



KEVIN JOHNSON/SENTINEL PHOTOS

A begonia dragon float meanders through Soquel Creek in Capitola Village on Sunday afternoon during the Nautical Parade at the annual Begonia Festival.

Magic touch

Begonia festine

9.2.13

Flowery Nautical Parade floats draw out crowds in Capitola

By SHANNA MCCORD

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CAPITOLA — People swarmed just about every vista point along Soquel Creek on Sunday to catch a glimpse of flower-covered floats drifting by during the 61st annual Begonia Festival's Nautical Parade.

Even the train trestle overlooking the creek was crammed with hundreds of festival fans.

Themed floats, six in all, covered in thousands of begonia blossoms meandered down the creek while spectators cheered and snapped photos and a team of judges eyed each float for creativity.

Excitement grew as floats neared Stockton Bridge, with some barely clearing the bridge. In fact, the Puff the Magic Dragon float had its mast clipped as it was too tall.

The theme of this year's festival was

SEE BEGONIA ON B3

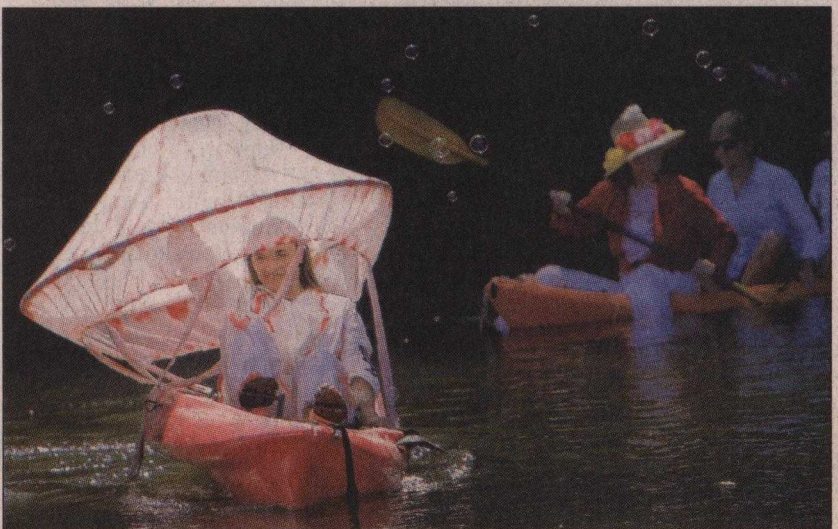


A girl dressed as a genie waves to the crowd as she floats down Soquel Creek near Capitola Village on Sunday afternoon during the annual Begonia Festival Nautical Parade.

AT A GLANCE

BEGONIA FESTIVAL
NAUTICAL PARADE
WINNERS

- 1ST:** Puff the Magic Dragon by Casa Finkel
 - 2ND:** Aladdin's Lamp/Genie in a Bottle by the River Rascals
 - 3RD:** The Magic School Bus by Friends of the Windmill House
 - 4TH:** A Magical Place by the Mid-County Senior Center
- SPECIAL RECOGNITIONS**
- Best in Community Spirit: The Capitola Community Float
 - Best in Showmanship: Magic Fun with Bubbles
 - Rookie of the Year: Mid-County Senior Center — A Magical Place



A woman dressed as a giant jellyfish skims atop Soquel Creek on Sunday afternoon during the Begonia Festival Nautical Parade.



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Parade participants interact with onlookers as they float across Soquel Creek in Capitola Village on Sunday during the annual Begonia Festival Nautical Parade.

BEGONIA

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Capitola Magic, and floats had a magical air about them.

Ed Carcello, owner of It's Wine Tyme in Capitola Village, drew on the magic of bubbles to build a giant champagne bottle float made from wood, galvanized pipe, chicken wire, and what he estimates were 12,000 tightly woven red and yellow begonias.

Carcello, his wife Sondi, friend Aaron Black and about 50 others in the community labored over the champagne float for two weeks, working late Saturday night and applying finishing touches right up to the last minute on Sunday.

"It was so cool; you feel like a celebrity," Carcello said about the parade. "The community support is unbelievable. It was a lot of work, but it was worth it."

While the majority of festival-goers jockeyed for a spot to clearly see the creek, many people with homes along Riverview Drive simply had to step outside their back door to enjoy the flowery parade.

Santa Cruz resident Sarah Woodside, 37, hosts a party with family and friends every year to watch the parade from the deck of the green and white Riverview Drive vacation home that's been in her family for four generations.



Parade-goers wearing vibrant hats adorned with begonias line Soquel Creek in Capitola on Sunday.



Hundreds gather around Soquel Creek in Capitola on Sunday to watch the Begonia Festival Nautical Parade.

"I've been doing this since I was a kid. I've grown up with the Begonia Festival," Woodside said. "I enjoy it because it's such a part of our family's history. I love that the Capitola community comes out and it just brings people together in a sweet way."

San Francisco resident

Robert Aguilar snagged a seat along Wharf Road for his first visit to the festival.

Aguilar marveled at the floats passing by, wondering how such delicate creations were able to come together.

"I enjoyed it thoroughly," Aguilar said. "It kind of reminded me of the Rose Parade."