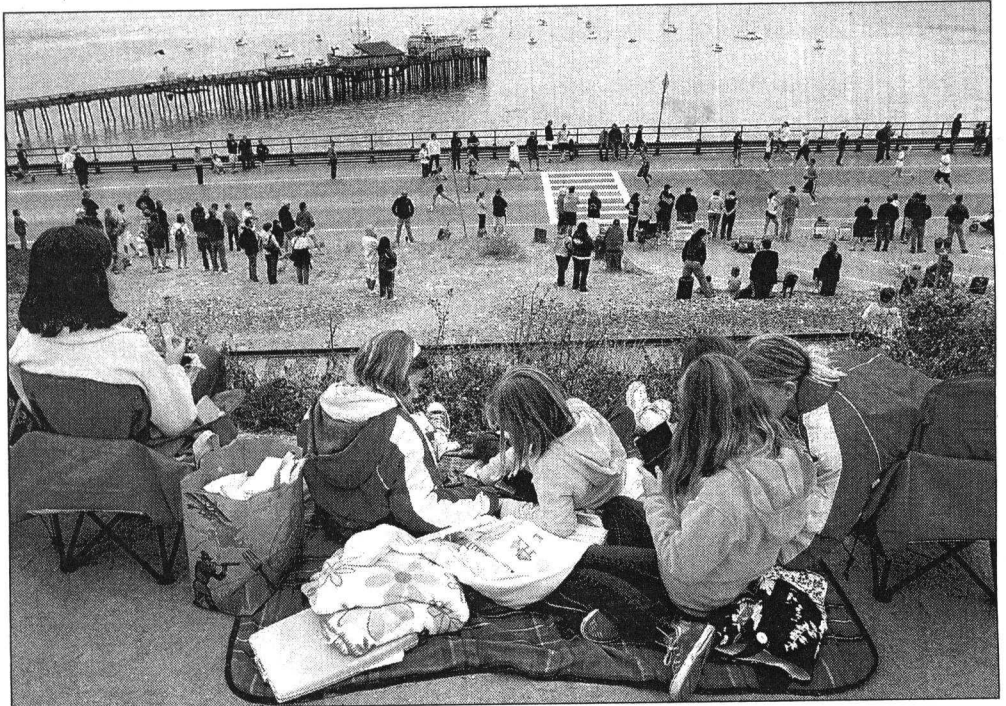
"It will take us a couple of days to sort through everything, but we got a lot of really positive feedback and were really happy with the way it went," Nicol said.

Several Capitola businesses seemed to enjoy the race aftermath.

Michaela Olavarri of Capitola Coffee Roasters and Patisserie said business was about triple that of a typical Sunday.

"It was phenomenal," she said.

Emmilu Choy of Pizza My



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A group of girls from Pleasanton wait along the bluffs above Capitola for their mothers to run by during the Wharf to Wharf on Sunday.



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The Blue and Red Circus Band plays for runners as they take the turn onto 41st Avenue.

Heart, on the Esplanade, said they got a throng of customers after the race, when the streets reopened.

"It's definitely busy," Choy said. "The village is crawling with people."

One Boulder Creek woman seized the race as an opportunity to raise awareness for a little-known chronic disease she suffers from called Sjogren's syndrome, an autoimmune condition.

Estrella Bibbey, 38, said several of her friends, many of whom have young children like she does, formed Team Sjogren, training for several weeks at the San Lorenzo Valley High track.

"I was a little nervous, but I have some fabulous friends," Bibbey said before the race. "I feel good now; I'm excited."

Claire and Katie Marsh, 18-year-old twins from Saratoga, finished the race in about 44 minutes, they said.

The sisters are on the USC triathlon team and ran their first Wharf to Wharf just for fun, Katie said.

And it was. She said there were so many bands that they didn't need their iPods.

"It was a really nice run," she said. "People were all lined up and they had some great bands. I loved it."