



Aromas Day rocks

Armas *F-P 82503*
 Friendly community holds annual celebration in town's center

By DAVE BROOKS

OF THE REGISTER-PAJARONIAN

AROMAS — It's not just a place on a map. It's a state of mind.

There are so many things you could say about this rural Central Coast town, and one of them is that there aren't many things to see. Well, at first glance, that is.

Small, peaceful, tightly knit. That's how people in Aromas described their small village Sunday during the annual Aromas Day celebration in the town's center. What started out as a yearly yard sale by area residents has turned into the town's biggest festival and affords local residents the opportunity to sip home-made lemonade, dance to bluegrass music and do what Aromas residents do best: act neighborly.

A pancake breakfast and parade helped kick off the festival, which is coordinated mostly by the efforts of the Aromas Eagles, a local fraternal order. Local marching bands and colorfully decorated floats caught everyone's attention while onlookers danced with debutantes from a Jazzercise class who burned calories and boogied up the parade route.

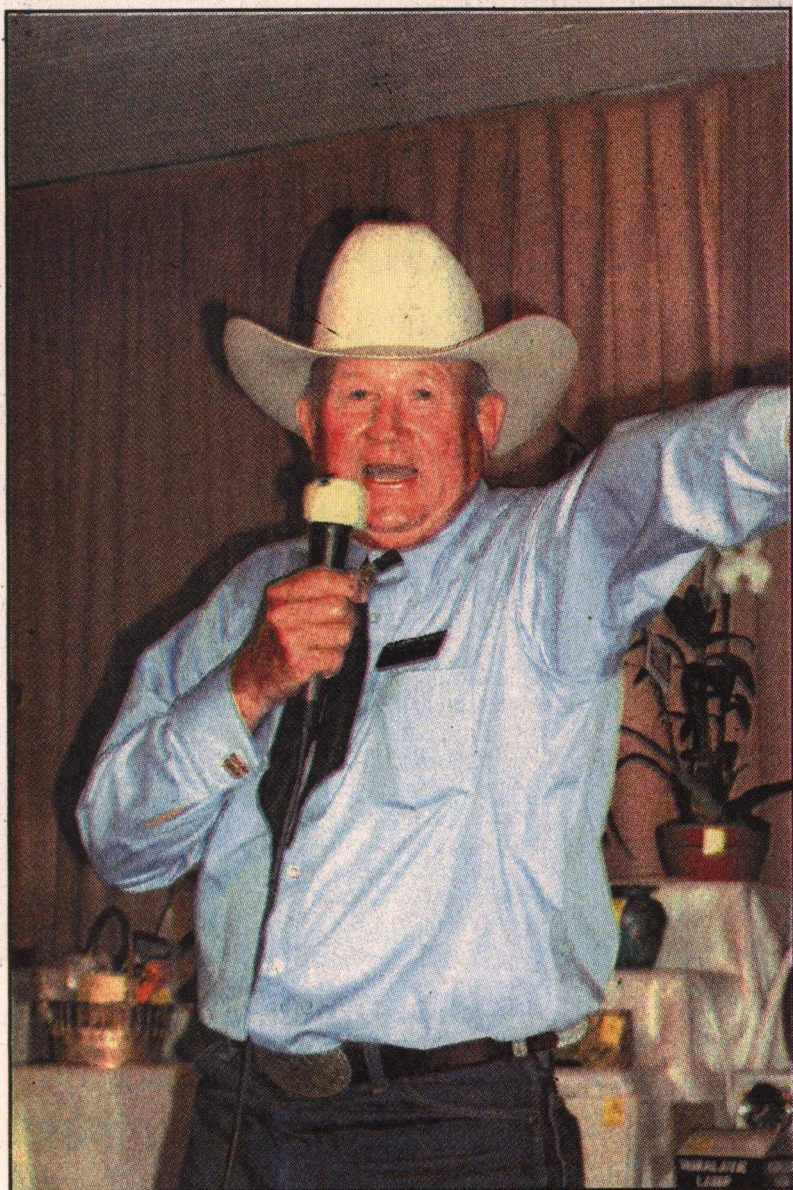
Artists such as Elaine Campos sold intricate stone necklaces and earrings. Many of the necklaces were made with pieces that she had collected over many



TOP: Taylor Meyer (from left), Brianna Miltimore and Amanda Ralph smile before taking off for a parade during Sunday's Aromas Day celebration. LEFT: Artist Nicole Mamann (right) and friend Josh Sandifer do their best to sell eclectic art pieces like the pot shown here during the Aromas Day celebration on Sunday.

