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# “It’s the Palisades Skydivers!”

Skydiving will return to the parade this year at 2 p.m. at Swarthmore and Sunset Boulevard.

Photo courtesy of Scott Smith

By SUE PASCOE

Skydivers will once again start the Palisades Fourth of July parade.

Look to the skies just before 2 p.m. and three skydivers, Anne Helliwell, Josh Hall and Scott Smith, should be descending towards at the intersection of Swarthmore Avenue and Sunset Boulevard.

“The first time I jumped into the Palisades was with Carey Peck in the early ‘90s,” said veteran skydiver Smith. “I have done the jump maybe eight to 10 times over the years, when I wasn’t booked doing other jumps.”

This jump is tricky because of the wind currents and the large trees along Sunset, but Smith pointed out, “All three of us this year are highly experienced, with more than 40,000 jumps between us.”

Hall is a world champion, with more

than 10,000 skydives, and is the manager of Skydive Lake Elsinore.

Helliwell, who was featured in last year’s PAPA magazine, has more than 11,000 skydives and 1,700 BASE jumps.

Smith, who grew up in the South Bay area and attended Lawndale High School, took his first jump a week after his 16th birthday in 1978. (Today you have to be 18 everywhere in the United States to jump.)

“It was something my brother and I saw on a film at school, and I knew immediately it was something we wanted to do,” Smith said.

He attended Chapman University, where he received a bachelor’s degree in business administration, and then went to the American Film Institute for his master’s degree in fine arts in film production.

He has worked as a SAG-AFTRA stunt performer and stunt/aerial coordinator. His

film work includes *Iron Man*, *Triple X*, *Terminal Velocity*, *Tears of the Sun*, *Godzilla*, *Cutaway* and *Seal Team*. He has extensive television credits and was the parachuting coordinator for Bear Grylls on *Man vs. Wild* and *Running Wild with Bear Grylls*.

Smith pitched and arranged a YouTube video of Tom Cruise, a former Palisades resident, skydiving with James Corden. The video was made to promote *Mission Impossible 6* and is hysterical. (Visit: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G1wsCworwWk>.)

Cruise is just one of the many celebrities that Smith has worked with. The list includes Miley Cyrus, Channing Tatum, Zac Effron and Kendall Jenner.

“Jumping with Olympic downhill skiing Gold Medalist Bode Miller was probably my favorite,” said Smith, who noted that it was interesting listening to him talk about his Olympic runs and experience. “It was like a master class in high-level competition.

“He also had a great personality and was fun to be around as well,” said Smith, who has also coordinated most of Bear Grylls’ skydiving adventures around the world for the last 15 years.

Smith is highly sought out by the military for his expertise and continues to work under contract for the U.S. Navy’s Military Freefall School in San Diego.

“I teach Navy SEALs military freefall,” he said, noting that he has been instructing skydivers since the mid-80s. A military freefall means the jump is made with a 50- to 100-pound Rucksack, a rifle and sometimes bail-out oxygen for high-altitude jumps.

Smith has worked with Qatar Special Forces and the Singapore Military as an instructor (with U.S. State Department ap-

proval) training military in basic skydiving and military freefall.

His awards include the 1995 World Freestyle Champion, the 1996 and 1997 U.S. Freestyle Champion, the 1997 World Cup of Sky Surfing (silver medal) and the 1998 Top American Skysurfer at the X-Games.

After all he’s done in the sky—the competitions, instructing the military and working with stars—how does this Pacific Palisades jump compare?

Smith said, “This has always been a super fun jump and I look forward to celebrating the 4th of July with you again!”

(Editor’s note: Last year, Vice President Kamala Harris was at her Brentwood residence and the air space was closed, which meant the skydivers and the flyover were cancelled. The parade skydivers, who board a plane at the Santa Monica Airport, are aware of that possibility and are looking to mitigate the problem.)



Skydiver Scott Smith, who helps start the Palisades Parade this year, helped coordinate this stunt with former Palisades resident Tom Cruise and comedian James Corden. Photo courtesy of Scott Smith



Scott Smith

Photo courtesy of Scott Smith



# *Happy 4<sup>th</sup> of July*



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The dinosaurs were a favorite in the 2021 parade.

Photo: Morgan Genser

# Look for a Glorious Palisades 4th of July



This air squadron will fly over Pacific Palisades on July 4 at 3 p.m.

Photo courtesy of Chris Rushing

## WWII Plane Flyover

A squadron of World War II-era planes will fly over Pacific Palisades at 3 p.m. on July 4. The planes made their debut in 2020 much to the delight of the community. The parade had been cancelled that year because of Covid, and people were home-bound. But everyone could look to the skies and enjoyed the Fourth of July treat.

The nonprofit flies for a variety of events, ranging from funerals to parades. The Condor Squadron was started in 1962 by former WWII fighter pilot Richard Sykes and fellow veterans. Sykes, now deceased, was shot down over Hungary during the war, but returned safely home. Under the group's president Chris Rushing, a new cadre of pilots fly these historic airplanes.

## Kids on Bikes Return: Entries Sought

Last year it was not an easy to select the winners, said The Yogurt Shoppe owners, Christine and Adam Wolfson. The couple sponsored the Kids on Bike decorating contest.

All kids were invited to decorate bikes and scooters—and although an actual tally of contestants was not available, parade announcers agreed that this was one of the largest group of kids riding bikes and scooters in years. The youth were first on the parade route and stretched for about half a block.

“There were so many to choose from,” Christine said, noting so many kids had come up with imaginative, clever and different designs.

Each winner was to receive a \$50 gift certificate to The Yogurt Shoppe.

“Being a part of the community is one of our most important values,” Adam Wolfson said. “Given all this community has been through, it’s important to carry on this long tradition.”

Christine added, “We’d like to thank our amazing community for continuing to come out and support us.”

All “Kids on Bikes” participants are asked to meet between 1 and 1:15 on July 4 on the sidewalk at Bowdoin, at the corner of Via de la Paz.

Participants should come with a parent or guardian, who will need to sign a partic-



This young lad decorated his bike with balloons.

Photo: Morgan Genser

ipation form on their behalf and accompany them along the parade route. Water bottles are recommended, and bike helmets are required. Kids and their guardians/parents may leave the parade at any time along the route. Visit: [palisades4th.com](http://palisades4th.com).





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# Garner Selected as Grand Marshal

By SUE PASCOE  
with BERNICE FOX

Actress Jennifer Garner, whom many Pacific Palisades residents consider a “hometown” girl, will be Grand Marshal of this year’s Pacific Palisades 4th of July Parade.

One of her fans summed it up perfectly. “Does anybody else watch Jennifer Garner and think, ‘that’s who we all should be?’ She is the most likable person on Earth. Lovely.”

Like other locals, Garner and her family often are among the spectators watching the annual Palisades 4th of July parade from the curb. This year as Grand Marshal, she’ll be driven along the route.

This will not be Garner’s first parade of the year. In February, she rode through the streets of Cambridge, Massachusetts as Harvard’s Hasty Pudding Woman of the Year.

The Associated Press reported, “Despite the frigid temperatures, Garner, 49, was all smiles as she waved to the hundreds of spectators along the parade route.”

Hasty Pudding organizers said they chose Garner not only for her acting career, but also for her record as a philanthropist and entrepreneur. She combines both philanthropy and entrepreneurship as co-founder of the organic food company, Once Upon a Farm. The company’s pouches of blended vegetables and fruit with bright labels are aimed at kids. Now her company is donating an amount from each sale towards meals through one of Garner’s favorite charities, Save the Children USA, where she’s a board member.

With her down-to-earth appeal, Garner is the face of Once Upon a Farm. On the company’s Twitter page, she’s sometimes pictured in the fields of her grandmother’s farm in Oklahoma or seen talking up the product from her own kitchen.

It’s in that kitchen that she hosts her online *Pretend Cooking Show*. What started as a fun way to showcase her cooking skills has turned into a full-blown Instagram series with 11.7 million followers. And she and her show recently partnered with KitchenAid.

During the show, Garner’s relatability is on full display as she hums while she cooks, inadvertently drops things and sometimes struggles with ingredients.

She’s also the face of Neutrogena—a gig she’s had for at least 15 years. And she pitches Capitol One credit cards, just like Pacific Palisades Honorary Mayor Eugene Levy and his two actor kids, Sarah Levy and Dan Levy.

Garner grew up in Charleston, West Virginia, the middle child of three girls. Her father worked as a chemical engineer and her mother was a homemaker and later an English teacher at a local college. Once in a while, her mom will be on the *Pretend Cooking Show* by phone.

Jennifer Garner was raised Methodist, going to church every Sunday and attending Vacation Bible School. She once said that



Jennifer Garner

she and her sisters were not allowed to wear makeup, paint their nails, pierce their ears or dye their hair. Garner also has raised her three children in a local Methodist Church.

Garner studied theater at Denison University in Ohio, before moving to New York City. There she worked in the Roundabout Theatre Company and supplemented her income by working as a hostess in a restaurant on the Upper West Side.

She made her screen debut in 1995 in a TV movie called *Zoya*.

A few years later, Garner was married. And with then-husband, Scott Foley, she moved to Radcliffe Avenue in Pacific Palisades in the early 2000s. The couple split amicably in 2003, and the divorce was final a year later.

They had met on the set of the TV show *Felicity*, when they played boyfriend-girlfriend during her three guest episodes. Garner’s fame took off when she starred on the hit series *Alias*. Garner can thank Palisades High graduate J.J. Abrams for creating both *Felicity* and *Alias*.

*Alias* ran from 2001 to 2006, with Garner starring as Sydney Bristow, a double agent for the Central Intelligence Agency. She won a 2002 Golden Globe award for best performance by an actress and a 2004 Screen Actors Guild Award for an Outstanding Performance by a Female Actor in a Drama Series.

Her film career then took off and she landed roles in *Catch Me if You Can* (2002), *Daredevil* (2003) and *13 Going on 30* (2004).

She was married to actor Ben Affleck from 2005-18. They have three children.

Garner continued to achieve commercial success with performances in the comedy-drama *Juno* (2007), in which she was nominated as Best Supporting Actress by the Online Film Critics Society and by the Gold Derby Awards for her heart-wrenching portrayal of a wife desperate to adopt a baby while her marriage is collapsing. She also appeared in the romantic comedies *Ghosts of Girlfriends Past* (2009) and *Valentine’s Day* (2010).

In the 2013 film *Dallas Buyers Club*, the actors, including Garner, were nominated

together by SAG for Outstanding Performance by a Cast in a Motion Picture.

David Edelstein of *New York* magazine said about her performance in *Dallas Buyers Club*: “It’s not a well-shaped role, but I’ve gotten to the point where I’m happy to see Garner in anything. She’s incapable of phoniness.”

Her most recent film, *The Adam Project*, was released in March. It reunited her with Mark Ruffalo. The two had worked together 18 years earlier in *13 Going on 30*.

She has a number of projects coming up, including these two TV series: *The Last Thing He Told Me* and a reboot of *Party Down*.

Garner continues to balance the needs of her family, even as she’s one of Hollywood’s most sought-after actresses.

In 2013, she testified before the California Assembly Judiciary Committee in support of a bill that would protect celebrities’ children from harassment by photographers.

