

Octopus floats to victory at Begonia fete

A huge pink octopus — with moving tentacles, rotating head, rolling eyes and surrounding clams that opened and closed — snatched the hearts of the judges and some 15,000 spectators at Sunday's 29th Annual Begonia Festival Nautical Parade in Capitola.

Experience paid off for the Depot Hill Society, the makers of this year's grand sweepstakes float. It was the fourth time in the past nine years the group captured the top award.

For other float winners, however, it was the first time that proved the charm. Bahai's Faith beautiful hummingbird flying down to a flower, Puff the Magic Dragon by Dragginwood and the Magic Crystals and "Scotch and Soda" by the Edgewater Restaurant took top awards. All were first-time entries.

In all, 15 begonia-covered floats made their way down Soquel Creek. The huge crowd filled every nook and cranny in order to find a choice viewing spot. The railroad trestle, adjacent river bank, rooftops and even rafts were popular choices.

Unfortunately, the mainstays of the octopus float — the three-person team of Sam Storey, Kit Morris and Howard Pujol — could only hear the reaction of the crowd. They were inside the octopus operating a host of guide wires to make everything move.

"The whole idea is to get the crowd to enjoy it," head builder John Johnson told *The Sentinel* afterwards. "Movement obviously helps as does surprise."

The "surprise" involved the octopus opening up an adjacent treasure chest just as the float passed the judge's stand to release balloons.

The only other surprise, this one not intended, occurred when the high-kicking "Carmen Miranda" float by David Lyng and Associates didn't quite make the clearance under the Soquel Creek bridge.

The float operator ducked Carmen's head down in order to get through the first time. Upon coming back, though, he raised Carmen's head too soon — and she was bowing the rest of the day, having come out on the short end against the concrete bridge.

"Puff the Magic Dragon" featured more than 4,000 begonias and an eight-foot-long tail that trailed in the water. It won first place in the commercial category, followed by Mervyn's Department Store's "Over the Rainbow" and Lyng's Carmen Miranda.

Bahai's Faith hummingbird was first in the group category. Second place went to Nels Enemark and The West Hillies with its RCA dog that sat listening to the traditional gramophone. Long-time entrant Joe Urbancic, sponsored by the Venetian Court Homeowners' Association, was third with his rooster and three chickens in his "Talk to the Animals" float.

The Edgewater Restaurant's "Scotch and Soda" entry won the Mayor's Choice award, the Elk's Club American flag was the best first-time entry and the Brown Bulb Ranch's "Age of Aquarius" float was the President's Choice.

"I loved it," commented parade-watcher Yvonne Hargreaves of Fresno. "I came all the way just to see the parade. It was very colorful and showed a lot of work."

Parade veteran Mary Ann Oliviera, who was at her ninth Nautical Parade, noted the floats "were prettier this year and showed even more work than usual."

