

July 4th

A cloudy, quiet parade

By KEN McLAUGHLIN

The Fourth of July parade in Watsonville could probably best be described as low-key.

The morning cloud cover lingered throughout the event, which lasted a little over an hour. And the fog has its effects. The crowds were thin and less enthusiastic than in years past. Applause for the parade entries was scattered and sparse.

A pretty cheerleader for the Oakland Raiders, apparently dismayed by the quiet spectators lining Main Street, yelled to the crowd: "Don't you like the Raiders?"

No one answered her.

Another reason for the subdued mood might have been the lack of music. Only two bands — the Watsonville Band and the Watsonville High School Band — appeared. As usual, they were good, but the crowd appeared to want more music.

Many of the parade entries were cars — from a 1913 Buick to 1964 "low-riding" Chevy Impalas. At times, the parade, because of the varooming, sounded like Saturday night downtown.

Traditionally, the nicest parts of hometown parades are the children. And

yesterday's parade was no exception. Proud parents beamed as their kids strolled down the street, mostly out of step.

When the sun finally popped out of the clouds shortly before noon, it made all the difference in the world. The International Bazaar in Callaghan Park following the parade was packed with people, who stuffed themselves with ethnic and American food and sprawled out on the grass to listen to music. Appearing were Tropicali, performing Latin music; Reese Party of Two, playing an assortment of blues, folk music and pop; and mimes Tommy Marquez and Cindy Valle.

The mimes, both Watsonville High School students, delighted the young children. Doing pieces such as "Happy and Sad" and "The Box," the pair used techniques resembling Shields and Yarnell and Marcel Marceau.

Because of the last minute cancellation of some of other scheduled performers, the entertainment portion of the bazaar ended earlier than expected. But a lot of the crowd stayed around anyway, eating and drinking on the lawn and listening to FM music over a sound system.