In 2014, Garner spoke in support of a “No Kids” policy, which was adopted by many media organizations and forbids publication of photos of celebrities’ children. Two sections of the state’s civil code were amended to place limits on how the paparazzi can intrude on celebrities’ lives.

In a lighter vein, Garner and her family have purchased their Christmas trees from the Palisades-YMCA lot. In a hilarious video on Instagram in 2019, Garner explained that a Christmas tree had just been delivered to her house, and it was just a smidge taller than the one she thought her family had chosen.

Starting with a close-up of Garner, the camera zooms out and a massive evergreen is revealed.

This past December, Garner hosted *In Performance at the White House: Spirit of the Season* for PBS alongside first lady Dr. Jill Biden.

Garner’s 50th birthday was this past April. She shared a clip of a pre-birthday surprise on Instagram, that she calls “a doozy.” Her childhood idol, Donny Osmond, showed up where she was sitting at a café in the Brentwood Country Mart.

The two hugged and Osmond presented her with a cake that read, “13 going on 50,” a nod to her film, *13 Going on 30*. They then went on to sing a duet before a clearly overwhelmed Garner covered her face with a napkin. As of this writing, that clip has been seen more than 24-million times.

J.J. Abrams, of both *Felicity* and *Alias*, was quoted in a 2016 *Vanity Fair* story talking about Garner.

“I don’t remember having more fun working with anyone than I’ve had working with her. She’s smart-funny—she makes you want to be funnier and smarter, and you know that when you throw the best you’ve got her way, she’ll make it better. No one’s perfect. But no one’s Jen Garner.”

Organizers of the Pacific Palisades 4th of July Parade are proud to have Jennifer Garner as this year’s Grand Marshal.



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Runners line up on Alma Real before the start of the race.

Photo: Tyler Newman

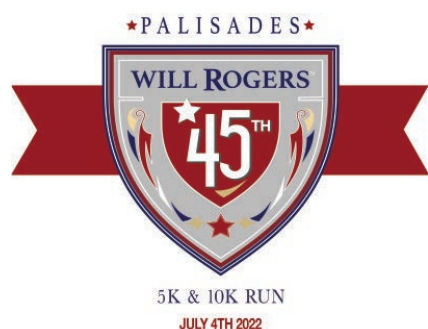
# Will Rogers 5/10K Run Returns

The Will Rogers 45th Annual Race returns this year, after a two-year absence because of the Covid pandemic.

The 5/10K is run on one of the most beautiful courses in the country, with the 10K winding through Will Rogers Historic State Park. Runners are urged to register early ([palisades4th.com](http://palisades4th.com)) and pick up packets on July 2 and 3 at the Palisades Recreation Center.

## RACE BEGINNINGS

Residents Brian Shea and Chris Carlson had just finished running the Brentwood 10K in 1977 and thought it would be great if Pacific Palisades could have a 10K run. A group of men, who ran together as the Ridge Runners, organized the first Will Rogers 10K Run in 1978, augmenting the town's other Fourth of July activities.



## 10K HISTORY

That first year, Drew Mearns won the men's race in 31:35 and Pam Firestone was the women's champion in 39:35. Between 1978 and 2011, Russell Edmonds had the fastest course record of 29:46 (1983) and Katie Dunsmuir Younger had the fastest women's time of 35:09 (also in 1983).

The race, with its run through historic Will Rogers State Park and the switchbacks to access the park, is considered one of the most beautiful in the country. It has been

written up in various magazines, including *Runner's World*, as a race not to be missed.

However, the race times were never official, because the course had not been officially measured. Before the 2012 race, the course was recalibrated and found to be 475 feet short, so the extra distance was added. Tonny Okello, who won the race in 2014, 2016, 2017 and 2018, now holds the course record of 31:21 (2014) and Kaitlyn Peale has the women's record of 36:19 (2018).

## 5K HISTORY

A 5K run was added in 1986, and current race director Brian Shea later explained why. "The 5K started the year after the 10K race sent 20 ambulances to local hospitals because of the heat, and it was on every news channel that evening."

"It was very hot that year and runners had only one choice, the 10K," Shea said. "The 5K was born the next year to give runners a choice of either distance."

David Greifinger won the inaugural race in 15:22 and Kiki Laborteaux finished first in the women's division in 17:34.

Palisades High runner Peter Gilmore,

who eventually became one of the country's leading marathon runners, won the 5K eight times: 1995, 1997, 1998, 1999, 2002, 2003, 2004 and 2006. Kara Bernard holds the most wins for women with five: 1997, 1998, 1999, 2000 and 2004.

The 5K course was recalibrated in 2015, bring it to national standard. With the now accurately measured route, Andrew Bland now holds the record at 15:48 (2014). Drake Johnston, who won in 2015 and 2016, has the second fastest time of 15:56. Regina Lopez holds the women's record with 17:54 set in 2017.

## LEMEN HIGH SCHOOL TROPHY

The Lemen High School Run coincides with the 5K race. Student runners from local high schools run under their school's name and compete for the team trophy. The fastest three individual times are added to determine the winner.

The first year of the competition in 2019, Palisades High edged out Loyola by just 53 total seconds. Pali's Brett Bailey ran 17:35, Alec Schmitt 18:27 and David Tobin 18:54, giving the team a time of 54:16.

Loyola's Nathan Mars ran 18:28, and Tyler Ratkovich and Mark Valencuela had identical times of 18:39, giving the team a 55:07.

This team competition is dedicated to the late Dick Lemen, a longtime Palisadian and a track coach at Palisades High for many years. He was also a member of the Ridge Runners, the band of about 20 local runners who originated the Will Rogers Run in 1978.

In a 1990s feature article by Matt Purdue ("They're Running the Show"), Lemen explained why the group organized the 5/10K races. "It's a good opportunity for us to put something back into running. Also, it's good for the community and we enjoy doing it."

Lemen died in 2017 and is survived by his wife, Karen, and two adult children, Carly and Jeff.



# Ariola Heads Kids Fun Run

By SUE PASCOE

Danielle Ariola, a broker associate/realtor with Compass, is in charge of the Kids Fun Run this year.

“It’s been three years, since I took it over, however because of the pandemic, this is my first official year in charge,” said Ariola who grew up in Pacific Palisades. “So, wish me luck!”

The Kids Fun Run was started in 1995 for kids who were too young (or unwilling) to run a 5K. Every year hundreds of kids, some as young as three, sought to emulate the older runners by running the half-mile race that starts at Alma Real, turning left on Drummond and finishing back on Toyopa.

“I became interested in the Kids Fun Run after volunteering in 2019,” Ariola said. “The 4th of July in the Palisades is my favorite time of year.”

She and three siblings, Wayne, Chris and Nicole, the children of Wayne (deceased) and Mary, attended Corpus Christi and grew up with the Palisades 4th festivities.

Ariola attended college in Santa Barbara for architecture before transferring to the

University of Arizona. While there she worked for the University soliciting donations from alumni.

After college she worked as an event coordinator, managing large event productions in the entertainment industry.

“But my passion has always been architecture and design which eventually led me to a career in real estate,” said Ariola, who is now partners with her sibling Chris, as The Ariola Group with Compass.

In 2016, when her daughter was only 18 months old, Ariola’s husband, Chris Klein passed away. She is thankful for the support she receives from her family and the community.

“Our hometown means the world to me, my daughter and my entire family,” she said.

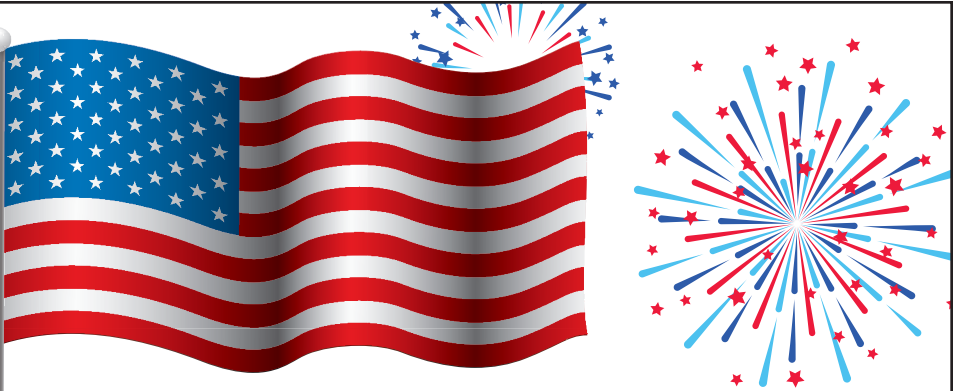
“We are all very close and still get together for the 4th.”

Not only will it be a Kids Fun Run, but there will also be a family component because her brother’s kids Wren and Beckett will be running with Ariola’s daughter Aurora. And her family “has all been summoned to help with the Fun Run this year.”

*(Continued on Page 11)*



Danielle Ariola



## HAPPY 4<sup>th</sup> OF JULY FROM THE SOLUM FAMILY

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## Ariola

(Continued from Page 10)

"I can't tell you how special it is to share the 4th of July festivities and traditions with our kids," Ariola said. "It's important knowing they will experience similar memories that molded and shaped us all into who we are today."

"We have been so lucky to be a part of this community, surrounded by families supporting each other, and instilling in our kids the importance of values, all while honoring fun traditions," said the Santa Monica resident. "It's really magical to be a part of such an amazing community and I am very proud I now get to take part in creating some of that magic."

"My heart is here in Pacific Palisades," Ariola said.

Her daughter, Aurora Klein, attends Palisades Elementary and Ariola's office is in the Palisades.

Currently, Ariola doesn't plan to make any changes with the run. "Once I get my feet wet this year, maybe I will have a few new fresh ideas and will always be open to suggestions," she said. "But for now, I'm just so grateful that my predecessors have left me with a very organized and well-oiled machine."

For her the best part of this race is the obvious—the kids. "Their energy and excitement are infectious and it really what makes this such a fun event."

Only a month until the big day. Parents can sign kids up at [Palisades4th.com](http://Palisades4th.com). The



Kids take off after the start of the Kids Fun Run.

Photo: Shelby Pascoe

cost is \$25 but the price will go up after June 26. All participants will receive T-shirts.

"I can't wait for the race this year," Ariola said. "It is really feeling like we are back to normal after these long, hard years during Covid and we all deserve to have some fun."

"I hope we see tons of kids this year with record-breaking participation," she said.

## Realtor Laura Brau Sponsors Kids Fun Run

Laura Brau, the Senior Estates Director for Compass, is sponsoring the Kids Fun Run this year.

She became involved when Mike Solum (Farmers Insurance), a sponsor who helps organize the Will Rogers 10K/5K Run, and also the parade, called and asked if she would like to get involved.

"I jumped at the chance," Brau said. "Supporting our town with my lifelong friends who I grew up with in Palisades, and who are now on the race committee, makes sponsoring the kids' race even that much more special."

Brau grew up in the El Medio Bluffs neighborhood, where her parents, Susan and Brooke Temple, still live. She has an older brother, Brooke Jr.

"I grew up as family friends with James Klein and Mike Solum, as well as Danielle Ariola," a teammate in club volleyball," Brau said.

The Marymount graduate attended USC, where she received a degree in public policy and management.