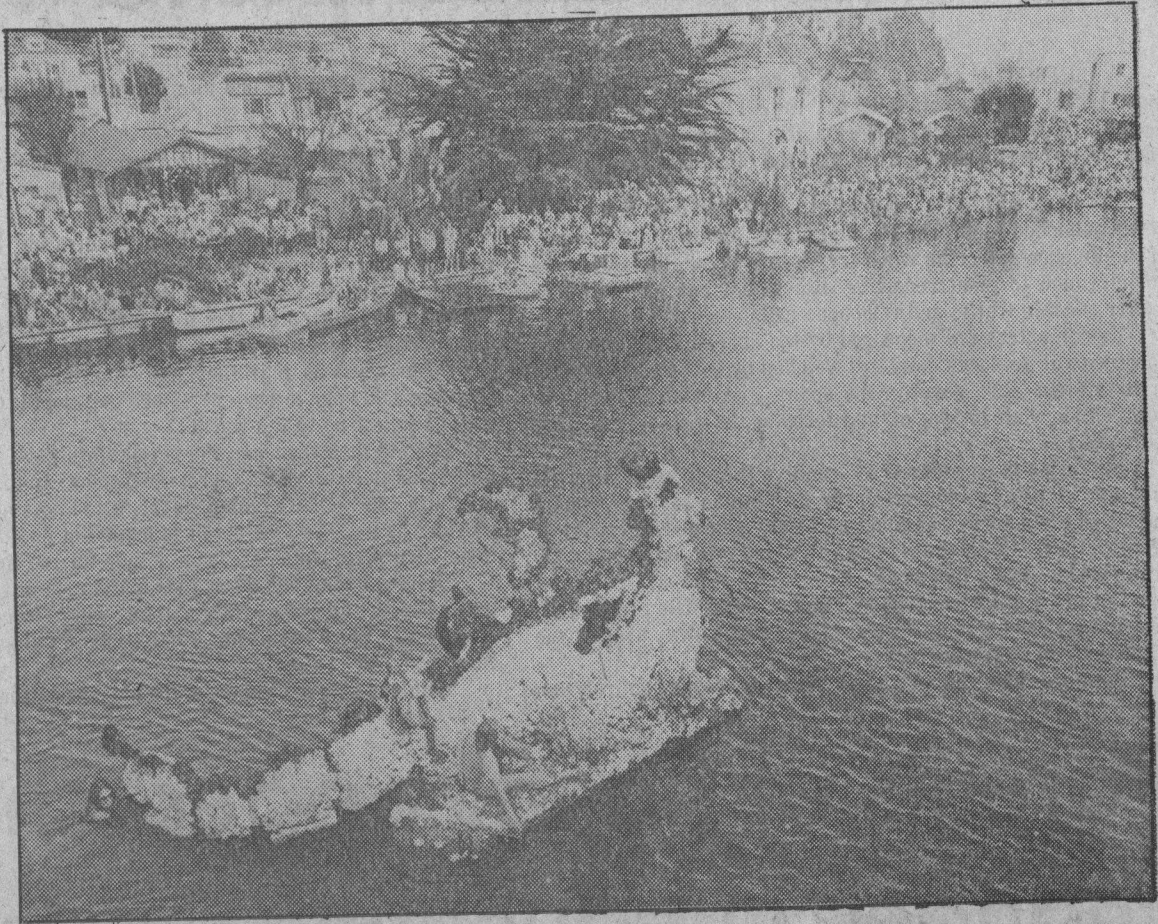
Her only complaint was the rather long wait in between some of the floats' appearance. The wait was increased, as always, when two outboard motors on the floats failed to work.

Other Begonia Festival events Sunday included the conclusion of the men's doubles of the Northern California Beach Volleyball Championship and the judging of the Home and Commercial Decorating Contest.

Some 350 persons watched the team of Steve Slivkoff of Watsonville and Kent Ketchell of Soquel win the volleyball tournament for the fourth consecutive year. They beat second place finishers Gary Gysin of Soquel and Dave Garrison of Pacific Palisades in straight sets — 11-6 and 11-7.

Third place went to Mike Morgan and Todd Prindle of Capitola and Santa Cruz, respectively. Fourth went to Santa Cruzans' Jeff Polaio and Sam Edwards.

Commercial winners in the Home and Commercial Decorating Contest were The Posie Palace, 120 Capitola Ave., with its rainbow (first); The Bathing Machine, 114 Capitola Ave. with its "Red Sails in the Sunset" (second); and Polar Bear Ice Cream, 104 Stockton Ave. (third), featuring three dancing polar bears.