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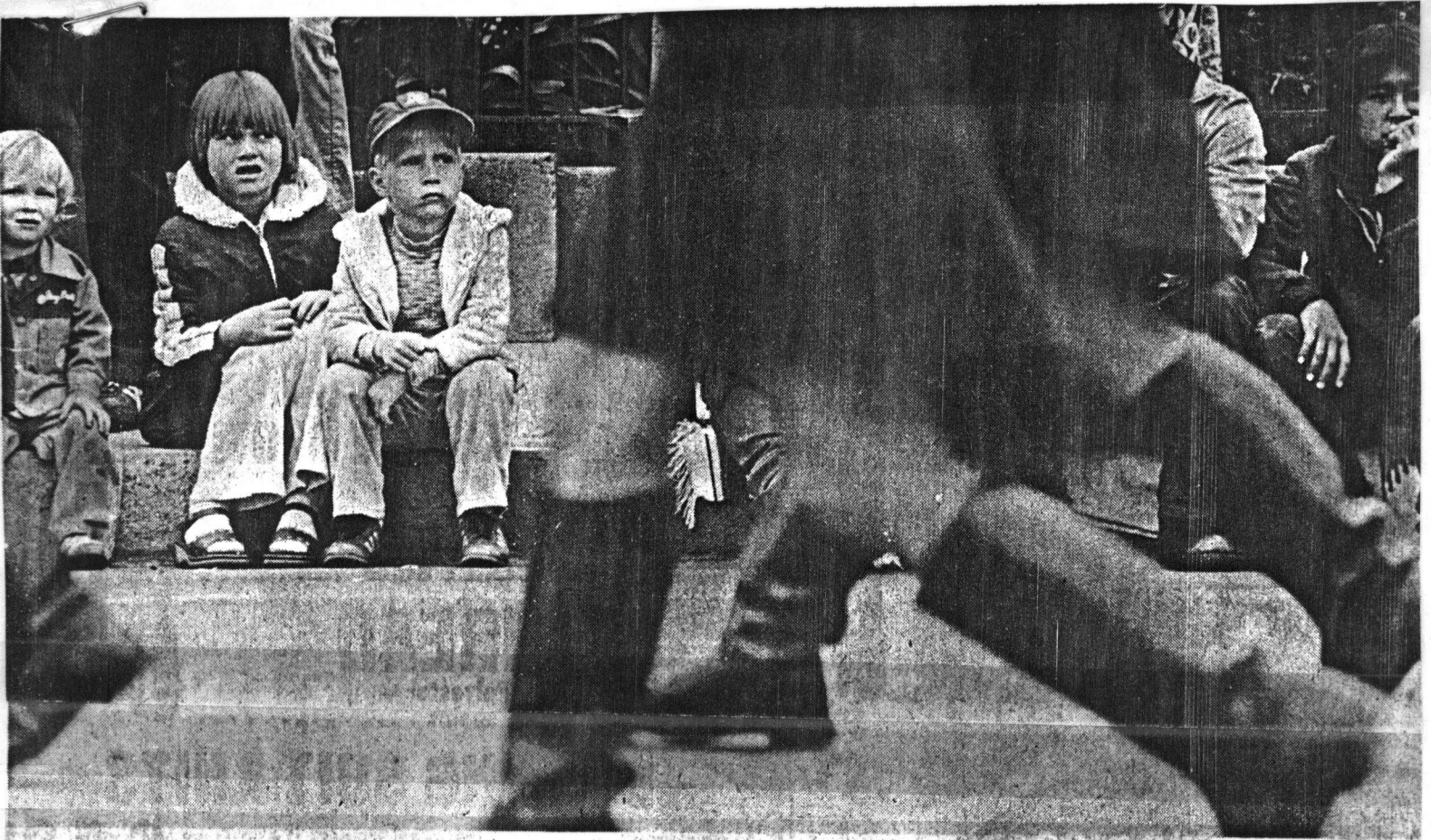
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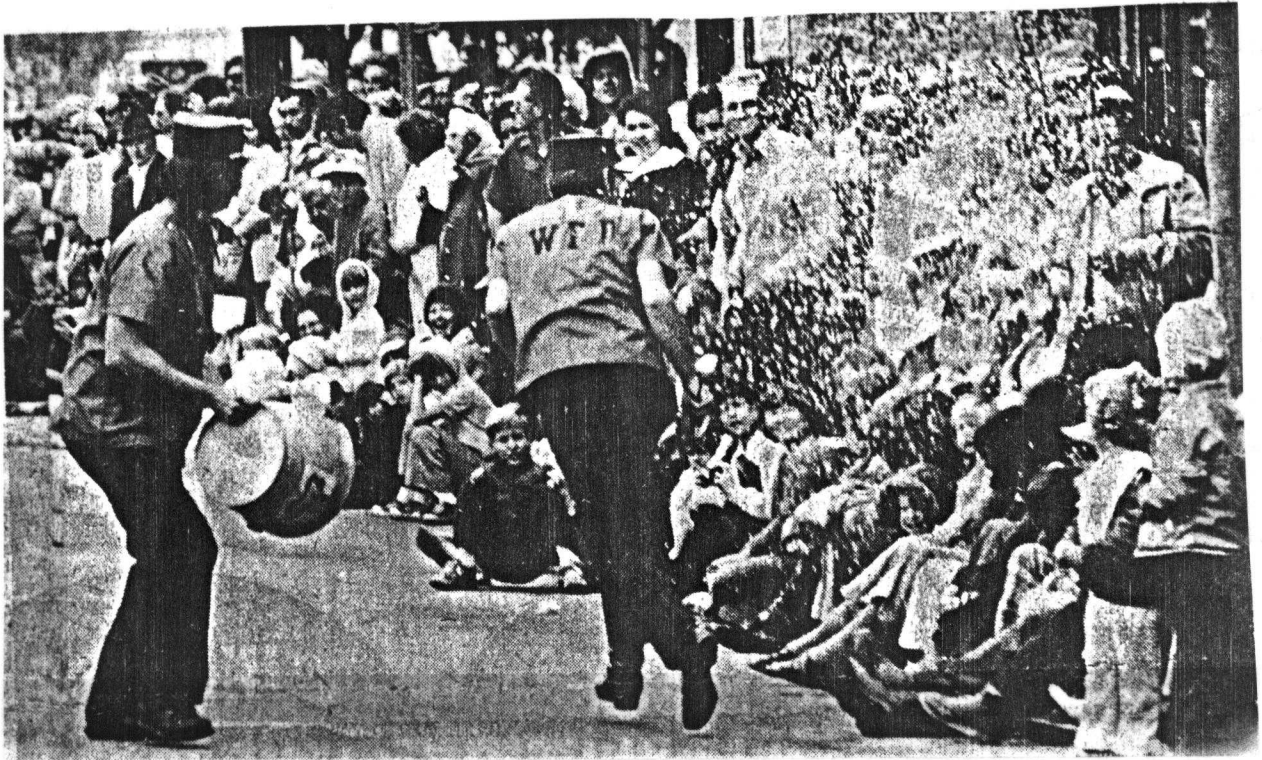
Parades can be full of surprises.



The Watsonville Band steps out with the lively Barbara Ellen dancers in front.



A drill team impresses watching children.



Watsonville firemen shock the crowd with water that isn't wet.



Refugio Figueroa looks like he should be in a parade.