Brau and her husband Evan, who grew up in Brentwood, have two children. Their son Jameson, who attended Brentwood High School, is a senior at UC Santa Barbara. Daughter Peyton just graduated from Marymount and will attend Villanova.

"They ran the kids' race when they were little," Brau said, adding, "That race is so fun to watch, and is not just run by the kids alone but also by parents who run alongside their child to encourage them all the way."

Like many Palisades residents, Brau has trouble pinpointing the best part of the Fourth of July in Pacific Palisades, but "I do

love walking into town towards the race the morning of the 4th and hearing the music from the starting line get louder and louder as you get closer."

"As the music grows louder, it reminds you that you are about to have one of the best days of the year in the Palisades," Brau said. "Everyone comes together on this one day, new friends and old, young and old, to run, walk, cheer and laugh."

"I am so happy to be a sponsor this year and contribute to our town's wonderful tradition!"



Laura Brau

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# Ambassadors Vital to Parade, Community

By LAURA ABRUSCATO

When the Palisades Charter High School Ambassadors march by in the Fourth of July parade or help with the evening fireworks, they are giving back to the community.

Ambassadors President Hannah Safaie-Kia and Director of Affairs Kiala Bryant, PaliHi juniors, have been attending PAPA (Palisades Americanism Parade Association) meetings in preparation for their group volunteering in the parade. Both Brentwood residents, they attended Canyon Charter and Paul Revere Middle School together.

"I knew kids who grew up in Pacific Palisades and they always talked about the parade," Bryant said.

Last year, Bryant and Safaie-Kia held the banner for the Optimist Club, while several other PaliHi Ambassadors marched with the Optimists wearing the uniform of hats, shirts and boxer shorts. "It's always fun being with the Optimist Club," says Safaie-Kia. "It's a proud moment to get to that point, to be able to be of service and hear the cheer from the crowd."

Other ambassadors will be helping with the Chabad float this year.

In addition, ambassadors, who can be recognized by their uniform of a white polo shirt and gray sweatshirt bearing their logo, help with parking and other needs on the PaliHi field where many locals go to watch the fireworks.

Only one out of ten applicants is accepted into the highly sought ambassadors group, which is made up of 40-45 sophomores through seniors who give tours of the school to prospective students. "I love the tours," Bryant said, "to be able to show my love for Pali."

Additionally, there are 30 underclassmen Dolphin Diplomats who are "ambassadors in training."

There is a three-step application process to become an ambassador, including a written application, video application and eventual interview with the 6-member cabinet and Dr. Pam Magee, PaliHi's Principal/Executive



Palisades Ambassadors Ashley Radfar, left, and Lauren Dardashti carry the first banner introducing the parade. Dressed in their Ambassador polos and festive gear, they march along with Palisades pride!

Director, who is the supervisor of the group.

Ambassadors participate in many Palisades events. In the 21-22 school year, they have helped with the Lutheran Church Oktoberfest, YMCA community cleanup, Paul Revere Middle School beautification, Chabad Chanukah Celebration and Holiday Ho!Ho!Ho!

Unable to participate the year prior due to covid, it was fun for the ambassadors to help with the Holiday Ho!Ho!Ho! where they donned Santa hats, set up hot chocolate and popcorn stations and hung decorations.

Ambassadors' activities this year helped the greater L.A. community. At two L.A. Marathons (Nov. 2021 and March 2022) they set up a recycling system, manned water stations along Montana and San Vicente and picked up trash. They also worked at the Teen Cancer America Polo Event at Will Rogers Field, an organization that helps adolescents and young adults get specialized cancer care.

in partnership with Access Books, the ambassadors collected more than 4,000 books, which they used to set up a new library for

Whaley Middle School in Compton. "Seeing how thankful the principal of the school felt and seeing the finished product was a nice payoff," Bryant said.

Attending PAPA parade organizing committee meetings has been an eye-opening experience for the teens, learning how much goes into parade preparation behind the scenes, including the closing down of streets and coordination with the fire department.

"I'm highly looking forward to participating in the parade with fellow ambassadors," Safaie-Kia said.



Ambassadors (from left to right) Will, Ava, Leon, Avani, Kian, Kaila, Natania, and Rodrigo, are pictured with attendees at the Ho!Ho!Ho! event that takes place in the winter. The Ambassadors love getting festive with hats and antlers!

"Having the Pali High Ambassadors in addition to the school sports team members as July 4th volunteers is a wonderful opportunity for our community to see and meet these students. As a group, the Ambassadors focus on community service, and educate Palisadians and school visitors about our local public school, its extracurricular programs, as well as its diverse student body."

— Daphne Gronich, PAPA Treasurer



Ambassadors were on hand to help with the Palisades centennial.



# '76 Trombones Led the Big Parade'

In the 1957 musical *The Music Man*, Harold Hill convinces the townspeople of River City, Iowa to visualize their children playing in a marching band, with 76 trombones leading the parade.

In a Letter to the Editor in the *Herald and Review*, a reader wrote "Could someone explain why none of the parades in Decatur are having any bands? I have heard so many people say that a parade isn't a parade without a marching band."

The reader is right that bands, music and celebrations go hand in hand. The Palisades 4th of July Parade is a grand hometown celebration and offers residents some good music and old-fashioned fun.

Some of the bands this year include:

## PASADENA SCOTS

Formed in 2006, the Pasadena Scottish Pipes & Drums are the 2018 Grade 3B World Champions and the current Grade 3 & Grade 5 Western United States Pipe Band Association Champions.

Known as the Pasadena Scots, the band is dedicated to the study and performance of Scottish bagpipe and drum music.

The group have performed at different venues and have played the National Anthem at Staples Center before a National Hockey League game.

The Pasadena Scots got into the holiday spirit in 2012 when they recorded with Rod Stewart for his PBS television special



*The Pasadena Scots will once again march in the Palisades 4th of July Parade.* Photo: Joanne Reich  
*Merry Christmas, Baby.*

The Scots also recorded soundtrack music for the movie *How to Train Your Dragon*.

The musicians are a diverse group, and several members are actual rocket scientists employed at Pasadena's Jet Propulsion Laboratory. Those scientists/musicians were asked to play as part of the official U.S. Postal release ceremony for the stamp of the 50th Anniversary Moon Landing.

Members, who wear the California State tartan, competed in the World Band Championship in 2009 in Grade 4B, placing sixth.

But by 2018, in their third trip to Glasgow, Scotland, they had been crowned Grade 3B Champions.

## PALISADES HIGH SCHOOL

Look for the award-winning Palisades High School marching band. The organization has 75 students, who entertain at halftime of home football games and also compete in the Western Bands Association (WBA) circuit. In addition, the band has been a mainstay in the Palisades parade for more than a decade.

Like most extracurricular activities at a public school, competition fees, equipment truck rentals, instrument repairs, festival and sheet-music fees and transportation to shows is provided mostly through parent donations. Music lovers can make a tax-deductible donation to the band program. Checks can be mailed to Palisades Charter High School, Attn. Band Programs, 15777 Bowdoin St., Pacific Palisades, CA 90272.

## NORTH VALLEY MILITARY INSTITUTE

The North Valley Military Institute College Preparatory Academy (NVMI) is a grades 6-12 public charter school in Sun Valley, with about 715 students. This is a public school that uses a military framework (uniforms, formations, military awards and rank structure) to help students get into college. The school stresses hard work and complying with a code of honor.

NVMI's Drum Line began in July 2013, and two years later a full marching band was started and almost immediately began winning awards.

## NEW ORLEANS JAZZ BAND

The New Orleans "Traditional" Jazz Band has been featured at Disneyland and in ads for the iPhone, FOX NFL and DirecTV. The band is available for occasions such as weddings, funerals, parties—and, of course, parades.



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# Home-Grown Oom PaPa Band Produces Music, Camaraderie

By LAUREL BUSBY

Since 1975, the Oom PaPa band has been providing music and fun for Pacific Palisades.

Aside from 2020, when the pandemic forced the cancellation of the parade and other events, the band has been a regular part of not only the Fourth of July parade, but also Christmas festivities and other local events.

Although the band has local origins and mostly consists of Palisadians, people from across Los Angeles County also join the group each year to make the parade more festive.

Palisadians Gene Romig and Sandy Schaefer started the band, and the name Oom PaPa is not only inspired by peppy marching music featuring brass, woodwind, and percussion instruments, but also by PAPA, the Palisades Americanism Parade Association, which orchestrates the parade.

Five years after its inception, the band's current leader, Mark Eisenberg, heard about the group from his high school friend, Palisadian Nancy Morrison. He soon joined the band as a trumpeter, and then, in 1986, he took over the role of drum major and music



The Oom PaPa band practices on Pampas Ricas for the Fourth of July parade.

Photo courtesy of the Eisenberg family

director. This year will mark his 43rd year in the band.

"All of us love it," said Eisenberg, an attorney who lives in Playa Del Rey. "It's a

great group of people, and we're all dedicated to having fun on the Fourth of July."

Eisenberg's wife, Marla, began managing the band three years ago after longtime managers Margot Morrison and Phyllis Schlessinger retired, and the Eisenbergs' children, Michael, 16, and Emma, 14, have been joining the parade since they were babies—first in strollers and now as playing members.

Michael, who has played both the drum and trumpet in the parade, "told me two days ago how he can't wait to play the trumpet this year," Mark Eisenberg said in early June. Emma, who previously played the clarinet, will take charge of the cowbell this year. "They're both excited to come back and play again."

Both Michael and Emma have also invited friends to participate, which means an estimated 10 more young people will join the group, their father said. These newer band members join a stalwart group who return

year after year to play together.

Every June, the band begins to gather to practice its repertoire, which includes "76 Trombones" and "Louie, Louie." Every Saturday morning, on a grassy median on Pampas Ricas Boulevard, the older members help the newer ones get the hang of the tunes, and they're soon marching up and down the street, entertaining the neighborhood.

"The veterans pick it up where they left off," Eisenberg said. "It's just a given. I used to worry that we wouldn't have a good showing each year, but there's always this solid core of 20, and every year we expand our ranks to 35 or 40 . . . For a lot of the people in the band, this is their only opportunity to play. Being part of the community and going out on the Fourth of July to do something bigger is a time-honored tradition."

As always, the Oom PaPa band welcomes new members. Practices are Saturday mornings at 10:30 a.m. Contact Marla Eisenberg: [meisenberg310@gmail.com](mailto:meisenberg310@gmail.com).

## Wishing Everyone a Safe and Happy 4th of July!



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Once again horses will be in the Palisades Parade, as the Mounted Unit takes the route.

Photo: Joanne Reich

# Mounted Unit Featured in Parade

By LAUREL BUSBY

About a year ago, the California State Guard 26th Mounted Unit expanded their duties from parades and events to search and rescue and security.

The all-volunteer force, which should feature more than a dozen horses and riders at

the Pacific Palisades Fourth of July Parade, trains one weekend a month, for eight hours each day, to learn these new skills, according to Command Sergeant Major Daniel DeGeorge.

"The training is very intense because they want to make sure they're doing it the right way, following the regulations, doing what

the mission requirements would ask for, so that not only them as riders but their animals are prepared for different scenarios," DeGeorge said.