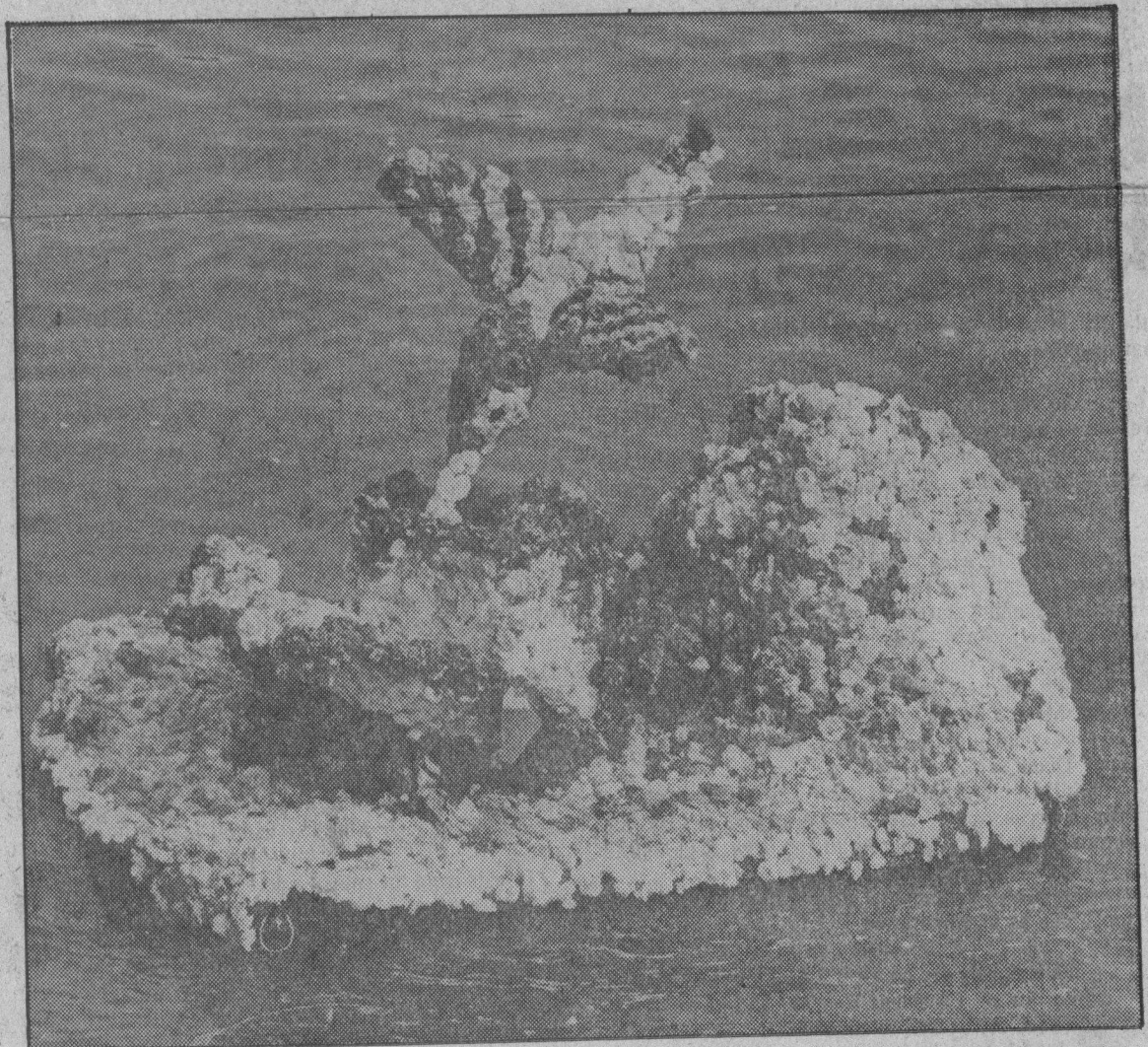


ABOVE — Dragginwood's "Puff, the Magic Dragon."

RIGHT — The Depot Hill Society's grand sweepstakes float.

BELOW — Bahai's hummingbird was one of the top award winners.

Sentinel photos by Dan Coyro



The Mudgett residence at 507 Riverview Drive won the grand sweepstakes award. Its theme was, "Sunny Side of the Street."

First through third finishers in the home category included: "McDonald's Farm," 417 Riverview Ave., by Chris

McDonald; "Puff the Magic Dragon" at 520 Gilroy Drive; and "Sailings" at 317B Riverview Ave. by the Woodside family.