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Life

Tuesday, June 20, 2006

Pups in poodle skirts and more at pet parade

BY SHELDON TRAVER

[Appeal Tribune](#)

May 24

SILVERTON — It may not have been lions and lambs at Silverton's annual Pet parade Saturday, but the cats and rats made fine entertainment for hundreds of spectators that lined West Main and North Water streets.

"This is just a really fun parade that people come to year after year," said Susan Stelljes. "People are really drawn to the story of Bobbie and what he represents."

The pet parade, a nearly continuous event since 1932, is a draw for locals and people from outside of Silverton who come to enjoy a unique experience. Pups in poodle skirts and rats behind kiddy tractors lined the streets as spectators waved.

All were invited to participate and many did, including Chihuahuas in trailers and ducks behind trucks. All things canine and bovine walked with their pet humans.

The morning started at Town Square Park at Sweetheart, the stand-in for Bobbie the Wonder Dog, waited with her owners for participants in the Bobbie Look-Alike contest. It looked like the contest would be a wash until Angus and Misha arrived with their owner Kathleen George. Several others finally made the trek, some looking more like Bobbie than others, but all seven dogs loved the attention and exercise.

Each dog's owner waited patiently while the judges looked for Bobbie's qualities in each pooch.

Sheldon Traver / [Appeal Tribune](#)

Renai Olson, right, rode Twinky and Kristen Morris rode Dizzy during Saturday's Pet Parade in Silverton.

What makes a quality Bobbie impersonator? Stelljes said judges look for a dog in the herding family. The light brown and tan coloring is also important. The ideal dog has a large white collar around its neck and extra points are awarded if the dog has a bobtail.

And the winner of the Bobbie Look-Alike contest was...Angus the Collie.

"It doesn't surprise me," said George as she placed the trophy bone-collar on Angus. "I think this guy looks a lot like the statue."

Joey, a herding dog/collie mix won the Pal look-alike contest. Pal was one of Bobbie's offspring and another famous pooch, at least to Silvertonians.

All participating dogs won the right to help lead the Pet Parade following the U.S. flag.

Along with Silverton's pets, trailers with students from Bethany Charter, a truck with a hopeful future governor, a fire truck and plenty of candy made kids' day during the parade.

"It was fun," said 11-year-old animal fan Sarah Elliott. "All the animals were dressed up." Her father, Bruce, agreed.

"I liked seeing all the people we know," he said. "It's a great community event."

Craig Robertson said he enjoyed the cows and snake and added this was a yearly event for his family.

"We love to bring the kids," he said. "They really enjoy it. We come down whether it's raining or not." His only complaint: "It was kind of short and sweet."

After the parade, viewers flocked to Silverton's Farmers Market to purchase fresh produce and flowers, crafts, "Divinely Original" mustards and other offerings. Students demonstrated the effects of erosion with a handcrafted watershed exhibit and educated visitors about their project.

Young and old also flocked to Eugene Field School for the chance to learn about health and safety from area professionals.

Silverton Hospital offered free blood glucose screenings to attendees, and the Marion County Health Department showed kids proper hand-washing technique. Free toothbrushes, sugar-free candy and other sweets were passed out as kids played games and did arts and crafts at a variety of booths.

Silverton Together resource coordinator Doreen Kelly said the event drew nearly 600 visitors, and added she thought the day was a success.

"These are things to get kids and their parents engaged," she said. "Parents' lifestyle influences their kids' lifestyle. This really was the best flow, and it was just a lot of fun. We were really pleased."

Other groups included representatives from the Hispanic community. Somos Hispanas Unidas passed out information about health programs and clinics and Silverton Hospital Family Birth Center gave demonstrations on how to properly install a car seat.

"This was really fun," said 9-year-old Kelly Branson as he putted a golf ball into a hole. He said he learned quite a bit during the Healthy Kids Day event.

"I learned how to brush my teeth and wash my hands," he said. However, he drew the line at getting his blood checked. "But I didn't want to get my finger poked by the needle."

With all the activities offered in Silverton, many people, whether first timers or long-timers, said they would definitely be back to enjoy Silverton's unique tradition.

"It was great but short," said Kathy Bledsoe. "We were definitely ready for more. We'll definitely be back next year."

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