

July Fourth: Long and short of it

'Hogs' and tutus on parade; big crowd at Harvey West



Shmuel Thaler/Sentinel

American Ballet Tragedy troupe entertains the crowd Saturday at the World's Shortest Parade in Aptos.

By JOHN ROBINSON
Sentinel staff writer

SANTA CRUZ — "I love America," the woman said while sitting on the back of Harley Davidson motorcycle, an American flag blowing across her legs.

"What could be a more American than a Harley?" she asked shortly before joining a couple dozen other customized motorcycles in a loose formation at the start of The World's Shortest Parade in Aptos Saturday.

What could be more American than a "chopped" Harley flying flags?

Maybe the men in pink tutus who followed the motorcycles; a veteran's honor guard; a "drill team" of white terriers wearing red, white and blue or those

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marching in support of abortion rights.

The sublime and often ridiculous met in the Aptos parade which — though billed as the world's shortest — took nearly two hours to pass on its one-block route from State Park Drive to Aptos Park.

It was only one of many star-spangled events and great American pastimes that were celebrated around the county this Independence Day.

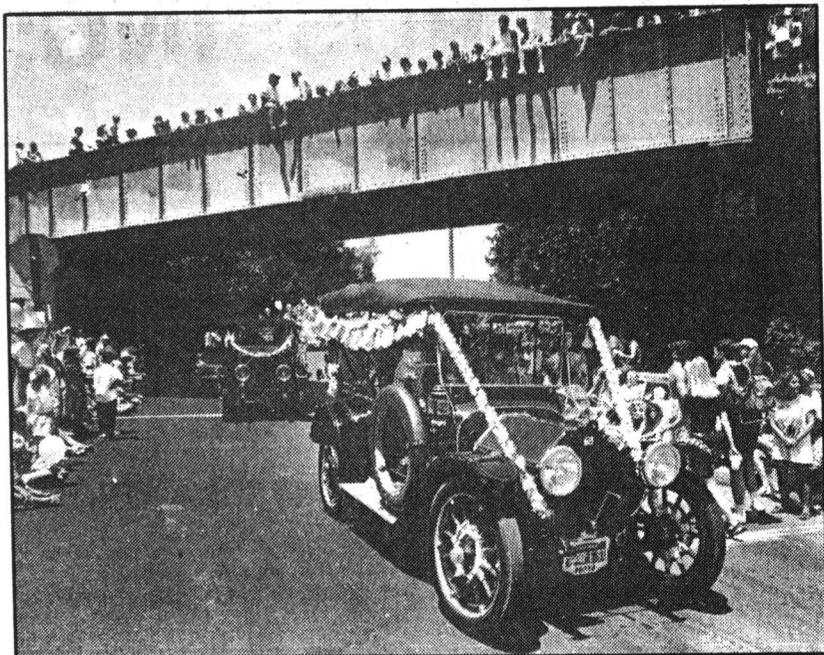
Despite thousands of visitors and locals clogging the beaches and roads, police reported few serious

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Shmuel Thaler/Sentinel photos
County residents from Santa Cruz to Aptos and La Selva Beach were among those celebrating the nation's independence Saturday. At right, Logan Dunlop four-wheeled it during the "World's Shortest Parade" in Aptos, which actually took two hours.

FESTIVE FOURTH



Aptos streets were lined with people for its old-fashioned July 4 parade; some found a higher perch for a better view.

troubles, largely because of a parade of law enforcement along the county's North Coast and other beach areas.

"It's been real quiet, not like in past years," said sheriff's Sgt. Terry Parker at a sheriff's command post set up at the Bonny Doon Beach parking lot.

Law officers credited a "zero tolerance" program of prohibiting fireworks and the banning of alcohol at many events, such as the city of Santa Cruz's Fourth of July party at Harvey West Park, for keeping the trouble to a minimum.

One of the few serious problems occurred around 7:30 a.m. when a man reportedly led law enforcement on a chase from Harvey West Park to Half Moon Bay where he was arrested by California Highway Patrol officers.

Although a report on the incident was incomplete, police said the man had apparently become angry after his car was towed by North County Recovery early Saturday. The man retrieved his car, and according to police, drove by the tow company office and shot ball bearings through the business's front window with a powerful slingshot.

The man then led police on a chase through the Harvey West

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Park area, which was crowded with runners preparing for the Firecracker 10K footrace.

The chase led to Mission Street and north on Highway 1 to Half Moon Bay at speeds up to 90 mph before wrecking his car. Details of his arrest were not available, but the suspect was not seriously injured, police said.

Otherwise, police reported a handful of arrests for alcohol-related problems.

At the Main Beach, crowds filled the sand, but city lifeguards said it was nothing special for a Fourth of July. They speculated that a strong ocean breeze, which kicked up in the morning, kept people away.

At Harvey West Park, an enthusiastic crowd estimated at 4,000 danced to music by bands such as Spang-a-lang and Urj, but no problems, other than an occasional lost child, were reported.



In LaSelva Beach, Laura Riehl, 5, left, tried to line up her golden retriever for the pet parade, while judges Debbie Mayfield, Laura Walther and Becky Neagley, rated everything from turtles to goldfish.



Thousands jammed into Harvey West Park for an annual celebration featuring music, food and children's games.