As the California State Guard's senior enlisted non-commissioned officer, DeGeorge has observed the group at both parades and during their training exercises, which sometimes include trial search and rescue missions. For example, at one such exercise, two people were intentionally "lost," and the riders devised a plan to find them and then succeeded in achieving that goal.

The southern members of the contingent generally train at Los Alamitos Joint Forces Training Base, but they combine with their northern counterparts for training in central California at either Camp Roberts or Camp San Luis Obispo, which "is a great training area for search and rescue because it has varied terrains," DeGeorge, 59, said.

About six months ago, security training was added to their regimen. The volunteers, who transport their own horses to training and events, have been learning crowd control and how to provide other security tasks, because horses can outrun people on foot.

This expansion is a change for the mounted force, which used to specialize solely in parades and other festive events. The Color Guard, which includes members from the Army, air, and maritime divisions of the California State Guard, also often joined them on marches.

"Parades are an opportunity to share with

the community what we have within our organization," DeGeorge said. Like the Color Guard, the 26th Mounted "have a lot of pride in what they do and what they represent. Their uniforms are impeccable, and the horses are well maintained. It's a great representation of what we do."

The increase in their duties stemmed from some changes within both the California State Guard and the military overall, which required some units to become more operational due to overseas deployments that left voids, he said.

"It helps the military to have more assets," noted DeGeorge, who added that the California State Guard is strictly a state military organization, so its all-volunteer force always remains in the state and is under the jurisdiction of the governor.

The guard also is always looking for new members, including personnel on horseback, although, thus far, they have yet to be called into service for one of a search-and-rescue or security mission. DeGeorge said that he anticipates the Mounted's eventual use in varied capacities, including at checkpoints during catastrophic fires. He noted that the guard is called to search and rescue missions every few days, so eventually the horses and their dedicated riders will join some of these searches.

"These individuals are true servants," DeGeorge said. "They give up their personal time away from their families. They are such great advocates for the California State Guard and the entire military."

## PRE-PARADE JITTERS?



Last year's co-parade marshals, Joe Halper and Dr. Mike Martini look to be perfectly relaxed before the start of the 2021 parade.

Photo: Joanne Reich



# Dr. Kevin Nealon Honored, Again

By SUE PASCOE

Comedian and actor, Kevin Nealon is racking up the honorary titles. He was given an honorary doctorate by his alma mater Sacred Heart University in Fairfield, Connecticut, in May.

He was honorary mayor of Pacific Palisades from 2016-17.

After being chosen as mayor, he was asked to serve as Grand Marshal in the 4th of July parade—and then, he was even asked to be a judge in the home decorating contest.

When he received the hometown honors in 2016, he told reporters that he felt honored. “I don’t know what’s coming next,” Nealon said. “Honorary mayor, grand marshal—crossing guard?”

Now the Palisades Americanism Parade Association has just feted the comedian with a new title “ex-honorary mayor.”

Nealon will ride in this year’s 4th of July parade. Although no one is sure what the official duties are for an ex-honorary mayor, it’s apparent Nealon will give them the same full attention he did when he governed Pacific Palisades.

After he became mayor, he told Conan O’Brien on O’Brien’s late night show that he planned to get tough on the drug problem here “specifically, the rampant use of Botox.” And he promised “to rid the town of those who forget to bring their own.”

Crime and homelessness also had him concerned. People were forgetting to take their own shopping bags to the supermarkets and “There’s a homeless problem, married men cheating on their wives and losing their

homes. I want to stop this,” he said. (The O’Brien segment can be viewed on YouTube.)

Nealon created and hosted *Hiking with Kevin*, which has more than 100 episodes on YouTube. In it, he interviewed celebrity friends on hikes around the Santa Monica Mountain trails. His guests have included Adam Sandler, Conan O’Brien, Caitlyn Jenner, Lin-Manuel Miranda, Tiffany Haddish and Courteney Cox.

PAPA has promised Nealon that he will not have to hike the parade route—but can ride in a car.

Born in St. Louis, he was mostly raised in Bridgeport, Connecticut. His father worked for a helicopter company. And from the time Nealon was six until he was 10, the family lived in Germany, where he learned to speak the language fluently.

“I learned how to swim in Greece, ski in Austria and argue in Italy,” Nealon said, in an earlier interview with *CTN*’s editor.

He is also a gifted artist, but not formally trained. “I’m a doodler. When I fly in planes, I sketch the person next to me.”

Nealon said he learned how to draw on his own. “There were two framed caricatures of my mom and dad on my bedroom wall, and I used to study them. When I was in Germany, I saw a sketch of a soldier on a napkin, and I practiced drawing it.”

He draws caricatures of his celebrity friends, which he often posts to his Instagram. A book will be released this October, *I Exaggerate: My Brushes with Fame*, featuring his caricatures accompanied by his musings on how he knows the person or an experience he had with them (@kevinnealonartwork).



Kevin Nealon

Growing up, however, “I always wanted to be a musician,” said Nealon, who plays guitar. After seeing the movie *Deliverance*, he also taught himself to play banjo. “I was too intimidated to sing on stage but started going to clubs and telling jokes.”

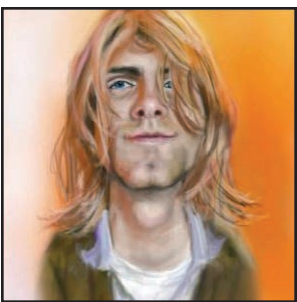
After Nealon received his bachelor’s degree in marketing from Sacred Heart, he moved to Los Angeles, hit the comedy-club circuit and soon appeared on Johnny Carson and David Letterman.

He heard from his pal, Dana Carvey, that

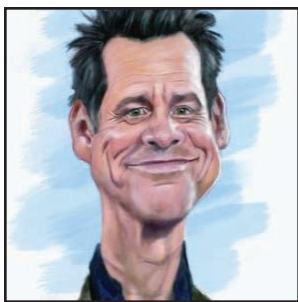
*Saturday Night Live* producers were looking for another cast member. After auditioning, he was hired and from 1986-95, he anchored the Weekend Update and created the muscular fitness experts “Hans and Franz” with Carvey.

Nealon made his film debut in the 1987 romantic comedy, *Roxanne*, with Steve Martin and has starred in more than two dozen comedies.

This summer he is on tour around the country. Visit: kevinnealon.com.



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# General Cross Is Parade Reviewing Officer

By LAUREL BUSBY

For almost 30 years, the California State Guard has worked with Ukraine to help the country in its effort to gain NATO membership, Brigadier General Peter B. Cross said.

Cross has visited the “beautiful, old country” and trained its military in American battle methods, which includes the on-the-spot decision-making of non-commissioned officers commanding small squads, as opposed to requiring each decision be made by the highest levels of command, which many foreign militaries use. This technique, he said, is what makes the American fighting forces so unique and effective and is also what has kept Ukraine so competitive in its ongoing fight with Russia.

“Ukraine is not some Johnny-come-lately mission,” he said. “We helped them develop their non-commissioned officer corps.... Their performance on the battlefield has been dominant, and I think it’s due to that NCO corps. We’re very proud of our Ukraine brothers and sisters.”

Cross, who will represent the California State Guard and the military at large at the Pacific Palisades Fourth of July parade, has spent most of his life serving in the armed forces, including 42 months of combat in Kuwait, Iraq, and Afghanistan, but he had no intention of joining the Army when he first enrolled in college at UC Berkeley in the late ‘80s.

He still describes himself as “very artistic;” he loves to draw and paint. As a young man, he was also a baseball player, but he got cut from the Berkeley team, and his college trajectory changed.

At loose ends, the Walnut Creek native noticed a fraternity brother wearing a sharp military uniform and learned from him that the National Guard paid college tuition.

“I enlisted that week without much thought,” Cross, 55, said. “I remember shipping off to basic training that summer, and I thought I had made the single worst mistake of my life.”

Two years later, in 1989, he graduated from college and received a commission as a second lieutenant in the Army. He was placed in charge of a platoon, and during the Gulf War, they were stationed in Kuwait, where he encountered an “extremely appreciative” populace, while they worked to guard the headquarters of General Normal Schwarzkopf.

His work and training also helped him discover that the military was a positive fit for his personality. Both its intense structure and the social nature of his work benefited him.

“I was conscientious enough that I didn’t want to fail,” he said. “I needed that hyper structure. If I was left to my own devices, I don’t think I would have thrived. I also love people. I connected with the military because it offset some of my weaker characteristics and enhanced my stronger ones.”

When his tour in Kuwait finished in 1992, he came home to California to relax and enjoy his leave, which was unfortunately cut short when riots broke out in Los Angeles after the Rodney King verdict.

“That was the most disconcerting period of my career,” he said. “There’s a reason there’s civilian authority over the military. It’s a dangerous mission to have the military employed on your own country.” Yet, he was proud of the result. “The National Guard performed wonderfully. . . . We weren’t shooting people



*General Peter Cross will be the Reviewing Officer.*

or doing anything that exacerbated the situation. More than anything, our presence calmed things down.”

During his more than thirty years of service, Cross has earned numerous honors, including the Bronze Star and the Meritorious Service Medal. He has specialized in the operations of the military police, an assignment that was particularly dangerous during his two tours in Iraq.

The eight-year conflict entailed dealing with IEDs—improvised explosive devices—that might explode anywhere at any time.

Traveling on the roads became precarious, which meant that his assignment of moving from police station to police station to train the Iraqi police was a dangerous endeavor. In the course of his service, he witnessed explosions of IEDs and the consequent horror that ensues.

“Combat is very loud,” he said. “It’s very shocking, and it’s very hard to control people when bullets start flying. People don’t understand how chaotic it can be. Your ability to work together is never more important than when those moments occur.”

The outcomes can also be tragic.

“You get soldiers killed on their first day of duty, and you get soldiers killed on their last day,” Cross said. “It makes no sense. You do what you can to mitigate the risks... but at the end of the day you can’t control your environment, so you try to be a good fellow soldier and you hope you make it out alive.”

In the process, he has met and bonded with numerous members of the military, who he describes overall as some of the “most empathetic people I’ve had the pleasure to know.” He noted that in movies, soldiers are often presented as glorying in violence, but he said the opposite is true.

“Any notion of bloodthirstiness or seeking

out conflict for some kind of thrill just doesn’t exist,” he said. “We are a very serious organization that is subject to civilian authorities.”

Their missions can also be confusing and are invariably challenging, particularly when dealing with other countries. In the process of working repeatedly in the Middle East, Cross has found himself sometimes surprised by the disinterest members of the citizenry can have in self-government.

Lethargy and a lack of initiative were also common in his experience. For example, when he visited Iraqi police stations, he might find multiple police officers asleep and would wonder, “What the heck am I doing here?” although he also saw Iraqis and Afghans who would “fight like hell.” In general, he said the U.S. military’s effort to both build governments and create democratic institutions seemed “illusive.”

“We’re good at creating safety,” he said. But “these countries need their own founding fathers for self-government to prosper and work. I don’t think the U.S. military is in a position to create governments that have any long-term durability.”

Back home in California now, Cross, who lives in the Bay Area with his wife, Melinda, said the Fourth of July and other military-oriented holidays, such as Veterans Day and Memorial Day, hold a special meaning for him. The holidays honor all the work that veterans have done and still do for the country, but they also provide a vital cohesiveness to the United States of America.

