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public art,” Long Beach Merchants Association vice president Carla Curtis said. “It’s remarkable because it’s so fleeting, and it doesn’t last long out on the beach because we have to clear Bolstad Approach within a week.”

Curtis is the chairperson of this year’s event, and was drawn to it for its sculptures and community connection. “They know of each other and they meet each other at these different competitions or display build-

ings, so it’s a sand community,” she said of the sculptors.

Competition categories include families, novices, intermediate and master builders. Participants work within the boundaries of a designated plot to sculpt their sand creation, using only sand, water, shells and other natural materials found on the beach.

“It’s so much fun to see the sculptors work and how much they enjoy it,” Curtis said. Sandsations entries will be evaluated on an array of categories, including difficulty, team-

work, suitability to the sand, effort, design, creativity and overall appearance. There will be prizes available for each skill level, including funds awarded to the top three sculptors from the intermediate and masters categories.

The event is just as much fun for those sculpting in the sand as those watching the creations take shape, and those looking to dip their toes in the art can take lessons.

“The master sculptors help with lessons for the kids,” Curtis said. This year, lessons will expand to

include adults, with sessions scheduled for 4 p.m. on Thursday and Friday. Sessions aimed at children will take place beginning at 4 p.m. on Wednesday and run regularly through the week.

For onlookers, there will also be plenty to see and experience, including food, craft vendors and music.

Curtis is in awe of the sculptures. “We have difficult sand to work with. It’s denser and wetter and it’s not as easy to make it stay together,” she said. “But they do it — it’s incredible.”

Sculptures on the shore at a previous Sandsations.