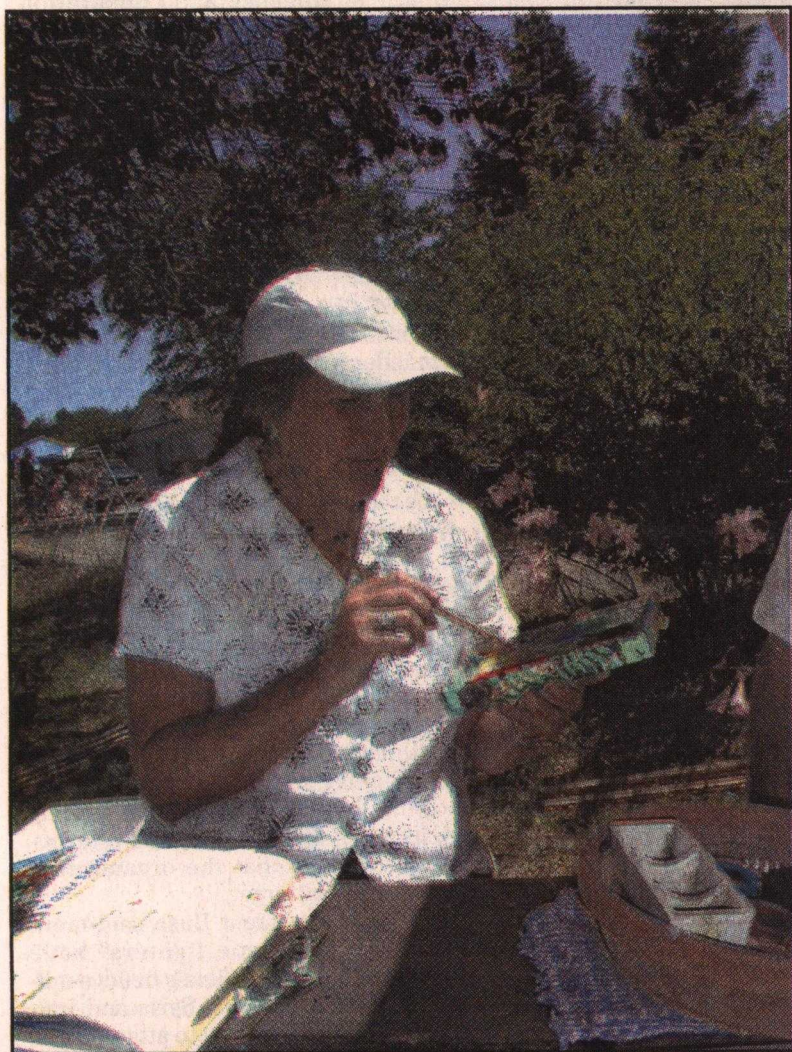
See AROMAS, page 12

Dave Brooks
 Register-Pajaronian



Dave Brooks/Register-Pajaronian

Auctioneer V.G. "Sleepy" Avant does his best to sell donations for the highest price during an auction held at the Aromas Grange Sunday as part of the Aromas Day festival. The proceeds will go to a local scholarship fund.



Dave Brooks/Register-Pajaronian

Local painter and publicist Evelyn Pogrowski was one of the colorful characters enjoying Aromas Day.

Local painter and publicist Evelyn Pogrowski was one of the colorful characters enjoying Aromas Day.

AROMAS

From page 1

years the self-described pack rat said.

"I did the jewelry while I was recovering from back surgery," the full-time artist said. "I had to spend a lot of time sitting down."

Campos wasn't alone. There were over a dozen artists selling everything from oil paintings to handmade ceramics. Commissioned painter Nicole Mamann of San Juan Bautista had unique items like pottery covered with buttons and framed pictures that could be mailed to friends like post cards.

"The idea is (for the picture) to go through the mail already framed," she said, hoping the recipients could then take the card and pin it on their wall with out having to unwrap anything.

While Mamann didn't want to say how she made them — in order to protect her proprietary secret — they seemed pretty simple to do. It looked like she took one of her photographs and sandwiched it in between two pieces of plastic the size of a large postcard. The perimeter of the plastic was sealed with aluminum tape, causing the image to appear framed.

While Mamann did her best to hoc her creative wares, locals living near the main drag did everything they could to turn a small profit by hosting garage sales. Linda Dean of Corralitos was at the home of relative Augusta Duvall, selling everything from Barney the Dinosaur videos to well-made suits.

"I have my kids clean out their closet, set up a lemonade stand and they're in business," Dean said. The money goes for a trip to Disney-

land.

But perhaps the hardest working hustler of the day was V.G. "Sleepy" Avant, who was doing his best to get top dollar from any willing buyer. The professional auctioneer was selling donated items for the town's scholarship fund but visitors at the Grange auction seemed more interested in Avant's antics than actually buying anything.

A color TV went for five bucks and an art piece estimated to be worth \$500 sold for about \$25. That's not to say everything went on the cheap. Thirsty participants got into a bidding war over a stainless steel thermos that ended with a \$35 price tag. And another patron seemed a little irked that Avant didn't give them enough notice before closing the sale on a butterfly garden.

"None of this 'going, going, gone' stuff," Avant heckled back in his Texas-style accent. "You gotta' jump in or jump out."

The favorite activity of the day seemed to be visiting with friends. Everyone in Aromas seemed to know each other and that's what people who live there like best: the town's strong sense of community.

In our increasingly fast-paced society, Aromas stands out as a place where knowing your neighbor is greatly valued. While efforts have been put in place through zoning ordinances to make it more difficult to move to Aromas, residents who do their best to be friendly to outsiders and make them feel welcome. It seems like they're doing their best to represent Aromas, not so much for the visitors' sake, but to remind themselves and other locals about the values they believe should be placed on hospitality and sincerity.