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## MONTEREY COUNTY'S LARGEST NEWSPAPER

## Plenty of Gumption



No, it's not actor Tom Hanks in his Oscar-winning role as Forrest Gump strolling around Cannery Row yesterday. It's actually Steve Weber of Santa Clara, a Hanks impersonator hired to launch the first Bubba Gump Shrimp Co. restaurant. Story on 1C.

Vern Fisher/The Herald

## Bubba Gump restaurant opens on Cannery Row

BY JUDY HAMMOND

Herald Staff Writer

The Bubba Gump Shrimp Co. Restaurant & Market celebrated its grand opening yesterday on Cannery Row in Hollywood style.

The music of a Cajun band echoed through Cannery Row as film studio dignitaries and local officials gathered to launch the first of a chain of Bubba Gump Shrimp Co. restaurants based on the theme of the 1994 Oscarwinning film "Forrest Gump."

Actor Tom Hanks, who won an Academy Award for his portrayal of the title character, was not at the opening, but an uncanny lookalike attracted sidewalk spectators for a closer look.

The restaurant was created

jointly by the Rusty Pelican, a n a t i o n w i d e chain of 14 restaurants, and Viacom Consumer Products, the licensing division for Paramount Pictures, the studio that

produced "Forrest Gump."

The decor features memorabilia from the film, including the original costumes worn by Hanks, Robin Wright, Gary Sinise and Sally Field. The background music is the film soundtrack.

Forrest's suit, scruffy shoes and suitcase containing a box of chocolates are kept in a glass display case, but a replica of the bench where Forrest sat is available for anyone to use.

Steve Weber, the Hanks lookalike, posed for pictures on the bench while clutching a box of chocolates. "All my life I've been told I look like Hanks," said Weber, who lives in Santa Clara.

In the film, Forrest becomes friends with a shrimper named Bubba while the two are serving in Vietnam. They agree to operate a shrimp boat together after the war, but it is left to Forrest to fulfill the dream after his friend is killed in combat. His Bubba Gump Shrimp Co. turns into a huge suc-

cess.

The restaurant, which features a family-style menu of shrimp and seafood dishes named for characters in the movie, opened in midweek without fanfare and was an instant attraction, said Ted Balestreri of the Cannery Row Co., the restaurant's landlord.

The retail store, which sells Forrest Gump T-shirts, sweatshirts, recipe books and other paraphernalia from the film, sold out the first day and had to restock.

"Business has been phenomenal," Balestreri said. "Of all places, they chose Cannery Row."

Sherry Lansing, chairwoman of Paramount Pictures, said: "I'm overwhelmed by it. The site is as beautiful as anything I've seen."

Two good things have happened

this week —
"Braveheart"
and this restaurant, she said.
"Braveheart," a
Paramount release, won five
Oscars.

"I'm just knocked out by this," Lansing

said. "Memorabilia from 'Forrest Gump' brings back all the wonderful memories of the movie."

Lansing, who also produced "Fatal Attraction" and "Indecent Proposal," said Paramount is working on a sequel to "Forrest Gump," but it would be done only if all the principals were available. The actors have said they will take part if the script is good, she said.

The Bubba Gump Shrimp Co. is the first time Viacom and Paramount have entered into the restaurant business, said Andrea Hein, president of Viacom Consumer Products. They are looking at San Francisco, Orlando and San Diego as choices for the next restaurant, she said.

"We picked Monterey because it's next to the aquarium, on historic Cannery Row and has a long fishing history," Hein said.

"I think they've got a winner," Monterey Mayor Dan Albert said.

The restaurant replaces Rusty's Seafood Grotto, which was bought by Rusty Pelican Inc. in 1990.

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 Sherry Lansing, Paramount Pictures chairwoman