

✓ Begonia Festival begins Saturday

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CAPITOLA — The dwindling water situation in Soquel Creek has improved, guaranteeing that this year's 35th annual Capitola Begonia Festival nautical parade will be held in the creek.

So reports Capitola Public Works Director Larry Perlin. He says the water level in Capitola Lagoon "has come up several inches in the past couple weeks."

Additionally, Capitola lifeguards have been removing algae that had formed in the lagoon. "We'll continue to monitor it (the algae)," said Perlin, "but I don't think more algae collecting will be necessary. The water is now flowing into and out of the lagoon."

The lagoon is formed on Capitola Beach by Soquel Creek. Upstream portions of the creek have become intermittently dry during the past month due to the drought and excessive pumping. At one point, it was thought the nautical parade might have to be held in the streets of Capitola — as it once did in the 1970s because of another drought.

The nautical parade capping the festival's is the premiere event. Thousands of colorful begonia flowers will decorate the 14 floats that are already signed up to compete in this year's 35th anniversary event.

The parade won't be until Sept. 11, but a host of other events will kick off this Labor Day weekend.

Events, which are all free and take place on Capitola Beach, in-

clude: women's professional beach volleyball Saturday, the ever-popular sand sculpture contest Sunday and a fishing derby and rowboat races Monday.

The Northern California Women's Beach Volleyball Championships will kick off this year's events at 9:15 a.m. Saturday and run through Sunday. Sign-ups will be conducted on the beach between 8:30 and 9 a.m. It'll be the men's turn Sept. 10-11.

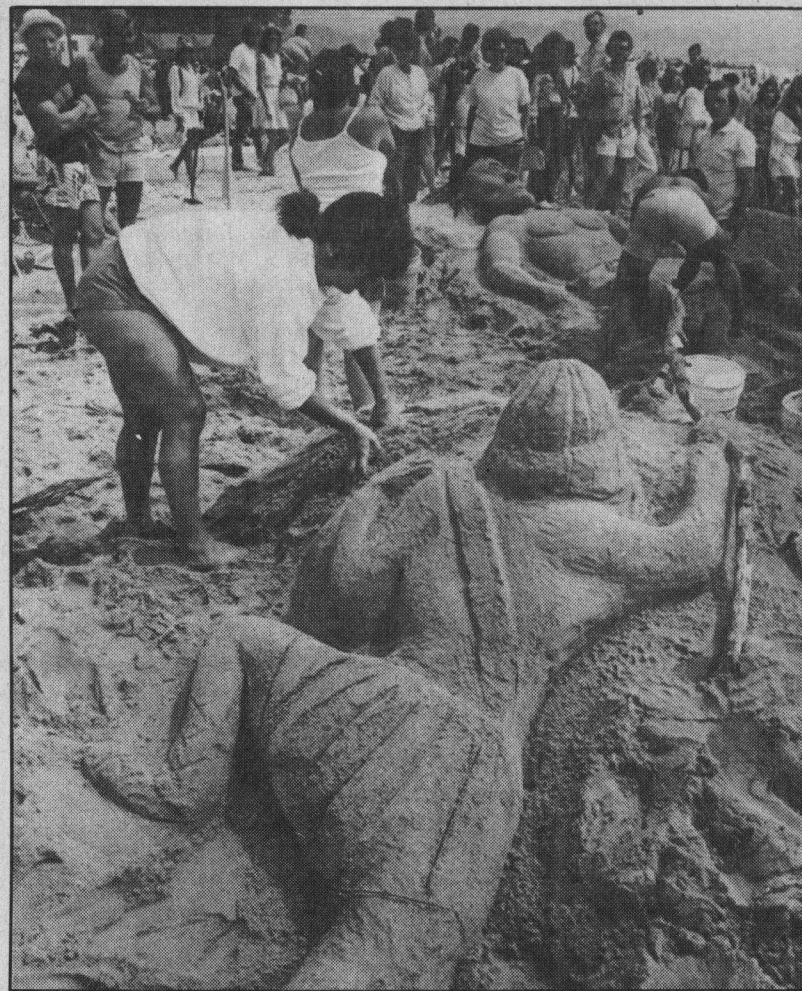
Upwards of 5,000 spectators are expected on the beach Sunday for the second most-popular festival event — the 13th annual sand sculpture contest. Registration, which is free, begins at 8:30 a.m. Judging will be at 1:30 p.m., with trophies awarded to the top three in numerous divisions for both the young and old.

Last year, a couch potato sculpture captured the hearts of nearly everyone, winning the director's choice award. It featured a potato sitting on a couch watching television.

This year, children in several Camp Fire clubs from Natural Bridges School plan to sculpt their club logo in the sand. Anyone interested in joining them should call Maggie Tittle at 423-7600.

The fishing derby gets off to a rise-and-shine start at 6 a.m. Monday on Capitola Wharf. It will run until noon, with prizes being awarded in both children and adult divisions.

Rowboat races will begin at 10 a.m. Monday at the Capitola Lagoon. There will be categories



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A sand man sneaks a peek at competing sculptures in Capitola.

for two-person teams for children and adults.

As usual, parking is expected to be at a premium throughout Capitola Village. However, visitors will get a break since Capitola Police will not be enforcing the public parking prohibitions in neighborhoods this Sunday or on Sept. 10-11. Neighborhood parking-permit signs will not be covered,

but those in the know can park without fretting about getting ticketed.

The city's free beach shuttle bus lot at Park Avenue and McGregor Drive, adjacent to Highway 1, will pick up passengers at 10-minute intervals. That lot will probably be full by noon. Also, Capitola's new 232-space public parking lot behind City Hall will be open.