



"The thing" (left) was created by Lydia Sellery, 13, Aptos, and Jessica Gallagan, 12, Santa Cruz. Last year, Lydia participated in the contest with her parents, Rose and David Sellery and won a trophy.

Castles of imagination

Capitola Beach springs to life with sand castles

By MICHAEL MERRILL
STAFF WRITER

CAPITOLA — Fanciful creatures and mythical beasts sprang to life on Capitola Beach Sunday, until the changing tide sent them back where they came from — the human imagination.

The 45th annual Sand Sculpture Contest, a long-standing Capitola tradition, brought artists, tourists and sun worshipers out in full force to witness the incarnations of dragons, wizards, sea monsters and some entities which remained undefined.

"This is just absolutely fabulous," said Ver-

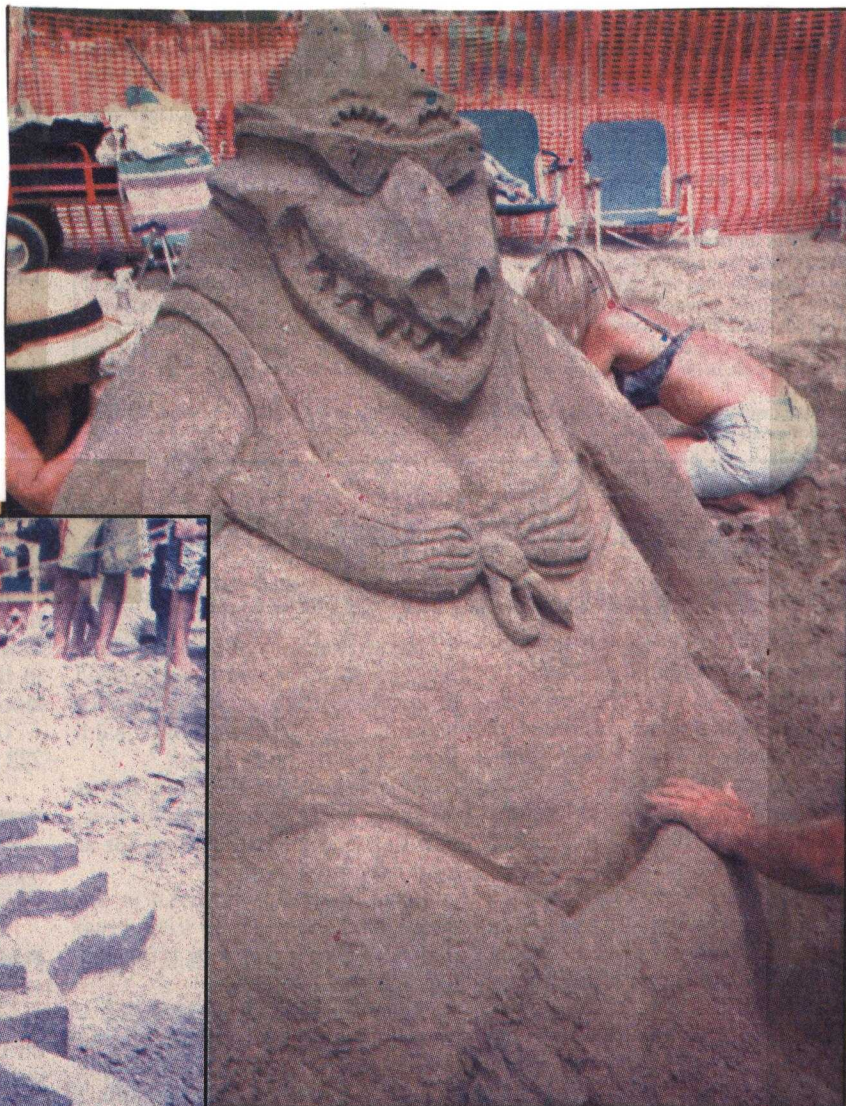
na Carmody, who drove all the way from Fresno for the event. "I try to come here every year, and I am never disappointed by the creativity of the artists."

The rules are simple. Participants must only use natural materials found on the beach, and creations must be suitable for all ages. Other than that, the only limitations are the human imagination and the physical properties of sand and water. Winners of the contest are to be announced.

The sand sculpture contest kicked off the Capitola Begonia Festival, which lasts through

Sept. 7. Today the city is holding a fishing derby on the Capitola wharf and rowboat races in the Soquel Creek Lagoon.

The festival's main event, the nautical parade, will be Sunday. The parade will start at 2 p.m., featuring colorful begonia-covered barges which will float down Soquel Creek. Much of the town, included businesses and private residences, will be decorated in begonias.



Brian Malo, Santa Cruz, is a professional sand sculptor. When not competing he gives group instruction and teaches sand sculpting with Santa Cruz Parks and Recreation and performs at beach parties. His geometrically precise construction is titled "Wishatola." "It is a wishing well," Malo said. "The bigger the coin, the larger the wish."

Mimi Rose and Sharlene Gately are part of a family team known as the "Sand Crabs," from Discovery Bay. This is the third year they have participated in the Capitola Sculpture Contest. This year's entry is titled "Drag-on Queen."

Photos by Michael Merrill