“They’re extraordinarily important to the fabric of our community because they give us a central theme that we can all get together on,” Cross said. “As divisive as the country seems, it’s parades and events like them that are more important than ever. . . . It’s not just a parade.”



*The photo was taken during Brigadier General Peter Cross’s 2009-2019 tour in Baghdad, Iraq.*

Photo Courtesy General Peter Cross





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The Palisades Americanism Parade Association (PAPA) thanks the supporters and community members who help our non-profit put on Pacific Palisades' July 4th Parade, Music and Fireworks events.

PAPA is delighted to be able to celebrate the Red, White and Blue in 2022!

Our appreciation to all those who have offered support and who will volunteer their time on our July 4th community celebrations, as well as the staff of Namevents, Pageantry Parades, Palisades Charter High School and Pyro Spectaculars.

This Official July 4th Program, which is mailed to over 12,000 local residential and business addresses, is the *only* local publication that supports and directly helps fund our community's July 4th events. PAPA thanks all those who worked on it and the businesses, companies and individuals who placed ads in it.

Together with the Official July 4th Program advertisers, the following people and entities are funding and supporting the **Red, White and Blue in 2022** celebrations. We will update this list (on our website) to add donations received *after* June 19.

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The individual **volunteers** listed below will make our 2022 celebrations possible. Those who have helped prep or committed to work on July 4th include: Mary & Barry Allwright, Melissa Anna, Zena Bartholomew, Kurt Bierschenk, Lorna Boyd, Sylvia Boyd, Nancy Brennan, Joy Daunis, Terry Dimich, Jeanne Elfant Festa, Andy Frew, Greg Frost, Morgan Genser, Linda Grant, Daphne Gronich, Manfred Hofer, Rosalie Huntington, Mike Kafka, Lou Kamer, Hannah Kia, Sam Lagana, Linda & Ed Leblanc, Mary Martin, Eli Nagle, Paul Nagle, Kevin Niles, Tim Overbeck, Sue Pascoe, Kimi Petrick, Jeff Ridgway, Matthew Rodman, Max Rodman, Rene Rodman, Spencer Rodman, Katherine Saslow, Bill & Cindy Simon, Keith Turner, Rob Weber, Rich Wilken. (*Our apologies to anyone who may have been inadvertently omitted.*)

Donations will always be gratefully accepted by PAPA at P.O. Box 1776, Pacific Palisades, CA 90272, online at [palisades4th.com/parade/donate](http://palisades4th.com/parade/donate), or via Zelle directed to [palisadesparade@gmail.com](mailto:palisadesparade@gmail.com).

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# Barber Joe Almaraz to Ride As 2022 Parade Marshal

By SUE PASCOE

Although long-time barber and business owner Joe Almaraz has been asked to serve as the Fourth of July parade marshal many times, this is the first year he's agreed to be honored.

When asked why this year, Almaraz said "This is my 60th anniversary. I came to Pacific Palisades in April 1962."

Almaraz, who lives close to the parade route on Sunset, says he especially likes watching the bands, the Kids on Bikes and the Patriotic Pups. This will be his first year riding in the parade.

When this reporter stopped by Joe's Palisades Barber Shop on Antioch on a recent Friday morning, Joe had a customer in the first chair, and sons Tom and Jose Jr. ("JR") and daughter-in-law Lucy were also cutting hair.

"The parade committee made a good choice—finally after all these years," Tom said.

"It's his time, it's his time to shine," JR said, noting that the barbershop is the town's oldest surviving retail business, having been founded in 1940.

"He's the man," said Joe's customer, who was in the chair, when this editor stopped by. "It's a proper honor."

Almaraz was initially hired straight out of barber college by Vince Mangio, who owned three barber shops in town: The current shop, Bob's Barber Shop in the space now occupied by Katie O'Neill's art studio, and New Classics, across from today's Hank's on

Swarthmore.

After graduating from Santa Monica High in 1959, Joe attended the American Barber College in downtown L.A. and joined the Barbers Union. Looking for a job, he heard about an opening in Pacific Palisades.

"I didn't know where that was," Joe said, and when he was driving up Chautauqua for the first time, "I didn't think my car was going to make it. That hill is very steep coming up from PCH."

He made the trip daily to cut hair until 1983, when he bought the business from Mangio. The former owner kept working two days a week in the front-window chair, which was fine by Joe, who noted that "Vince was my mentor."

Alas, about a year later, Vince suffered a fatal heart attack while at his chair working. "There was a cardiologist getting his hair cut at that time," said J.R. "He told us afterwards that Vince 'died before he hit the floor.'"

Almaraz and his wife Nina moved to Pacific Palisades in 1989. They have three children: Jose Jr., Tom and Patricia, a realtor in Westchester. JR started working at the shop in 1984, followed by his wife, Lucy, in 1989, and Tom in 1991. There are six grandkids (Tommy, Cindy, Joseph, Travis, Pricilla, Katy) and one great-grandchild, Joshua.

Over the decades, the Almaraz clan has cut hair for dozens of celebrities, some of them regular customers for years, others who were just passing through or in town visiting a friend. During an interview with *Circling the News*, the barbers cited some of them:

Walter Matthau, Tom Hanks, Sean Penn,



Joe Almaraz, who has been cutting hair in Pacific Palisades since 1962, is this year's Fourth of July parade marshal.

Photo: Sue Pascoe

Rodney Dangerfield (who instructed Joe, "Short—the hair and the conversation"), Charlie Sheen, Christian Bale, Tesla's Elon Musk, astronaut Buzz Aldrin (yes, they gave him a buzz cut), actor Joseph Cotten, James Arness, Charles Bronson, Sal Mineo, James Whitmore, Ron "Tarzan" Ely, Michael Richards (*Seinfeld*), John Goodman, Eddie Albert, Ted Knight, Adam West, Peter Graves, Steve Guttenberg, Martin Short, Mark Harmon, Kurt Russell, Burgess Meredith, Ryan O'Neal, Peter Fonda ("My favorite," says JR/J.R.), John McEnroe, the NBA's Vlade Divac, Vin Scully, author Shelby Foote, Olympian Bob Mathias and Broadway's John Raitt ("Every once in a while he'd hum a little tune," says Tom).

"I remember one day we had Bruce Willis in the front chair and Billy Bob Thornton in another," JR said.

That reminded Joe about the time Dom DeLuise brought Buddy Hackett with him. "When I was finished, Dom said, 'We're going across the street for a quick bite.' They went to the Chinese restaurant and were there for three hours."

Almaraz remembered in 2004, he was ready to close the shop when "A woman called and said, 'Can you take one more?' I told her no," Joe recalled. "But she pleaded, 'Please, please, he's a Presidential candidate—Dennis Kucinich.' I wanted to say, 'Who's he?' but I just said, 'Okay, bring him over.' He was visiting people here in town. We talked as I cut his hair, but I can't remember what we said."

The proprietor enjoys recalling the shop's

famous clients, but he emphasizes, "The most important people are regular people—our loyal customers here in town."

He said that recently a man in his 50s brought a photo of Joe cutting a four-year-old's hair. "That was me," the man told Joe.

Almaraz, who was active in the Palisades Lions Club (before it recently merged with Santa Monica) and the Palisades Chamber of Commerce (before it closed earlier this year), received the 2020 Bob Sage Business Person of the Year Award from the Palisades Rotary Club.

Joe, who is now 80, said he experienced a slight stroke two years ago. "It took me about a month to come back." Then Covid hit and the shop was closed for nine months. Business is now finally starting to recover.

Tom Almaraz said that the Fourth of July is "the best because everything is hunky dory, and everyone is friendly. Everyone says 'hi.'"

This year people are lucky because if they time it right, they can have the parade marshal give them a proper trim/cut before the holiday—and then wave at Almaraz when he goes by in the parade.

While you're in the shop, take a look at the antique on the back wall, a clock that has kept time from 1940.

As everything keeps changing and technology takes over the world, it's nice to know there's a place in town where you can get a good haircut at a reasonable price, while enjoying a pleasant conversation with nice people—at the Palisades Barber Shop.

(Additional reporting by Bill Bruns.)



The Almaraz family (left to right) JR, Lucy, Joe and Tom (with a customer), have helped to make this shop one of the most successful in town.

Photo: Sue Pascoe



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## PARADE THEME WINNER

# “Red, White and Blue in 2022”

By LOLA COFFEY

A regular attendee with his family at the Pacific Palisades Fourth of July Parade, John Abruscato is now also the winner of this year's parade theme contest with his entry: “Red, White and Blue in 2022.”

“My wife Laura, a daily reader of *Circling the News*, shared with me that the parade committee was looking for a theme. I quickly came up with ‘Red, White and Blue in 2022’ which I thought had a nice rhyme to it.”

John learned about the annual parade through Laura, a writer for various Palisades publications. “I look forward to it every year,” he says, noting that his favorites include Pasadena Scottish Pipes and Drums and the horses.

“I enjoy seeing the old, well-maintained cars and who is riding in them, particularly local politicians,” says John, who himself drives a near-classic 1985 Toyota Celica Supra with the original engine and interior and 148,000 miles.

Other favorites are local entrants like the Patriotic Pups, Palisades Charter High

School football players and PPBA baseball players throwing out candy, says John, who was a Little League utility player growing up in Elmont, New York and the San Fernando Valley.

“I think the parade is very patriotic and I like seeing how it's well-attended,” says John, a West L.A. resident. “We are always running late to the parade looking for parking. One of these years I hope to arrive early enough to see the skydivers jump from the plane and land on Sunset.”

John grew up in Queens and Long Island until age 8. At that time, his father, a sales executive for Columbia Pictures Television, was transferred to Los Angeles and the family settled in Tarzana. He graduated from Taft High School and Cal State University Northridge.

His earliest memory of the Fourth of July was when his father lit and allowed him to hold a sparkler. Fourth of July growing up included barbecues with friends and watching fireworks in the Valley.

John, a personnel analyst for the City of L.A., works with the Operations and Maintenance division of 1,000-plus employees at Los Angeles World Airports.



Parade theme winner John Abruscato and family.

Photo: Lesly Hall Photography

He and Laura have two children. Jared will be a senior at PaliHi and is a member of their Western League-winning track team. Lily will be a seventh grader at The Archer School for Girls where she participates in the dance program. In 2018, Lily rode her decorated bike with Kids on Bikes and she marched in 2019 along with members of Troop 6445 and other local Girl Scout troops.

Since both their children attended Palisades Elementary School over a span of 11 years, and Jared attended Paul Revere Middle School, the family always enjoys seeing friends and classmates along the parade route and marching in the parade.

The Abruscatos have also been regulars at the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade when visiting family in New York City. “We take the subway or a taxi to 72nd and Central Park West to get as close as we can to the parade,” John says. Bystanders are allowed to stand about 250 feet away from the parade. “With the balloons being so high, we can see them without obstruction, but to see the floats go by we might have to hop on scaffolding by the Dakota building. I put the kids on my shoulders when they were younger,” he recalls.

“With the Palisades parade you're so much closer and it's exciting to see the costumes and faces of the participants.”

