

Green Sheet

and Cabrillo Times

Capitola, California, Thursday, July 8, 1976
Volume 7 — No. 28

60 Pages



Gum and candy was passed out to the kids in Aptos parade

A mellow parade in Aptos

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It was a fine day in Aptos.

The sun rose like a king to preside over the day. By 10 o'clock in the morning people began to gather to watch the World's Shortest Parade, scheduled to start rolling at 1 p.m. Cars, horses and people who were going to participate in the parade were already milling around behind Terrible Herbst's service station. The booze was flowing early in the Aptos Club.

Over behind the Bay View Hotel, booths had been erected in a vacant field and were already dispensing hamburgers and chili dogs, tacos and shish-kebab, knackwurst and beer, hot buttered corn (on the cob, not pop), homemade pies and ice cream (10 cents extra with strawberries) and soda pop. Some young entrepreneurs were hawking slices of watermelon at two bits a crack.

By 11 o'clock the village was pretty well loaded with people. A pickup had parked in front of the Aptos Market with a sofa in its bed. A ringside seat with the comforts of

home. Across the street and up a way, a big flatbed truck loaded with bales of hay made a rustic grandstand for a group of exuberant young people, well-stocked with Budweiser.

Dress was Bicentennial casual. Red, white and blue was everywhere, from George Honerlah's socks to Fred Hudson's stovepipe hat. By noon, Soquel Avenue from Terrible Herbst's to the Shell Station at the corner of Rancho del Mar was solidly lined with people.

The parade didn't start on time — it started 10 minutes early. It was a fine parade. There were kids on bicycles and little old ladies in tennis shoes and people of all ages, sexes and sizes on horses, who left their inevitable reminders that a parade had passed this way.

Abe Lincoln was there; beardless, but it was Abe all right, with stovepipe hat and somber mien, and accompanied by Mrs. Lincoln. And General Patton, standing in his Jeep, issuing the blunt orders that helped give him the sobriquet, Ol' Blood 'n' Guts.

Antique cars put-putted by and a stream

of more modern Corvettes went varoom-varoom. There were kiddie carts pulled by dogs, a woman on roller skates, and villainous looking cowpokes on horseback firing six-guns in the air.

There was music, too. The Aptos High School band was identifiable; another group wandered by, tottling away, looking much as if they had just run into each other in the pub and decided to go out and join the parade. There was a youthful fife and drum corps, and if the instruments were toys and the fife player a bit off key, Yankee Doodle would have understood.

The crowd, cheered, whistled, leaped in the air and drank beer as the parade marched, more or less, up to State Park Drive and back, with some stragglers dropping out here and there.

There were thousands of people, perhaps more people than had ever been in Aptos before. The parade lasted more than an hour, making it the longest World's Shortest Parade in the world.

It was a fine day in Aptos.



This star-spangled float with its top-hatted riders was one of many in the Aptos Fourth of July parade.