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Pacific Palisades Embraces the Fourth



This year's parade theme, suggested by Christine Borland, was "Home Is Pacific Palisades on the Fourth of July." Alas, the banner carriers at the head of the parade were carrying a banner inadvertently recycled from a previous parade.

By SUE PASCOE, Staff Writer
Photos by RICH SCHMITT
Staff Photographer

Thousands of residents and visitors had a heck of a good time in Pacific Palisades on July 4. Even people who didn't run came out for the 35th annual Will Rogers 5K/10K Run, followed by the Kids' Fun Run (303 registered) and street hockey on Alma Real with the L.A. Kings Ice Crew.

Pre-parade gatherings were taking place all over town when American Legion Post 283 opened its kitchen for the Third Marine Aircraft Wing Band from San Diego, and auxiliary members served them hamburgers and hot dogs with all the trimmings.

Major General Andrew O'Donnell, commanding general of the Third Marine Aircraft Wing and parade reviewing officer, said he will be leaving next month for Japan to serve as deputy commander of U.S. Forces there.

"It's an honor to serve my country," O'Donnell said, adding, "We're really excited about being in Pacific Palisades."

O'Donnell's Sergeant Major Anthony Spadaro, who holds the highest rank an enlisted officer can hold, explained how the Marines acquired the nickname "leather-necks."

The Marines' current uniform was adopted in 1870 and had a leather collar—"to ward off sword blows," said Spadaro, who noted that the collar style is the same today but made of material. "Everything in the Marines is based on tradition."

A block away at the Methodist Church courtyard, the parade organizing committee (PAPA) hosted its traditional VIP luncheon, featuring political dignitaries, celebrities, community leaders and people who have donated at least \$200 to help fund the parade and fireworks (a total exceeding \$90,000 a year).

Ernie Marquez, a direct descendent of the Marquez-Reyes families whose vast land holdings once included Pacific Palisades, was asked to ride in the parade by Community Council Sparkplug winner Colleen McAndrews Wood, who was instrumental in saving the Marquez family cemetery in Santa Monica Canyon.

"I've never been in the parade before," said Marquez, who with fellow Marquez descendent Sharon Kilbridt wore intricately stitched jackets that had been in the family for 100 years.

Citizen of the Year George Wolfberg, who had just returned from watching the U.S. Olympic track and field trials in Oregon, had mixed feelings about riding in the parade this year. "My favorite part is watching because you get to hear all of the bands," Wolfberg said, who named the Marines, Palisades High and the bagpipers as his favorite groups.

Parade Grand Marshal Jerry Mathers said that after the parade, he would return to his mother's house in Tarzana and continue celebrating the Fourth with dozens of friends and relatives.

"All the kids sing, play piano and perform," he said. "It's campy but a lot of fun." Between performances, Mathers is one of many who read parts of the U.S. Constitution. He usually reads the Second Amendment because "It's the shortest."



Fancy Feet dancers Keely O'Sullivan (left) and Layla Owens show their best steps along the parade route.



Bill Prachar, the parade's official clown, visited with 96-year-old Marvin Hoffenberg during the pre-parade VIP luncheon.



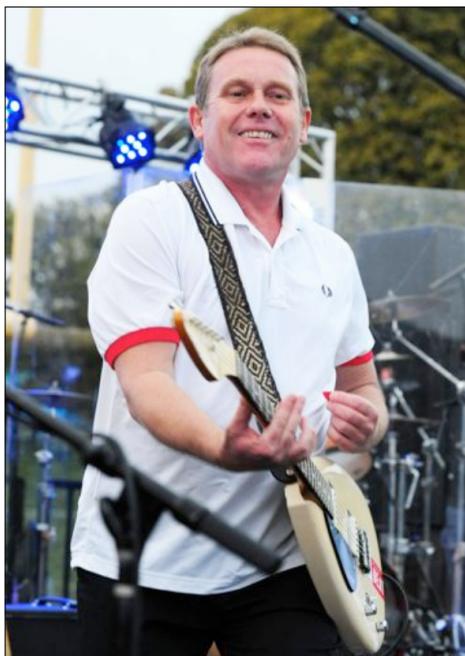
Patty Davis, who grew up in Pacific Palisades as the daughter of President Ronald Reagan, rode to draw attention to the newly launched UCLA Alzheimer's and dementia care program. She co-facilitates the support groups.



Left to right: Major General Andrew O'Donnell, 1964 Heisman trophy winner John Huarte (a Palisades resident), American Legion member Emil Wroblicky and Sergeant Major Anthony Spadaro at the American Legion before the parade.



The Palisades High School band had 45 members marching and playing this year.



Palisadian David Wakeling and The English Beat headlined the Palisades Rocks the Fourth concert.



The acoustic guitar duo of Randy Coleman and Donovan Lyman performed at the concert prior to the fireworks show last Wednesday evening at Palisades High.



Mathers, who gained fame playing Theodore Cleaver in the television show "Leave it to Beaver," said his mom was indirectly responsible for starting the Universal Studio Tour.

"Our show was shot on Universal back lot, stage 17. The lot was so big, they use to bus workers from area to area. When my mom and Mrs. Dow had friends who wanted to visit the set, they would have them ride around in the worker bus. Lew Wasserman

started thinking about how that could translate into a tour."

Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa was a late scratch, but two mayoral candidates were on hand—City Controller Wendy Greuel and City Councilwoman Jan Perry—along with potential candidate Zev Yaroslavsky, a county supervisor.

"Pacific Palisades represents what's great about Los Angeles with its active community groups that care about the neighborhoods and its schools," said Greuel, who graduated from Kennedy High School. "There are a lot of problems facing Los Angeles, but we can do it together."

State Senator Fran Pavley, who currently represents the Palisades but must now run for reelection in a new district because of redistricting, said this might be her final parade appearance here. "I've been in the parade for 12 years, starting in 2000, when my husband and I walked with our golden retriever in the Patriotic Pups brigade."

When 2 p.m. rolled around, all eyes were on the sky looking for the four Carey Peck skydivers. Only two came down—Lynn Fogelman and Rich Piccirilli—because Peck, who usually lands last with the American flag, broke his foot a few months back, and a fourth member was unable to fly out of Lake Elsinore to Santa Monica because of the low cloud cover.

After the parade, residents retreated back home or to neighborhood barbecues, and several thousand returned for the 6:30 p.m. concert in the Palisades High Stadium (featuring Palisadian David Wakeling and The English Beat) and then the 20-minute fireworks show by Pyro Spectaculars by Souza, which wowed the crowd—inside and outside the stadium.