The family also enjoys watching fireworks around the Westside. “We used to live on the third floor so could see several sets of L.A. fireworks from the western-facing balcony, then would run to the other side to watch fireworks in other parts of the city from the eastern-facing balcony.”

John's favorite parade viewing spot is somewhere in the shade, either with friends along the parade route or near the corner of Via de la Paz and Antioch. “I enjoy the announcing by the emcees there, Sue Pascoe and Manfred Hofer. They do a very good job.”

This year the family plans to arrive early, and as parade theme winner, John and his family get to sit in the VIP bleachers in front of Ralphs. “I'm looking forward to a comfortable, unobstructed view when watching the parade,” he says.

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Isabella Violani Toppel (age 3) celebrates her Palisadian heritage.

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# National SAL Commander Loves a Parade

By LAUREL BUSBY

The American Legion is so entwined with Michael Fox's life that he can't remember a time when he wasn't celebrating with his local post on the holidays, cheering on baseball teams at their yearly tournament, or reminiscing with veterans.

"It was just part of our lives," he said of his childhood in Sacramento County. "Every holiday we were always at the Post."

Easter meant an egg hunt and brunch at his Rio Linda American Legion Post, Haggin Grant Squadron 521. Christmas was dinner and Santa Claus, while other visits included horseshoes or competitions at the pool table. Summer vacation entailed a trip to the veterans' home at Yountville where he and his family both visited with veterans and watched two weeks of baseball games.

Fox, 42, who became a member of the Sons of the American Legion on the day he was born, earned his first elected position as sergeant-at-arms when he was six years old. Now, he's the national commander of the Sons of the American Legion and will be representing the country's largest veteran advocacy organization at the Pacific Palisades Fourth of July Parade.

His father, Ned, and grandfather, Ed, a World War II veteran, started these family traditions, and Fox has continued them with his four daughters, ages 13 to 22, he said. Connecting with veterans has been impactful

for the whole family and has given them insights into the stresses that can be part of military service.

For example, during World War II, his grandfather, a member of the Army Air Corps, was the personal pilot to Gen. Douglas MacArthur.

"He was with General MacArthur when his troops came back from North Africa," Fox said and that event changed him. "That's when my grandfather left the service. He said, 'Those men were not men anymore,' and that scared him." His grandfather didn't like to delve into that memory too deeply. "He started to talk one time about the women and children, then broke down. He said, 'The soldiers had to do things that shouldn't be done.'"

But even after Fox's grandfather left the service, he continued to work as a civilian on military projects, such as setting up radar towers at airfields. He also remained connected to fellow veterans, and his family has endeavored to do the same.

Fox, a mechanic for 22 years, stepped into his role as national commander of the Sons of the American Legion (SAL), an adjunct organization to the American Legion, last September, and since then, he has traveled almost every weekend to accommodate requests from various states for his presence. He visited Indianapolis for the Indy 500, which features a Legion-sponsored car. In June, he traveled between France, Belgium,



Michael Fox

and Germany to participate in Legion events, including the official D-Day ceremony, wreath-laying at Normandy, and a visit to NATO headquarters.

"It has been a lot more work than I could have ever dreamed of," said Fox of the one-year commitment. "There are 46 different destinations that I'll end up hitting over the year. I could end up traveling more than any other national commander."

As his command year project, Fox established a goal of connecting with the broader community through placing one million flags on veterans' graves. This effort included

not only state and federal cemeteries, but also "local mom and pop cemeteries that are tucked back in neighborhoods."

The choice had a special significance to him.

"With the pandemic and everything that happened with buildings being closed, I wanted to set a goal to be active and get into the community, which the American Legion was so dominant with in the '60s, '70s, '80s," Fox said. "I feel the younger generation doesn't understand the sacrifices made to give us our rights and freedoms, so this work will help people realize that freedom is not free."

The endeavor has been a success. Before Memorial Day weekend, more than 215,000 flags had been placed at gravesites, but by that Sunday afternoon, the figure had climbed to over 680,000, and on Memorial Day, the SAL, which has more than 345,000 members, had exceeded his goal of one million flags placed.

This effort was only one of the efforts of the SAL this year. For example, fundraising for child welfare and other causes is also essential to their mission.

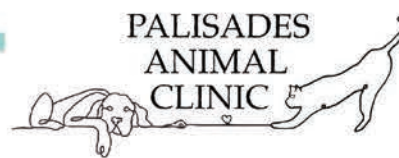
"The American Legion has hundreds of different programs across the country," Fox said. "It's based on the community and what the community's needs are and what they like to do." He continued, "I could talk forever about the Legion. I've been involved with this organization my whole life. It's a passion of mine. It's a way of life."



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# Patriotic Pups to Walk in Parade

You and your dog can be a “star”—at least in the eyes of Palisades residents. One of the most oohed and aahed entries in the annual Fourth of July Parade is the Patriotic Pups brigade.

If you have a dog that gets along with other dogs and doesn't panic when it sees a horse, then consider marching with the Pups along the route, which starts on Via, turns on Sunset and goes to Drummond before ending on Toyopa.

For the past 28 years, between 70 and 100 dogs trot along the parade route with their owners, wowing the crowd with their resolute cuteness.

Patriotic Pups was the brainchild of Margaret Haaker, who moved to the Palisades in 1995. “My sister [Margaret] started the pups marching,” Marilyn Haaker said. “She had lived in northern California and noticed that a Memorial Day parade had a dog entry.”

Margaret and her eight-year-old daughter, Grey, approached the parade committee about a dog entry. “The idea didn't go over very well,” Marilyn Haaker said. “My sister was told that the dogs would bite people and there was no one to sponsor it.”

Undeterred, Margaret took full responsibility, and her dog, Bijou, and Marilyn's dog, Timothy, were among the initial parade walkers. Paws N' Claws Grooming Salon (on Marquez Avenue) came on as parade sponsor in 2001—and continues to sponsor the entry.

“Every year, the pups continue to be one of the most popular entries,” said Marilyn, who took over the organizational responsibilities in 2004.

Margaret passed away on May 2, and although Marilyn is no longer a Palisades resident, she is organizing the Pups in Margaret's memory.

“I love seeing all the happy dogs and people,” she said.

Her two dogs, Edgar, a Bichon Frise, and Murphy, described as furry and cute, will be



Above: Dogs and owners alike were patriotically attired for the 2021 Palisades parade. Left: A pug waits in the shade for the start of the parade.

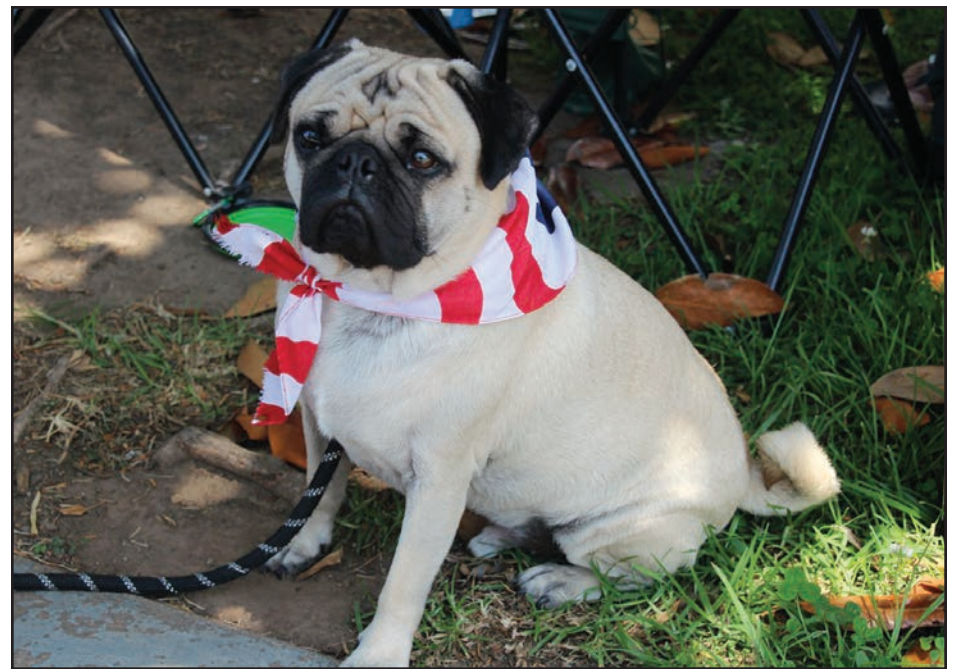
Photos: Joanne Reich

“marching” this year. If a dog can't walk the route, its owner is invited to let him ride in a wagon or stroller. “One of my dogs sometimes rides in a wagon,” Marilyn said.

All potential marchers should call Marilyn at (310) 962-5830 and leave their name, telephone number and the pup's name.

Shortly before the parade begins at 2 p.m., owners and canines meet under the trees at Palisades Elementary, corner of Via de la Paz (Paz) and Bowdoin. Owners should bring water for their pets.

Marilyn said that every year is about the same. “It's a bit chaotic in the beginning and then it's just dogs walking along with their owners,” she said. “We've never had a problem. The dogs all cooperate.”



## Fireworks Tickets

Scanning this QR code will allow you to purchase tickets for Palisades July 4th Fireworks at the Palisades High School Stadium. Tickets are limited and none will be sold at the gate.



## Banner Carriers Essential to Parade

The Palisades High School football team annually participate in the Palisades Fourth of July Parade. Last year the team only lost one game to San Pedro in the City Section Open Division semifinals.

Photo: Morgan Genser







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## On the Cover

One of the most talented artists in Pacific Palisades is Katie O'Neill, who grew up here. Her paintings capture the local beauty of the ocean, the Santa Monica Mountains and the local community. This is her fourth year creating a cover for the Palisades Americanism Parade Association program.

Katie taught art in Malibu for 15 years, before returning to the Palisades in 2011. She has a studio at 15330 Antioch St., where she paints and offers art lessons. Visit: [oneillsfineart.com](http://oneillsfineart.com) or call: (310) 459-1039 or email: [katie@oneillsfineart.com](mailto:katie@oneillsfineart.com).

# Champs to Ride in Parade

Youth baseball players who win the local World Series will ride in the Palisades 4th of July parade.

The Pacific Palisades Baseball Association (PPBA) season starts with tryouts in January and a community pancake breakfast in March. For the next two and half months the teams play at least two games a week.

The Rockies were added as a PPBA franchise in the Pinto and Mustang divisions when the league expanded in 2021. To accommodate players, a Shetland division was added for younger kids, and there were four Pony teams this year.

This year in the parade look for:

In the SHETLAND division, under Coach Tyler Atwood, the Dodgers prevailed over the Red Sox 21-14. This division featured mostly six-year-olds.

The Tiger PINTOS (ages 7-8), under coach Sara Prokop, beat the Royals 9-8 to take that World Series title.

The Rockies MUSTANGS (ages 9-10), under Ollie Dunn, beat the top-seeded Cubs.

In the BRONCO division (ages 11-12), it was also a Tiger win for that top-seeded team coached by Matt Badt. The Tigers beat the Cubs 4-2.

In the PONY division (ages 13-14), the Pali Black team lost 10-1 in the final to Pali Red.



