

FESTIVAL

Celebration honors Portuguese queen's generosity

Events

Holy Ghost Festival unites community, reminding them of their roots

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SANTA CRUZ — Dressed in white, crowned and donning elaborate capes, six young girls will march down Pacific Avenue on Sunday as part of the annual Portuguese Holy Ghost Festival.

The festival, which begins tonight and lasts through Sunday night, honors Portuguese religious and cultural beliefs.

Sponsored by Colonia Portuguesa do Divino Espirito Santo, this year marks the 83rd celebration to take place in Santa Cruz, and will include a parade, music, dancing, auction and bazaar.

Celebrations begin at 8 p.m. tonight with music and dancing and the crowning of this year's queens and their attendants at 9 p.m. The 2011 senior queen is Cerena Clifford, attended by her younger sister Sarah Clifford and McKenna Hernandez; the junior queen is Chelsea Jamison, attended by Rachel Tobin and Lily Kohler.

For the next year, the young girls will represent the Portuguese community in Santa Cruz, traveling city to city.

Cerena Clifford, 13, said she thinks the festival is a good experience for her family because it has allowed them to visit different cities and meet new people.

"You get to see how people think in different areas," Clifford said.

She also said she was excited for her first walk through Pacific Avenue on Sunday morning.

The Festival celebrates the Portuguese Queen St. Isabel who — in a time of famine — took bread from the castle, hidden under her cloak and



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

The annual Portuguese Holy Ghost Festival little queens, from left, are Sarah Clifford, Cerena Clifford and McKenna Hernandez.



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The annual Portuguese Holy Ghost Festival junior queens, from left, are Lily Kohler, Chelsea Jamison and Rachel Tobin.

delivered it to the people of Portugal.

"She belonged to the com-

moners and she felt for her people," said Fernanda Olivara, festival organizer.

Legends say when the king confronted his wife Isabel, asking her what was kept under her cloak, she responded that it was roses. When Isabel's cloak was opened, rather than loaves of bread, roses fell from her the folds of cloth — this is the miracle the Holy Ghost Festival celebrates, Olivara said.

In remembrance of Saint Isabel's generosity and her religious devotion, people share in sopas — soup ladled over bread — and carne, feasting on a meal mirroring the one St. Isabel shared with her people.

The festival is a way for the Portuguese community to remember their roots in

IF YOU GO

HOLY GHOST
FESTIVAL AND
PARADE

WHEN: 9:30 a.m. Sunday

WHERE: Cathcart and Cedar streets to Holy Cross Church on High Street

EVENTS: All-day festival; solemn Mass, feast, auction and bazaar to follow parade

a world where people can be more connected to social networking sites and smartphones than each other.

"This is a way to bring our Portuguese community together as one," Olivara said. "It's a reminder of who we are and to be grateful for what we have."