

Rhody from page 1A

Motorcycles were the highlight of much of Rhody Days, as some bikers have traveled to Florence each year since the 1970s. They were also the featured guests of Three Rivers' "Let it Ride" Bike Show and Vendor Fair and Florence United Methodist Church's "Blessing of the Motorcycles."

Other vehicles were featured in the BeachKomber Car Club's 26th annual Show 'n' Shine, which featured stock and modified classic cars, rat rods and trucks in the Grocery Outlet and City Lights Cinemas parking lot.

Hundreds of guests viewed the cars during Friday's pre-registration event and Saturday's Show 'n' Shine before the Coast Radio Classic Car Cruise brought many of the cars on a cruise through Old Town.

BeachKomber gave out 29 awards. Bob and Marsha Baker of Florence won Best of Show for their 1941 Willys Roadster. Buck and Karen Buckmaster of Florence won Host's Choice for Best Car with their 1962 Chevy Impala and Dan and Ladonna Bartholomew of Drain won Best Truck with their 1972 Chevy Pickup 4x4.

Back on the other end of town, Florence Events Center became a hub of activity for the annual Siuslaw Chapter of the American Rhododendron Society Festival Flower Show & Sale and the Florence Regional Arts Alliance Art Festival.

Youth and families flocked to Oak Street for Saturday's Junior Parade, put on by Siuslaw Valley Fire and Rescue, and the Kiwanis Kids Games at the Siuslaw High School JV Baseball Field.

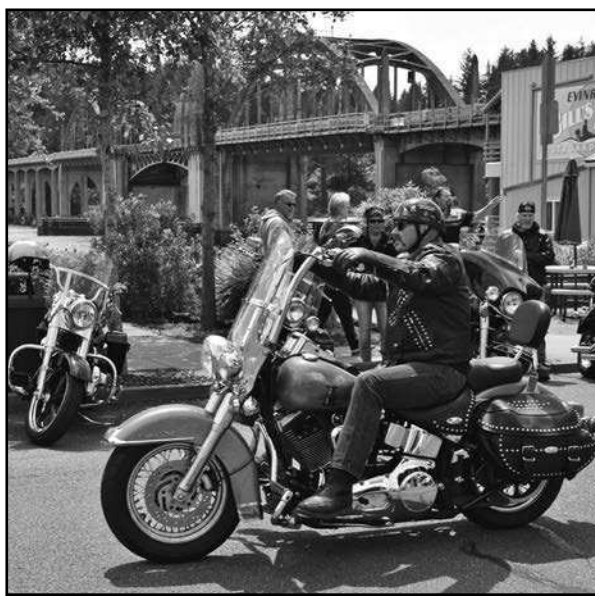
Firefighters led the Rhododendron Court in the parade that also featured tractors, walking groups, bicycles, teams, clubs and characters from Star Wars.

After the parade, youth participated in sack races, fishing and other energetic events with the Kiwanis Club of Florence. Kiwanis provided prizes and snacks.

"The entire festival could not have been done without the tremendous group of volunteers and committee people who come out every year," Abeyta said. "This town is full of incredible people."

Carrying on 111 years of tradition, Florence continued the Rhododendron Festival with the Grand Floral Parade on Sunday. One hundred entrants joined the route from Highway 101 at 27th Street down to Old Town —including dignitaries, bands, equestrian groups, classic cars and floats from commercial and nonprofit groups.

Many floats honored the "Rhody Rendezvous" theme with gatherings, gardens,



festive rhododendrons and whimsical takes on the theme.

Florence Mayor Joe Henry's award went to the Rhododendron Court Float, sponsored by Banner Bank and Oregon Pacific Bank; the Queen's Award went to Habitat For Humanity's "Three Little Pigs" inspired float; and the King's Award went to the Siuslaw Varsity & JV Baseball and Softball Float, sponsored by Chuck's Plumbing.

Combat Veterans Motorcycle Association opened the parade, followed immediately after by Florence Police Chief Tom Turner and the U.S. Coast Guard Station Siuslaw River Color Guard.

According to Abeyta, the 100 parade entries included more than 700 band members from Florence, Oregon City, Beaverton and Coos Bay schools and 75 student banner carriers featuring the names of the chamber's distinguished sponsors and corporate underwriters.

Dan Lofy was this year's parade master. He also served as chairman for the Rhody Days Committee.

"In addition to all our chamber sponsors, I would like to give special thanks to the more than 45 dedicated festival parade and vendor fair volunteers," Abeyta said.

She also thanked Ocean Dunes Golf Course, Lofy Construction, Coastal Disposal, Buck's Sanitary Service, Siuslaw School District, C&M Stables and the City of Florence for their partnership with the chamber's Rhody Days events.

Rhody Days also saw 30 vendors at the Maple Street Vendor Fair, the 40th annual Rhody Run 5K and 10K and the Coast Radio Classic Car Cruise, as well as the annual Elks Lodge breakfast, barbecue and pie sale; Oregon Coast Humane Society's hot dog and hamburger sale and the traditional Rhody Queen and Court Display at the Siuslaw Pioneer Museum.

Florence Police Department, Oregon State Police and Lane County Sheriff's Office provided thorough public safety coverage throughout the weekend, along with Siuslaw Valley Fire and Rescue and Western Lane Ambulance District.

"Rhody Rendezvous" was a good theme for this year, and for every Rhody Days," Hannigan said. "People really do come from all over for our festival, which continues to bring people together year after year."

Florence's famous festival will continue next year. For more information, visit florencechamber.com.

See more photos in the Rhody Album on page 12A

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