

# 'Cinderella' wins best-float 'Oscar'

Begonia Festival Nautical Parade draws thousands to Capitola



Shmuel Thaler/Sentinel photos

Spectators fill the Stockton Avenue and Capitola trestle bridges as the Running Thunder Alumni Association's 'Pirates of the Caribbean' float leads off the 54th annual Begonia Festival Nautical Parade on Sunday.

## Begonia Festival Event drawing more interest

By **SORAYA GUTIERREZ**  
SENTINEL STAFF WRITER

CAPITOLA — Rowdy pirates and their wenches, man-eating sharks and a cackling witch took over Soquel Creek on Sunday and battled for a \$1,000 treasure.

These were the among the characters on the 10 floats participating in the 54th annual Capitola Begonia Festival Nautical Parade, which features mostly man-powered barges covered with begonias.

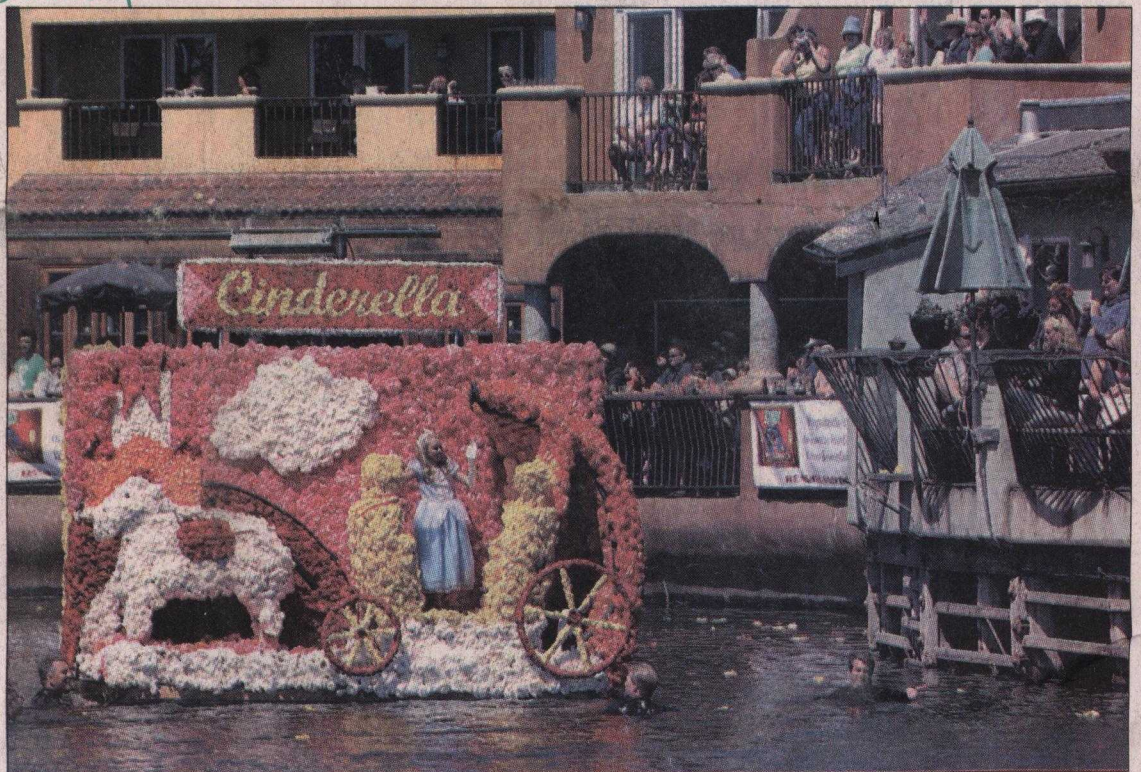
Playing with this year's theme of "Capitola goes to the movies," each float highlighted the characters of a film.

The belle of the ball this year was a "Cinderella"-themed float. It was blanketed with bright red, yellow and orange begonias that on one side created an image of a red chimney and on the other a pumpkin carriage and its white horses carrying a waving Cinderella.

Taking home the second-place Oscar trophy was the "Pirates of the Caribbean" entry, a float that sprayed cheering onlookers with begonia cannons and had a pirate go overboard.

At the top of the pirate-manned float was a red flag with a white skull and crossbones, which came down as the barge made its way under the Stockton Avenue Bridge.

"They had the spirit of the festival down to a tee," festival vol-



A real-life Cinderella waves to the crowd from the grand prize-winning float, made by the Cherry Street Gang. The group won \$1,000 for the effort.

unteer Eddie Ray Garcia said from the edge of the creek, where a panel of five judges was busy sizing up the floats and filling out score sheets.

Racing off with the third-place Oscar trophy was Speed McQueen, a float with a bright red race car spinning its wheels representing the movie "Cars."

Riding the float was a small group

of boys waving black-and-white checkered flags.

Although not among the top three winners, other crowd-pleasers included floats with characters from the movies "Finding Nemo," "Jaws" and "The Wizard of Oz."

Thousands of spectators packed into Capitola Village to catch a glimpse of the floats as they floated down the creek and into the lagoon

under clear skies.

The floating movie skits entertained the crowd for nearly two hours, then the top winners were announced and a check for \$1,000 was presented to the Cherry Street Gang, the group that created the first-place "Cinderella" float.

The second-place winners, a Cal

See **BEGONIA** on **PAGE A14**

# Begonia

Continued from Page A1

Pol alumni group, received a \$500 check; and the third-place group, Riverview Rascals, received a \$250 check. The prize money goes to a charity of their choice.

Linda Banks, festival president, said she was pleased with the amount of floats that entered the parade, which doubled from 2005.

"There's just this big resurgence and enthusiasm in participating in the parade," she said at the end of the awards ceremony.

The festival ends today with a fishing derby at the end of the Capitola Wharf, an art event for children in Esplanade Park and rowboat races at Soquel Creek.

For a full schedule of events, go to [www.begoniafestival.com](http://www.begoniafestival.com).

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Shmuel Thaler/Sentinel photos

The Windmill House and Friends' 'Wizard of Oz' entry included The Wicked Witch of the West, the Cowardly Lion, Dorothy and the Scarecrow.



## If You Go

**WHAT: FISHING DERBY**, 6 a.m. to noon. Registration begins at 6 a.m. at the end of Capitola Wharf. All ages.

**WHAT: CHILDREN'S ART EVENT**, 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Children of all ages welcome to create artwork at Esplanade Park.

**WHAT: ROWBOAT RACES**, 1 p.m. at Soquel Creek. Registration at pathway by Stockton bridge from noon to 1 p.m., boats are provided.

**INFORMATION:** [www.begoniafestival.com](http://www.begoniafestival.com).



**ABOVE:** Two girls wave from Riverview Terrace's 'Jaws' entry.

**LEFT:** Mareen's Marauders' entry, Begonia Belle, steams its way down Soquel Creek.