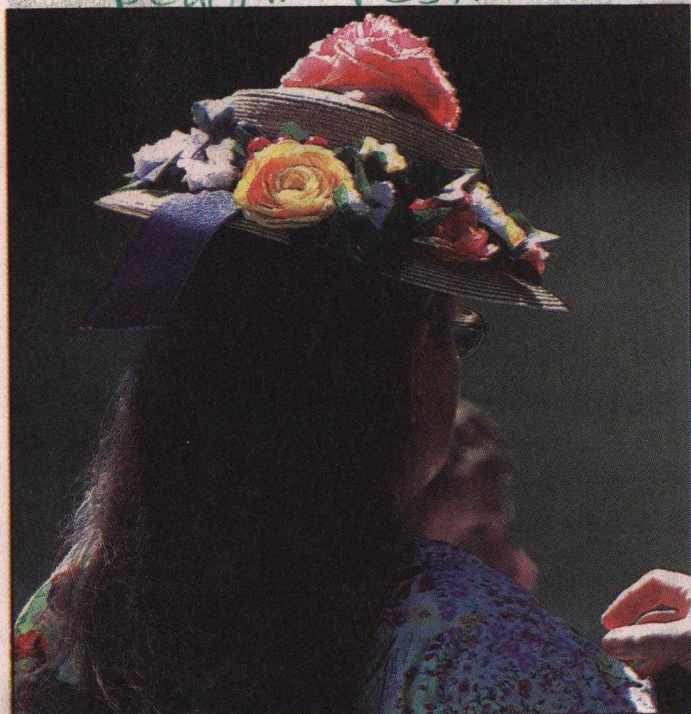


# Magic in the air: Begonia Festival a blaze of color

Begonia Festival

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Many attendees decorated their hats with begonias.

By TARMO HANNULA  
OF THE REGISTER-PAJARONIAN

**CAPITOLA** — Thousands of people attended the 61st annual Capitola Begonia Festival over the Labor Day weekend. The four-day event peaked Sunday with the Nautical Parade whose theme was "Capitola Magic."

Six begonia-coated floats bobbed along Soquel Creek as spectators lined the shore, the Stockton Bridge, the rail trestle and Capitola Beach under warm and sunny skies.

"It's one thing to see the parade on TV but to see it in person is so exciting," said Margaret Rosas of Santa Cruz. "This is my first time here in 13 years. I figured I might as well come down and see it. It's really incredible — just beautiful."

The floats are judged on a number of levels including originality, effective use of begonia blooms, theme development, creative "wow factor" and showmanship.

This year the first place winner was Puff the Magic Dragon by Casa Finkel. Aladdin's Lamp/Genie in a Bottle by the Riverview Rascals came in second. The Magic School Bus by Friends of the Windmill

Best in Showmanship: Magic Fun with Bubbles by It's Wine Tyme, and Rookie of the Year: Mid-County Senior Center with their float, A Magical Place.

This year organizers created an entirely new entry to the parade, a Community Float. The float was not judged and was simply meant to be a fun community float that was available to the community, locals and tourists alike, to work on. Dozens of people, from near and far, worked on the float.

Peter Grahndim, who lives in Denmark, said it was the first time he had seen the Nautical Parade.

"These floats look like a lot of work," he said. "I mean, they said some of the floats have 10,000 flowers on them. We're glad we came here. It was definitely worth it."

Bruce Wilder and Mary Lou Donegan said they drove from Carmel to see the parade.

"It's our first time and we loved it," Wilder said. "It's good, family-oriented fun. Everybody was having a good time."

"For me," Donegan said, "This was the best thing since the Rose Bowl."

Visitors at the free event also enjoyed horseshoes on the



Aladdin's Lamp/Genie in a Bottle by the Riverview Rascals placed second.





cal Place by Mid County Senior Center came in fourth.

Special recognitions included Best in Community Spirit: The Capitola Community Float,

beach, a sand castle building contest and chalk art on the sidewalk. On Monday the event wrapped up with a fishing derby and row boat races.

## Photos by Tarmo Hannula Register-Pajaronian



Thousands of people flocked to the festival, especially on Sunday to see the Nautical Parade.



Capitola Magic was this year's Nautical Parade theme.



Magic Fun With Bubbles by It's Wine Tyme earned best showmanship.



The Magic School Bus, by Friends of the Windmill House, placed third.



A Magic Place, created by Mid County Senior Center, came in fourth.