Chowder fans flock to Boardwalk

By TOBY GUILD

SANTA CRUZ — Fifteen years ago, Heather Miura-Egli ambushed her father, starting a family tradition that’s been a side-
door.

She entered her father, who was well known for his Boston- style clam chowder in the Santa
Cruz Beach Boardwalk’s Clam Chowder Cook-Off & Festival.

“We thought his chowder was great, but we weren’t sure if he was a contender to even enter,” Miura-Egli said.

That tradition grew into a dozen events that were showcased at the festival that attended the event.

The father, Tom Miura, is leader of Back of Clam, one of more than 40 teams that tested their culinary mettle in the

cook-off.

The first year, the family made six gallons, which proved to be a big understatement of what they needed.

“One soup was in 15 minutes,” said Cherie Miura, Tom’s wife. The next year, the Miuras made 20 gallons.

Family tradition was also the rule at Mike’s Chow- der, where more than a dozen family members had pitched in for Boston-style clam chowder handed out by Maritrich Bous.

Debbie Reis, 25, has worked with Miura-Egli, and

has nine grandchildren and nine grandchildren.

“We’ve won awards every year,” said family member Kitty Ditson.

Now in its 36th year, the festiv-

als have become a major draw for local and out-of-towners who come to watch the cook-off and as they are to leave work at 40

miles under cloudy, very fair, no cook-off. They can’t begin to cook — or even chop their vegetables — until the morning of the contest that gives them two hours to make several gal-

lons.

A cook-off has raised more than $81 million dollars for the City of Santa Cruz Parks and Recreation since the first event in 1983.

Mike Eisenbeis came from Reno, Nev. with four friends and a meat hook for the organization of a cook-off.

The family had a secondary min-

ation how to make their chowder.

Tim Eisenbeis has a recipe for a minimum of one hour.

“We’ll taste, then we’ll mingle.” Mike Eisenbeis said.

“We’ve been all over and we’ve never tasted a chowder that’s as good as yours,” he said.

Scott and Cindy Hanscom spoke of all the shows from the boardwalk and said they often come to the summer beach concerts at the Boardwalk.

“We love the smell, the ambiance, the atmosphere,” said Scott. “But does less time come to the beach?”

Despite the pressure that comes with serving hundreds of people, all the participants are not in it for the money.

Most decorate their booths with a theme and dress up in costumes.

Souper-CLAAMMargaret, ex-patriates, for example, had a "Mexican Pimiento" theme.

They didn’t want it to look were“under a umbrella.

It also came with a bell and the food was an ex- periment.

“My daughter is my favorite Disney movie of all time," said Kristal Michels. "It’s also the the community," said student and wine-class teacher assistant, Darryl Arose. "And there are so many happy faces..." Sensible to do the competition.

Best Individual Manhattan 1st - Scalaways (Bobby Way, Campbell) 2nd - Tad Bubba, Santa Cruz 3rd - Clam Rake (Idom Bish, Santa Cruz)

Best Professional Manhattan 1st - UC Santa Cruz Dining (James Holmes, Santa Cruz) 2nd - Ray Area Seafood (L.T. Cardinall, San Jose) 3rd - Pleasure Point Eastside Eatery (DerekBUY, Santa Cruz)

Best Individual Bistro 1st - Silence of the Clams (Brian Edwards, Campbell) 2nd - Back of Clams (Bonnie, Santa Cruz) 3rd - Santa Cruz kids Chow- der (Tad Bubba, Santa Cruz)

Best Professional Bistro 1st - Serrallés Italian Food & Pizza (Robert Courtedia, Carmichael) 2nd - Team Bubby (Jopinti Ambruz, Santa Cruz) 3rd - Pleasure Point Eastside Eatery (DerekBUY, Santa Cruz)

Most Original Team 1st - Clam Rock (Christopher Hira, Gilroy) 2nd - Buzzy’s Clam & Get It (Kitty Ditson, Soquel) 3rd - Loomis Paradise (Mare Scocchio, Scotts Valley)

Most Tasted Overall 1st - Buzzy’s Clam & Get It (Kitty Ditson, Soquel) 2nd - Half Bar & Grill (Jesus Garcia, Santa Cruz) 3rd - Men & A Clam (Wayne Locker, Scotts Valley)