

# Fireworks weren't missed

By CANDACE ATKINS

It was "old fashioned" in every sense of the word. From the tug-o-war to the lemonade stand, the Capitola Fourth of July Hoe Down epitomized the annual celebration of yesteryear.

More than 2500 people listened to country music, joined in contests and stuffed themselves on nachos, calamari and fruit kabobs at the Jade Street Parkevent.

A crisp ocean breeze blew thin clouds overhead as the loudspeaker blared the latest information on the continually revised schedule. The original agenda was abandoned shortly before noon and events took place on a haphazard, though nonstop basis. The crowd's enthusiasm was not dampened in the least by the loose scheduling, and it was a party atmosphere all the way.

Contest winners were awarded the same tri-colored ribbon regardless if they placed first, second or

third. Victors' names were not recorded for most of the competition, but red, white and blue ribbons fluttered from many participants' t-shirts and jeans pockets.

Capitola policemen and animal control officers mingled with the crowd, and found their biggest job was giving directions to the bathroom or horseshoe tournament.

"The crowds were large but well behaved," said Capitola police Chief Supervising Officer Tom Hanna. "We were busy, but there was nothing extraordinary."

According to Hanna, "There was no comparison to the numbers and kinds of people that were attracted (to the Capitola fireworks show) last year. From a health and safety standpoint, the event this year is eminently better than the fireworks display."

From many who attended, the daytime celebration, followed by an evening dance at Capitola Mall, was a more enjoyable

way to spend the Fourth than the usual fireworks display from Capitola Wharf.

Dianne Graves, chairman of the Hoe Down, said "everyone loved it, from the little ones to grandmas and grandpas — they all had fun. What's more, so many are looking forward to the same thing next year."

Mrs. Graves and members of the Capitola Chamber of Commerce worked several months organizing the alternative to the fireworks display, and according to the chairman, the success and turnout was beyond their wildest dreams.

Perched on the "grandstand," (the back of a flatbed truck), Mrs. Graves directed activities with that kind of confused precision

that seems to happen only in Capitola. All events were held — eventually.



Ron Childers enjoyed the watermelon eating contest in Capitola