



6:30 p.m. each night  
www.christmasboatparade.com

**"Feelin'  
Christmas-Sea  
in  
Newport Beach!"**

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## BRIGHT LIGHTS, DAZZLING DECORATIONS SET THE HARBOR ABLAZE AT 103<sup>rd</sup> ANNUAL NEWPORT BEACH CHRISTMAS BOAT PARADE

**Newport Beach, CA (Sept. 29, 2011)**— Join over a million viewers as beautifully decorated yachts, boats, kayaks and canoes sail along the harbor in the 103rd Annual Newport Beach Christmas Boat Parade. Hosted by the Commodores Club of the Newport Beach Chamber of Commerce, we invite everyone to celebrate this year as the parade features the theme **"Feelin' Christmas-Sea in Newport Beach!"**

### The Event

As Newport Beach's Christmas Card to the world, the boat parade will set the harbor ablaze for five consecutive nights, beginning Wednesday, December 14 and ending Sunday, December 18, 2011. The parade starts off Bay Island at 6:30 pm and finishes at the same site at approximately 9:00 pm each evening. The Christmas Boat Parade is presented by **Simple Green, Meguiar's** and **The City of Newport Beach** and will attract nearly one million viewers.

Beautiful multi-million dollar yachts, kayaks, canoes and other small boats will light up the harbor as a dazzling array of holiday lights and music fill the air at the Christmas Boat Parade. Many of the boats will be richly decorated with animated Christmas scenes accompanied by music and costumed carolers. Some boat owners in the past have spent over \$50,000 to decorate their vessels for the event. The Christmas floats will wind their way some 14 miles around the harbor to give viewers in restaurants, yacht clubs, on public beaches, and in private homes an incredible sight that has delighted millions of people for a century.

The Christmas Boat Parade, which has been hailed as "one of the top ten holiday happenings in the nation" by the New York Times, is truly a magical holiday tradition for all ages. The parade continues to be a premier event during the holiday season in Southern California that brings joy and happiness to all that view it.

### 2011 Parade Route and Viewing

The 2011 Parade will utilize the same starting and ending point as last year, located off Bay Island, and follow the same route. As the Newport Beach Christmas Boat Parade winds some 14 miles around the harbor way, the public can view the parade from almost any place on the shore FREE of cost. With thousands of people viewing each evening, the public is encouraged to allow extra time for travel and arrive as early as possible. All city parking lots will be open throughout the parade to accommodate viewers.

For first timers, a great place to view the parade is at the Fun Zone. Admission is FREE and there is plenty of nearby parking. In addition, Captain Mike Whitehead will return for each of the five nights of the parade with live commentary at the **Newport Harbor Nautical Museum located in the Fun Zone**. So, join the anticipated million of parade spectators as you listen to the exciting narration of the beautifully decorated yachts, boats, kayaks and canoes as they sail along the harbor in the 103rd Annual Newport Beach Christmas Boat Parade.

Newport Beach Chamber of Commerce

1470 Jamboree Road, Newport Beach, CA, 92660 Ph. (949) 729.4400 Fax (949) 729.4417 www.christmasboatparade.com www.newportbeach.com



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Additionally, there are a number of local restaurants with waterfront viewing, as well as a few organizations offering reserved seating. For more information, visit [www.christmasboatparade.com](http://www.christmasboatparade.com).

### Ring of Lights

Serving as the backdrop for the hundreds of lighted boats in the parade is the annual "Ring of Lights" contest, hosted by the Commodores Club of the Newport Beach Chamber of Commerce. Beautifully decorated bayside homes and businesses surrounding the harbor go "all out" with their own holiday spirit, featuring everything from roof-top animated scenes to dancing Christmas trees. With its own judged categories and prizes awarded, the "Ring of Lights" has become as celebrated as the boat parade itself.

### Fireworks

On the final night of the parade, Sunday, December 18, a special fireworks display will close out the parade. Beginning at approximately 9:00 pm, the fireworks will be visible from all around the harbor, being launched from the Balboa Pier. Special thanks to Ruby's Balboa Pier for closing early to allow for the fireworks show.

