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Triathlon Lures 372 Athletes, One Bagpiper

By Chris Lavin



Canyon bagpiper Scott MacLeod serenades athletes at Canyon Road and Camino Pablo in Moraga for the 7th Annual Moraga Triathlon. He was inspired by the Boston Marathon bombings to play "Chariots of Fire" to the passing cyclists. Photo Chris Lavin

courage.

That meant a steady stream of athletes for MacLeod's pipes, and he played for the entire race. Cyclists on the way to the turnaround at Canyon School saw him going and coming. Dozens gave MacLeod thumbs up or hollered their thanks.

"It was wonderful," MacLeod said afterward. "I felt fully engaged, and I think the cyclists did, too."

Jay Ingram, director of Moraga Parks and Recreation, called the event a big success. "Just seeing the smiles on people's faces said it all," he said. Putting on the triathlon each year means hundreds of hours of work on the parts of volunteers and department staff, Ingram said, including Kimberly Nelson and Kim Burrowes, as well as this year's Saint Mary's College intern, Angelica Tabuena.

The youth divisions, in which 5-7 and 8-11 age groups participate on a smaller scale, have particularly grown, Ingram said.

The event also brings in enough money to fund local Community Emergency Response Training (CERT) programs, Ingram said.

Bagpiper MacLeod said that because marathons are such an old tradition, bagpiping twins well with the ancient art of playing the pipes, especially in light of the tragedy in Boston. It also fits MacLeod's life pursuit: He founded World University and School, a learning institution where anyone can teach or take a course.

At World University, one may even learn to play the bagpipe, at http://worlduniversity.wikia.com/wiki/Bagpipe_Tutorials.

More photos and a list of top finishers can be found in Sports, page Cx; for complete Moraga Triathlon results visit www.moragatri.com.

Moraga's streets were filled with competing athletes April 27 for the 7th Annual Moraga Triathlon, but the energy was especially palpable at the intersection of Canyon Road and Camino Pablo where bagpiper Scott MacLeod serenaded participants on the bicycle leg of the race with the song, "Chariots of Fire."

"I'm doing it as a contribution to honor the ceremony of the race," said MacLeod, a Canyon resident who heard about a bagpiper who had played the same song to encourage runners in the Boston Marathon last month. Inspired by the story, McLeod adopted the idea. "Bagpipes are ceremonial. They are played during funerals, weddings, important occasions. I did it (in Moraga) in remembrance of the craziness in Boston."

Three hundred seventy two athletes from throughout the Bay Area and beyond participated in the triathlon this year. It started with a 400-meter swim at Campolindo High School, where swimmers - wearing electronic ID tags for automatic timing - jumped into the pool at staggered intervals. Out of the pool, participants ran to their bicycles for a 14-mile ride west to Canyon, back to Moraga, up to Sanders Ranch and back to Campolindo for a 3-mile run before crossing the finish line.

MacLeod chose to serenade the bikers from a pear orchard, a spot he said represents his message of peace and

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