

# Begonia Festival parade will sail — with or without water

By KEITH MURAOKA  
Sentinel staff writer

CAPITOLA — Begonia Festival organizers are promising this year's 35th annual Capitola Begonia Festival nautical parade will take place in dwindling Soquel Creek "even if we have to push the floats."

So promises Nels Westman, a longtime director with the Capitola Begonia Festival Association.

The low water level of the creek has raised questions about whether the nautical parade, which features begonia-decorated floats, might have to take place in the streets of Capitola — as it once did in the 1970s because of a drought.

However, Begonia Festival organizers are confident the dwindling creek will have sufficient water for the nautical parade, which will be held Sept. 11.

Their biggest worry, said Westman, is that the water will be so low and infested with algae that the outboard motors on the floats won't run.

"If that happens, people will be pushing," said Westman, noting that waders have often pushed floats in the past when motors failed. "The show will go on in the creek."

Organizers also have plans to close a concrete flume at the Capitola Lagoon, which Soquel Creek empties into at Capitola Beach, Westman said. Such a closure should coax the water level in the lagoon up 5 or 6 inches, he said.

So far, there are already 10 entries for the nautical parade, reported publicity chairwoman Konnie Bugge. They include the 302 Cherry Street Gang, winner of the sweepstakes award for an unprecedented three consecutive years.

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'The show will go on in the creek.'

— Nels Westman,  
*Begonia Festival director*

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The Gang's chief builder, Joe Sutton, said work is already under way for this year's secret float. All he would say was, "This year, the Gang's mission is to go where no team has gone before. Spectacular does not adequately describe this year's effort."

Other entries are Capitola Fire Department, Green Earth Singles, Crawford and Friends, Santa Cruz County Office of Education, Orchard Supply Hardware and Shadowbrook Restaurant. Three entries already have chosen float themes. They are

Webber's Camera with "Photographer Joe," Bay Photo with "Begonia Express," and No Line Down with "Sorcerer's Princess."

In honor of the festival's 35th anniversary, there is no set theme for the nautical parade. There's still plenty of room for more, as well. Interested persons should call Bugge for information at 476-3476.

Besides the nautical parade, the traditional home and commercial decorating contest has been renamed the Residential and Business Display Contest. Owners of homes and businesses in Capitola Village are being urged to decorate the exteriors of their buildings, which will be judged.

Begonia Festival events will get started Sept. 4 with the popular sand sculpture contest on Capitola Beach. Open to all ages, with numerous divisions, registration will begin on the beach at 8:30 a.m., with judging at 1:30 p.m.