*The Rockies Mustangs won the World Series*

Photo courtesy Circling the News

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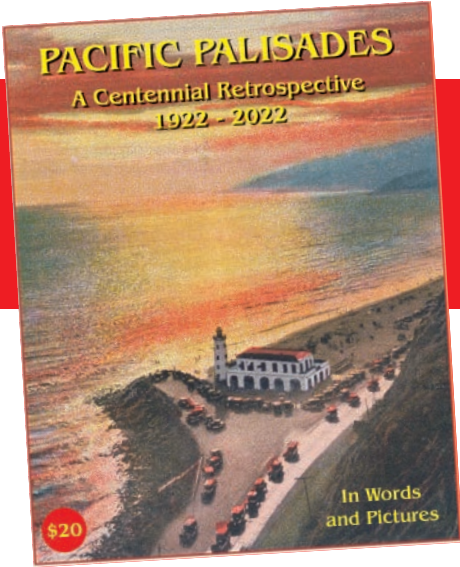
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# Natalie McAdams Helps PAPA Plan Evening

By SUE PASCOE

It is not easy throwing a Fourth of July party that involves music, food and fireworks—for several thousand people.

About a decade ago, the Palisades Americanism Parade Association, a group of volunteers that includes lawyers, architects and businessmen, realized it needed help planning one of the biggest after-parade parties of the year, the fireworks show at Palisades High School.

What PAPA needed was an event planner.

Meet Natalie McAdams of Namevents. “This will be my ninth year with PAPA, including some missing pandemic years,” said McAdams, a professional party planner who works major events. She just finished Heal the Bay’s June gala.

“I think both the fun and the challenge of PAPA is that it is so grassroots,” McAdams said. “We really rely a lot on volunteers, and we are really budget conscious and thrifty.”

“But for me what makes it worthwhile is the great people that I work with,” she said. “Our kids have grown up over the years. My daughter was four when I did my first PAPA event and now, she’s 13. This is the first year that she is going to come and work alongside me.”

McAdams grew up in Houston and went to college and law school in Austin at the



*Natalie McAdams helps PAPA with the concert, fireworks and food trucks for the 4th of July evening program.*

University of Texas.

After moving to La Jolla and practicing law for two years, she realized she wanted something different. “I moved to Aspen where I skied and did a number of jobs.”

One of her jobs was co-producing “24 Hours of Aspen,” which was the world championship of endurance skiing. She was asked to co-produce the event the following

year and “I realized I had found my calling.”

McAdams met a woman who worked for Major League Baseball and was soon connected to the L.A.-based production company, Party Planners West, Inc., which was responsible for special MLB events.

She moved to Los Angeles to work for the company, and eventually became a vice president.

Twenty years ago, McAdams decided to open her own company, Namevents (an acronym for her name, Natalie Ann McAdams).

“I do large fundraisers like Heal the Bay, which was held at the Jonathan Club for 600

guests, and PS One Pluralistic School’s 50th Anniversary Gala, which was held in April at the Skirball,” McAdams said. “Both raised nearly \$1 million for their respective causes.”

Another client is City of Hope. “I have two events for them, one in August and one in October. The latter is a seated dinner for 1,200 with headline entertainment.

“This City of Hope dinner is my favorite event of the year because it always has so many moving parts and great headline talent,” McAdams said. “It was also one of the first big events that I did on my own, so it holds a special place in my heart.”

Although she plans large for-profit events and galas, McAdams works with a minimal budget on PAPA’s behalf.

“Since we’re so active in the nonprofit area, we are cleverly creative,” she said. “It’s true that I might make more money doing other things, but PAPA has heart and soul and for me that’s important.”

“My mom taught me the value of giving back and helping the less fortunate as I was growing up,” McAdams said. “She did not work but she was always volunteering and often brought us kids along with her.”

The lesson McAdams learned early: “It feels good to do good.” It’s a lesson that she is imparting to her daughter. They volunteer for the Giving Spirit, which does outreach for the homeless.

Additionally, “I like the special challenge of making something impactful within a budget,” McAdams said. “I’m very happy that we are going to have this event with food trucks, music and fireworks this year.”



*This family enjoyed time together on the Palisades High School football field prior to the fireworks.*

Photo: Joy Daunis

## Sail into the Night

After the parade, there will be food trucks available in the Palisades High School Stadium parking lot that will include Cousins Maine Lobster, Baby’s Bad Ass Burgers, Recess Truck, The Lime Truck, The Vietnam Truck and Plant Lab. Palisades Gift Shop, a new vendor, will be near the food trucks. There is no picnicking on the field. The gates to the stadium will open at 6 p.m.

In 2008, a concert, Palisades Rocks the

4th, was added before the fireworks to showcase local bands and musicians. It grew to 300 minutes of live music on two stages, drawing an audience of 6,500. With Covid, the concert was put on hold. This year there will be a live DJ, Lee Dyson of Hey Mister DJ.

Keith Turner, concert co-creator, is looking to try to bring Palisades Rocks the 4th to its original mission. Contact Keith with ideas: [drum2law@me.com](mailto:drum2law@me.com).



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# Patriotic Home Decorating Contest

By ALISON BURMEISTER

The Home Decorating Contest, in conjunction with the Palisades Americanism Parade Association (PAPA), helps celebrate the unique nature of Pacific Palisades every Fourth of July.

Like a scene out of *Mayberry RFD*, residents are encouraged to commemorate our “small town” community in a big way!

Family, friends and neighbors are asked to decorate houses and front yards with home-spun creations, American flags and all things red, white and blue, for the contest, sponsored by Sotheby's real estate agent, Susan Montgomery.

“It's all about getting into the spirit!” said Montgomery, who has co-hosted the contest for the past five years. This will mark the 11th year of the PAPA Patriotic Home Decorating Contest.

“It's such a great day for Pacific Palisades, the perfect blend of community and patriotism,” Montgomery said. “That is why we do it.”

“The contest is a heartwarming community and family event centered around our wonderful neighborhoods,” said Montgomery, who raised twin girls in her home in the Huntington Palisades.

Little did Montgomery know, as she watched the parade out the window of her home with her young, wide-eyed twin girls, that years later she would play a big role in the tradition of the day. Now grown, her daughters live on their own in New York City and Colorado Springs.

“When I moved from Brentwood to the Palisades in the late '90s, I had no idea that I would end up in a community that felt a world away from Los Angeles. It almost has a cult following,” Montgomery said of the Palisades' Fourth of July.

People come from all over to participate in the morning 5/10K race, to see the parade and then the fireworks at night. In 2019, Actor Jeff Goldblum hosted a documentary, *The World According to Jeff Goldblum*, featuring Firehouse



Eugene Levy, Lulu and Cindy Simon, Joan Sather and Susan Montgomery in front of the Simons' winning entry.

Photo: Morgan Genser

69, on Carey, serving hotdogs on the 4th.

Montgomery began her real estate career with Coldwell Banker in the late '90s, about the time she moved to the Palisades. “My first year in real estate I was ‘Rookie of the Year’ and I never looked back.”

In 2018, Montgomery was named one of the Top 10 Realtors in Southern California for Sotheby's and the top half-percent nationwide. “The market has changed dramatically in the past 20 years, but helping clients find a place to call home has been a passion of mine for as long as I can remember,” she said.

That same year, she joined Joan Sather, the founding home decorating sponsor and fellow Sotheby's real estate agent, as a contest co-sponsor.

Montgomery loves how hosting the contest allows her to watch families and neighbors come together and see their family dynamic transition over the years. She re-

members one super competitive family that entered the contest three years in a row before finally winning.

“The year they finally won they also welcomed a new baby to the family,” she said. “It was so special to see them come out of the house excited to win and with a new baby in their arms.”

“The most fun is the day we decorate the golf cart and drive around with the honorary mayor to take photos,” Montgomery said.

Last year Sather and Montgomery were joined by the comic actor, Eugene Levy. “We had a blast. People loved him,” Montgomery said. “He was talking to all the kids and embracing peoples' pets. Contestants were excited to take photos with Levy in front of their decorated homes.”

Sather always wore a big red, white and blue scarf on judging day, which Montgomery plans to wear this year in Joan's memory.

Sather lost her battle with cancer this past year, but Montgomery promises to carry on the tradition. “There will be a void without Joan by my side, but I plan to keep on doing the contest in her honor, because that is what Joan would want,” she said.

“Organizing the parade is no small feat,” Montgomery noted, giving a grateful thanks to the many volunteers who make it work. “There is a lot that goes into getting the 4th of July in Pacific Palisades off the ground. From permits and fireworks to food trucks and skydivers.

“But at the heart of it all is the community that celebrates the best small town in America on the Fourth of July,” Montgomery said, urging everyone to enlist kids, neighbors and grandparents and start decorating. “Help make this Fourth of July Home Decorating Contest the best one yet.”

## Home Decorating Entries Sought

No matter where you live—Castellammare, the Highlands, El Medio Bluffs, Alphabet Streets, Huntington, the Riviera, Rustic Canyon, a mobile home park, an apartment building, a condominium—everyone in the 90272 zip code area is eligible and encouraged to enter.

This year, awards will be given to the Most Patriotic Home, the Runner-Up Most Patriotic Home, and new this year, will be the Joan Sather Memorial Sponsor's Award, given to the home that employs the most outstanding use of homemade decorative elements.

Entries must be submitted no later than 5 p.m. on July 2. Preliminary judging will be conducted upon submitted photos. Final judging will be conducted in person, and awards presented by local celebrities on the afternoon of July 3.



In 2021, Home Decorating first place went to Vicki and Jim Mercer (back row center), who are flanked by Susan Montgomery (left) and Joan Sather. Holding the banner are Eugene Levy and PAPA President Matt Rodman (right).

Photo: Morgan Genser



### Program Publisher

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# Remembering Joan Sather, Stalwart PAPA Supporter

Always active in Pacific Palisades, Joan Sather sponsored the Fourth of July Home Decorating Contest from 2010 onward.

She told *Circling the News* last year, "When I attended my first PAPA (Palisades Americanism Parade Association) meeting 11 years ago, I had no idea I would enjoy it so much and be so involved for so long."

Sather, a beloved longtime resident and a popular realtor with Sotheby's, passed away on March 13, after bravely battling ovarian cancer.

Her husband Kent suggested to her many friends that all donations in her memory be made to PAPA (Palisades4th.com).

"We both were always concerned how everyone thinks the parade just happens," Kent said. "Donating lets people know that all of us contribute time and money to make the day happen."

Annually, the community-minded PAPA volunteers must raise well over \$100,000 in order to provide the skydivers, the parade, the bands and the fireworks, plus numerous fixed costs such as insurance and city services.

Kent said, "Joan would get excited when the bands started practicing on Pampas Ricas every Saturday as a warmup to the 'Big Event' (July 4th)."

In an earlier interview, Sather said that her

favorite part of the home decorating contest was visiting the houses for the final judging on July 3. During these visits she was joined by various honorary mayors, who over the years included Jake Seinfeld, Kevin Nealon, Janet and Billy Crystal and Eugene Levy.

Sather said, "All of the judges are terrific and very funny!"

Kent remembers that Joan loved how entire families would join in decorating their homes. "She appreciated homes that showed the family's input and had 'Home-spun' décor."

