

Have a boat? Join the parade

New signs just went up at Boca Raton City Hall and Silver Palm Park urging local boat captains to take part in the city's 38th annual Holiday Boat Parade on the Intracoastal Waterway starting 6:30 p.m. Dec. 19.

"We take people right up to the last minute," said Becky Self, the city's community events coordinator. Boaters can call her at 561-367-7073.

There's no entry fee, and the city has thousands in prize money and throws a banquet for winners, Self said.

There's no conflict with other local boat parades this year.

"Last year, we had 20 boats, but we were com-

peting with the north Palm Beach parade, so we changed the date so we can attract more boats, and we already received more applications," she said. "We purposefully made sure we don't compete with Winterfest [in Fort Lauderdale Dec. 12] or Pompano Beach [Dec. 13]."

There's no theme, so the city is just looking for lots of lights and music, Self said. Smaller boats can be human-powered, but larger ones have to be motorized.

"Sailboats are welcome, but can't be under sail," she said.

Categories are: under 20 feet; 20 to under 30 feet; 30 to 40 feet; over 40



A TRADITION RENEWED Decorated boats make their way down the Intracoastal Waterway at last year's boat parade. The city of Boca Raton's 38th Holiday Boat Parade will return Saturday at 6:30 p.m. STAFF PHOTO/MARTA MIKULAN MARTIN

feet and up. Prizes in each category go to first to third place, best of pa-

rade, best corporate and honorable mentions in all categories.

Boats will line up on the Intracoastal Waterway at the C-15 canal at the Boca Raton/Delray Beach line and sail south to the Hillsboro Inlet Bridge.

The judges and a viewing stand are on the west side of A1A in Red Reef Park. Silver Palm Park in the downtown also will have bleachers.

The 43-foot *Bimini Twist* sports fisherman has won in its category every year since 2009, and won best in parade four times, said Anita McIlvaine. "We do the theme Winterfest picks, and we have done Winterfest since 2004, Pompano since 2003 and the Boca Raton boat parades," she said.

The Winterfest theme is fairy tales afloat, so the McIlvaines chose Shrek this year.

"We like to have really good dance music, and how do you dance to 'Sleeping Beauty'? Shrek has 'YMCA' and Joan Jett music," she said.

The main signature decoration goes on the flybridge.

"This year it will be a 20-foot neon pink dragon, and 15 of us will be dressed in fairytale characters; some will be villains."

Why do they do this?

"We love it. We like being creative," she said. "We love giving

continues on 31



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continued
from 27

people so much joy. My husband makes everything.” Spanish River High School marching band parent Tom Elia can't have big crowds on his 26-footer because of Coast Guard regulations. So expect to see two snare drummers and mostly likely a trumpet and sax

players. His son Stephen Elia is the percussion co-captain of the school's Silver Sound Marching Band, which was in the Holiday Street Parade for the 12th year last week.

“I like giving back to the city,” Elia said. “We have lived here 23 years and we were married in Boca. Last year, we got an honorable mention.”



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