

# The Timber Carnival Flourishes



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The history of the Timber Carnival illustrates what an extraordinary group of resourceful and imaginative community leaders Albany has enjoyed over the years. The Jaycees' revival of the Albany timber industry celebration—initiated four years earlier by the local chamber of commerce—attracted nationwide recognition of their talents and accomplishments. For three consecutive years in the late 1940s, the national Junior Chamber of Commerce selected the Timber Carnival as the outstanding Jaycee project in the nation among cities under 25,000 people.

Even as the Jaycees improved and refined the Timber Carnival during the late 1940s, building upon their original success, they continued to face obstacles. These challenges proved to be the origin of several memorable stories.

As the saying goes, a crisis is an opportunity in disguise, and the Jaycees proved the validity of that observation in early June 1950. A month earlier, they had begun to construct a float in the form of a Jeep-mounted carousel they planned to enter in the Portland Rose Parade to publicize the Timber Carnival. Unfortunately, the fourteen-foot width of the completed merry-go-round proved too great to allow it to be trucked overland to Portland. What to do? Since the carousel was a float, after all, why not send it down the Willamette River to the Rose City? At dawn on Sunday, June 4, a group of about thirty people, including Jaycees, their wives, guests, and eight candidates for Timber Carnival queen, boarded a fifty-five-foot-long barge bearing the carousel, and embarked for Portland. Two tugboats piloted by Jim Reed and



*Sharron McConnell was speechless when she was named queen of the 1957 Timber Carnival. (Photo courtesy of Sharron Seideman)*

of selling buttons was that it became a real family affair.

On the night of the coronation, the court and chaperones met in one of our rooms at the State Motel at the south end of Waverly Lake, where we waited prior to the coronation to hear who was to become the 1957 Timber Carnival Queen. The suspense was unbelievable, and when they said it was me, I was absolutely speechless!

During the ticket-selling phase, I was either in first, second, or third place, but no one knew who won until that very moment. We had all been fitted for the Queen's gown prior to that night, so I had to hurry and get dressed. Several boats waited in the dark on Waverly Lake to take the court across the water to be introduced to the waiting audience of four thousand people who were sit-