

CAPITOLA-1980-

Flower Festival

ON THE RIVER

by Mary Bryant

The waters of Soquel Creek in the summer meander south to the ocean. At the ocean, bordered by cliffs to the east and west and surrounded by the Village of Capitola, the stream slows to almost a standstill, forming a lagoon.

While it may originally have been the spectacular setting that inspired residents to decorate floats with begonias and set them off down the river to the lagoon, it has been the extraordinary popularity of the Begonia Festival that has kept the event flourishing since 1953.

The week-long Begonia Festival begins with contestants, in many age categories, building sandcastles at the beach and ends with the famed nautical parade.

The parade begins traditionally at 2:00 on the Sunday afternoon following Labor Day. However, the festivities start for float builders and spectators the day before.

Float sponsors, both non-profit organizations and businesses, build the floats along the river banks. With each entry requiring thousands of begonias to be hand-tied to the frame, there are hundreds of hours of work required from volunteers.

Fortunately, groups are often helped out the night before by visitors who stop to watch and then join in to work.

Maureen Enemark, the festival's president, estimated that 300 people took part in

creating the nine floats for this year's parade.

Announcing the 1990 parade was Festival Director Rita McPheeters and KSCO's Eddie Hudson.

Sponsors displayed originality in design, although the floats were smaller this year in recognition of new standards for cleanup of the lagoon by the Department of Fish and Game.

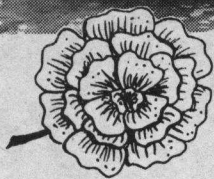
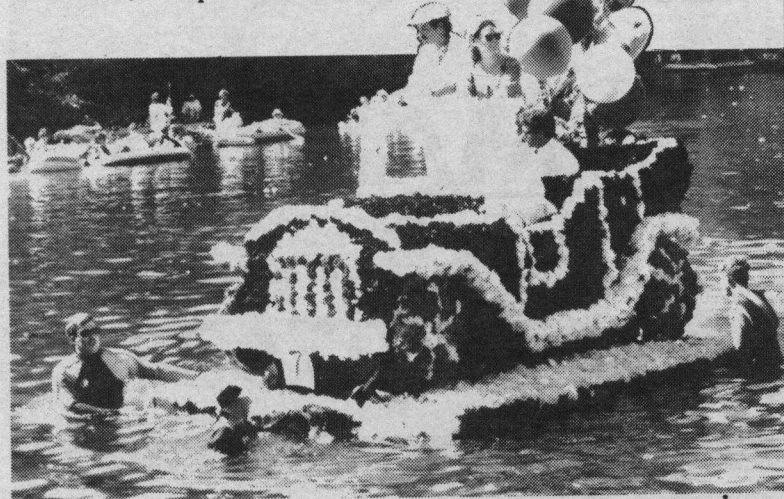
Even though there were fewer floats than in previous years, down from 13 last year and a record of 20 in 1983, according to Enemark, the crowds still lined the banks and beach to view the parade.

The number of spectators, between 7,000 and 8,000 was also slightly smaller, but as Capitola's Mayor Stephanie Harlan said, "It was an excellent size this year. Everybody was able to get a good place to see the floats."

While the smaller number of floats allowed each contestant a prize, awarding trophies was still difficult for the judges. Some sponsors, like the Central Fire District, added action to their float of 7,500 blossoms by depicting an antique racing car driven by the Great Leslie who rescued a "damsel in distress" from "evil villains" on the river bank.

Along a different theme, Goodwill Industries released doves from their "Peace and Justice Will Prevail" during this time of crisis in the Middle East.

The Great Leslie is reunited with his sweetheart, as the CFD Float is pulled down the river.



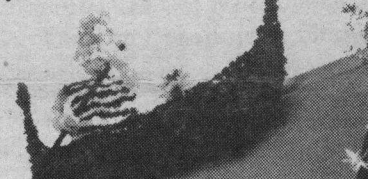
Harlan selected the Elk's Club float, a "Dedication of Peace" for the Mayor's Award because, "It was a beautiful float with a wonderful theme."

Although, as Capitola's first woman mayor, she hopes that the Elk's Club will review their membership policy to allow the admission of women in the future.

All in all, the afternoon of festivities paid tribute to the extraordinary weather and beautiful setting.

And, while for most of us the festival is another year away, the all-volunteer staff of organizers will soon be planning again to encourage more groups to build floats and ensure the on-going success of Capitola's end-of-summer flower festival on the river. □

The winner in the Commercial Division for land decoration was Capitola Kids, with help from Bart Simpson.



1990 WINNERS

GRAND SWEEPSTAKES

No Line Down
"Capitola/Ballaarat: Land of the Welcome Stranger"

COMMERCIAL DIVISION

— 1st Place —
Central Fire District
"Leslie Special"

— 2nd Place —
Goodwill Industries
"Peace on Earth, Goodwill for All"

— 3rd Place —
Mervyn's
"South of the Border"

GROUP DIVISION

— 1st Place —
Vision for You
"Recovery Vision"

— 2nd Place —
St. John's Church
"He's Got the Whole World in His Hands"

— 3rd Place —
Day Valley Pudding Society
"Sailing Around the World"

MAYOR'S CHOICE

Elk's Club
"Dedication of Peace"

BEST FIRST TIME ENTRY

The Good Times
"Around the World in Eighty Days"

JUDGES

Chuck Anderson, Rick Hildreth,
Keith Muroka, Gail Ortiz,
Mayor Stephanie Harlan