### Awards Dinner and Auction

Both the Boat Parade and the Ring of Lights competitions culminate at the annual Awards Dinner & Auction to be held on January 27, 2012 at the Balboa Bay Club. Open to the public, this gala event will honor award winners from both competitions. Additionally, the party will feature live entertainment, dancing and an incredible live and silent auction.

### Parade History

The Newport Beach Christmas Boat Parade began at the turn of the century. John Scarpa, an obscure Italian gondolier, and Joseph Beek, developer of Beacon Bay, the Balboa Ferry Line and the principal force in the early development of Balboa Island, arrived in the Newport Harbor area about 98 years ago. These two men established what was then called the Tournament of Lights, an event that would continue for the next nine decades.

In 1907, Scarpa began the tradition of lighting boats by taking a group of visitors from Pasadena across the bay in a gondola decorated with Japanese lanterns. One year later, on July 4, 1908, the first lighted boat parade took place. Scarpa, along with his fellow small boat operators, put together a loosely organized affair consisting of nine vessels. The parade, illuminated by Japanese lanterns, was led by Scarpa's gondola and followed by eight canoes. Thus, Scarpa has been credited with creating the first lighted boat parade.

In 1913 the parade, then called the Illuminated Water Parade, was held again. The boats were judged and prizes for the best decorated and best lighted vessels were given. Another larger parade followed in 1914 and for the Fourth of July, 1915, an even larger turnout was experienced. Historians say that as many as forty launches, canoes and rowboats participated in the celebration. The spectacular event featured a derelict boat hull that was set afire, followed by a dramatic "rescue" of passengers, a "Battle of Fireworks" between two launches and the explosion of two underwater mines. The relatively dangerous celebration was witnessed by thousands of visitors.

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Unfortunately this was to be the last parade for the next five years. World War I erupted and a severe depression hit Newport Harbor. It was not until 1919 that Beek, who at the time was operating ferryboats like the Fat Ferry, came to rescue the lighted boat parade.

Most of the early participants were children who decorated floats that were towed around the harbor. The floats were constructed in Beek's garage and many were patterned after those seen in the Pasadena Tournament of Roses Parade.

With the exception of several years during World War II, the Tournament of Lights was held every summer from 1919 through 1949. However, in 1949 the city fathers believed that the light parade was drawing too many visitors to the harbor and creating heavy crowding and traffic congestion. The Tournament of Lights fell out of favor.

Fortunately, back in 1946, Newport Beach City employees had outfitted a barge during the holiday season and installed a lighted Christmas tree. The barge was towed around the harbor while its passengers sang Christmas carols to residents on shore.

In later years, the Beek family came to the front again and provided one of their ferryboats for the floating Christmas tree celebration. Gradually, each year, other lighted boats fell in line behind the city employees' floating tree. Soon the Tournament of Lights came back as a Christmas celebration.

Today the Tournament of Lights, now called the Newport Beach Christmas Boat Parade, features as many as 100 boats. The parade is proudly hosted by the Commodores Club of the Newport Beach Chamber of Commerce and is hailed as "one of the top ten holiday happenings in the nation" by the New York Times. With this year's theme, "Feelin' Christmas-Sea in Newport Beach" the parade is the premier event of the holiday season in Southern California.

### Information

For more information about the parade or auction, or to request information about viewing areas, restaurants and boat charter companies, please call the Newport Beach Chamber of Commerce at (949) 729-4400 or visit [www.christmasboatparade.com](http://www.christmasboatparade.com). For photos of last year's parade, please contact Jeff Parker at 949-729-4408 or via eMail at [jparker@newportbeach.com](mailto:jparker@newportbeach.com)

*The Mission Statement of The Newport Beach Christmas Boat Parade is to celebrate a tradition of community pride by bringing Holiday Cheer and Good Will to all who participate and attend.*

*The Commodores Club is a council comprised of actively involved members of the Newport Beach Chamber of Commerce providing leadership, organization and fundraising support on business, social and community special events that promote the overall mission of the Chamber.*

*The Newport Beach Chamber of Commerce is a business organization of almost 1,000 members representing over 25,000 employees. The Chamber, with its five councils, committees, staff and valuable members, works with city officials, local businesses and the community at large to promote the local economy.*

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