The daughter of a Naval officer, Joan lived all over the United States, including Hawaii, Maryland, Rhode Island and San Diego. She also lived overseas in France for three years where she became fluent in French. She attended five elementary schools, two middle schools, two high schools and Sweet Briar College before graduating from UC Berkeley.

She met Kent in San Francisco and they eventually moved to Pacific Palisades. When he was offered a job in Arizona, Joan said simply, "I don't want to leave."

And they didn't, eventually moving to a home in the Huntington Palisades, where Joan would one day serve as president of the homeowner's association.

When her two kids were older, Joan earned an MBA at Loyola Marymount at



Susan Montgomery, Eugene Levy and Joan Sather take a break from judging homes in the 2021 competition.

Photo: Morgan Genser

night, and became a realtor with Jon Douglas in his Palisades office in 1988.

Susan Montgomery, Joan's associate at Sotheby's, said, "Always up for a challenge, Joan volunteered for many local events, including spearheading our annual Home Decorating Contest. I was thrilled to partner with her for this festive occasion for several years."

"The PAPA committee and I will feel her absence in perpetuity and will honor her

contributions going forward," Montgomery said. "She was such a bright spark in this world and touched the lives of so many."

Kent added that "Joan always wanted to get the awards out as soon as possible. She loved giving people awards."

In addition to her husband Kent, Joan is survived by her children, Kelly and Peter, and six grandchildren. Donations in Joan's name can be made to PAPA.

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## President's Message

It's Red, White and Blue in 2022! The Pacific Palisades 4th of July Parade returns for its 74th year, along with our annual Independence Day Fireworks celebration, thanks to the non-profit Palisades Americanism Parade Association (PAPA).

The Parade was founded 75 years ago by Pacific Palisades residents and our own American Legion Ronald Reagan Palisades Post 283 to celebrate the independence of our country each July 4.

Last year PAPA hosted the return of the 4th of July Parade and Fireworks with a smaller footprint, which was incredibly well received.

We welcomed our long-time neighbors and new arrivals to enjoy the hometown festivities. Now we're back in 2022 to do it again—a bit bigger and better!

With the Pandemic waning, the community immunized, and a sense of normalcy wafting in the air, we're going to have an incredible day for the community.

Once again, the Palisades Will Rogers 5K/10K Run will be in the morning, our Parade in the afternoon, then Music and Fireworks in the evening at Palisades High. Information about all the day's events can be found at [www.Palisades4th.com](http://www.Palisades4th.com).

A special thank you to one of the hardest working people in our community, Board Treasurer Daphne Gronich, for working with me to make our July 4th celebration a reality. Executive Board members Kevin Niles, Rich Wilken, Keith Turner, Ramis Sadrieh and advisors Rob Weber and Andy Frew are also indispensable in bringing you this great day.

Our July 4 events can't happen without our neighbor-volunteers who come out to help, and who are the real stars of the day.

Our celebrations continue every year because of the incredibly hard work and countless hours of the volunteers who show up every July 4th. If you'd like to help and be part of the fun, please join us by volunteering, and maybe even consider taking on a



Matthew Rodman, the Palisades Americanism Parade Association president, and his wife, Rene, at the 2019 parade.

Photo: Craig Weston

greater role in future years.

This is a true community day, the best day in the Palisades, and you can be involved. Just email us, if you're interested, or sign up to be on our mailing list!

There's only one Official July 4th Program and it features great stories, memories and information written and produced by our all-star team of returning professionals, including Sue Pascoe, Bill Bruns, Manfred Hofer, Laurel Busby, Laura Abruscato, Alison Burmeister and Jeff Ridgway.

The cover artwork is by our resident painter, Katie O'Neill. The revenue from the program helps pay for the celebrations, so

please support our advertisers.

Finally, and most incredibly, the American Legion Ronald Reagan Palisades Post 283 continues to generously support the Parade, just as they've done since 1948. We simply could not do this without the Legion, other community groups and individual donors.

If you would like to support the July 4th events, please visit [Palisades4th.com](http://Palisades4th.com) for details or donate via Zelle or Paypal to [palisadesparade@gmail.com](mailto:palisadesparade@gmail.com).

So, it's Red, White and Blue in 2022! Enjoy the day!

—Matthew Rodman,  
PAPA President

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Photographer Morgan Genser captured this spectacular shot at the Palisades 4th of July fireworks show.

Photo: Morgan Genser

# Colorful Explosions Are Back!

One of the more spectacular fireworks show on the Westside of Los Angeles is the Pyro Spectaculars by Souza display at the Palisades High School Stadium.

Gates open at 6 p.m. and attendance is limited. Advance purchase tickets are required. There will be no ticket sales at the gates. The 20-minute show will begin at 9 p.m. and the colorful display will include 1,000 three and two-and half inch shells.

"I love painting in fireworks," said Chris Souza, who designed the Palisades show. "By using computer simulation, I've been able to fine-tune the show so that every burst falls just where I want it to.

"This year's show has so many moving moments," he said. "I found myself being inspired scene after scene. The colors and effects will be incredible."

Pyro Spectaculars, headquartered in Rialto, California, is recognized as America's premiere pyrotechnic production company and stages more than 400 shows on the 4th, including the Macy's Extravaganza in New York City.

The Souza fireworks is a family business that was started in the early 1900s, by Manuel de Sousa (the family name was later

Americanized to Souza) and quickly garnered a reputation for creating fireworks displays for local Portuguese.

But it, like many businesses, was hit hard by the Covid-19 shutdowns. In March 2020, more than 300 scheduled July 4th events were cut to less than 20, and the company had to furlough 38 of its 50 full-time employees.

With the pandemic public events restrictions in place, the 115-year-old business almost folded.

CEO of Pyro Spectacular Jim Souza told The San Bernardino Sun in a June 2021 story ("God Bless American! We're Back") that the pandemic put the company in millions of dollars of debt.

Pyro which also has plants in Oakland, Sacramento, San Diego, Fresno and Rocklin, worked with banks and landlords to restructure the company's debt. It received two rounds of federal aid under the Payroll Protection Program, which helped this premium company stay afloat.

"It may take a few seasons to get back to what normal would be," Souza said. "We've never seen anything like this and could never have predicted a pandemic. It's just amazing what happened, and very devastating."



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## IN CONGRESS, JULY 4, 1776.

## The unanimous Declaration of the thirteen united States of America,

When in the Course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation. — We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. — That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed, — That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness. Prudence, indeed, will dictate that Governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and accordingly all experience hath shewn, that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed. But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same Object evinces a design to reduce them under absolute Despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such Government, and to provide new Guards for their future security. — Such has been the patient sufferance of these Colonies; and such is now the necessity which constrains them to alter their former Systems of Government. The history of the present King of Great Britain is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations, all having in direct object the establishment of an absolute Tyranny over these States. To prove this, let Facts be submitted to a candid world. — He has refused his Assent to Laws, the most wholesome and necessary for the public good. — He has forbidden his Governors to pass Laws of immediate and pressing importance, unless suspended in their operation till his Assent should be obtained; and when so suspended, he has utterly neglected to attend to them. — He has refused to pass other Laws for the accommodation of large districts of people, unless those people would relinquish the right of Representation in the Legislature, a right inestimable to them and formidable to tyrants only. — He has called together legislative bodies at places unusual, uncomfortable, and distant from the depository of their Public Records, for the sole purpose of fatiguing them into compliance with his measures. — He has dissolved Representative Houses repeatedly, for opposing with manly firmness his invasions on the rights of the people. — He has refused for a long time, after such dissolutions, to cause others to be elected; whereby the Legislative powers, incapable of Annihilation, have returned to the People at large for their exercise; the State remaining in the mean time exposed to all the dangers of invasion from without, and convulsions within. — He has endeavoured to prevent the population of these States; for that purpose obstructing the Laws for Naturalization of Strangers; refusing to pass others to encourage their migrations hither, and raising the conditions of new Appropriations of Lands. — He has obstructed the Administration of Justice, by refusing his Assent to Laws for establishing Judiciary powers. — He has made Judges dependent on his Will alone, for the tenure of their offices, and the amount and payment of their salaries. — He has erected a multitude of New Offices, and sent hither swarms of Officers to harass our people, and eat out their substance. — He has kept among us, in times of peace, Standing Armies without the Consent of our legislatures. — He has affected to render the Military independent of and superior to the Civil power. — He has combined with others to subject us to a jurisdiction foreign to our constitution, and unacknowledged by our laws; giving his Assent to their Acts of pretended Legislation: — For quartering large bodies of armed troops among us: — For protecting them, by a mock Trial, from punishment for any Murders which they should commit on the Inhabitants of these States: — For calling off our Trade with all parts of the world: — For imposing Taxes on us without our Consent: — For depriving us in many cases, of the benefits of Trial by jury: — For transporting us beyond Seas to be tried for pretended offences: — For abolishing the free System of English Laws in a neighbouring Province, establishing therein an Arbitrary government, and enlarging its Boundaries so as to render it at once an example and fit instrument for introducing the same absolute rule into these Colonies: — For taking away our Charters, abolishing our most valuable Laws, and altering fundamentally the Forms of our Governments: — For suspending our own Legislatures, and declaring themselves invested with power to legislate for us in all cases whatsoever. — He has abdicated Government here, by declaring us out of his Protection and waging War against us. — He has plundered our seas, ravaged our coasts, burnt our towns, and destroyed the lives of our people. — He is at this time transporting large Armies of foreign Mercenaries to complete the works of death, desolation and tyranny, already begun with circumstances of Cruelty & perfidy scarcely paralleled in the most barbarous ages, and totally unworthy the Head of a civilized nation. — He has constrained our fellow Citizens taken Captive on the high Seas to bear Arms against their Country, to become the executioners of their friends and Brethren, or to fall themselves by their Hands. — He has excited domestic insurrections amongst us, and has endeavoured to bring on the inhabitants of our frontiers, the merciless Indian Savages, whose known rule of warfare, is an undistinguished destruction of all ages, sexes and conditions. In every stage of these Oppressions We have Petitioned for Redress in the most humble terms: Our repeated Petitions have been answered by repeated injury. A Prince, whose character is thus marked by every act which may define a Tyrant, is unfit to be the ruler of a free people. Nor have We been wanting in attentions to our British brethren. We have warned them from time to time of attempts by their legislature to extend an unwarrantable jurisdiction over us. We have reminded them of the circumstances of our emigration and settlement here. We have appealed to their native justice and magnanimity, and we have conjured them by the ties of our common kindred to disavow these usurpations, which, would inevitably interrupt our connections and correspondence. They too have been deaf to the voice of justice and of consanguinity. We must, therefore, acquiesce in the necessity, which denounces our separation, and hold them, as we hold the rest of mankind, Enemies in War, in Peace Friends. — We, therefore, the Representatives of the united States of America, in General Congress, Assembled, appealing to the Supreme Judge of the world for the rectitude of our intentions, do, in the Name, and by authority of the good People of these Colonies, solemnly publish and declare, That these United Colonies are, and of Right ought to be, Free and Independent States; that they are Absolved from all Allegiance to the British Crown, and that all political connection between them and the State of Great Britain, is and ought to be totally dissolved; and that as Free and Independent States, they have full Power to levy War, conclude Peace, contract Alliances, establish Commerce, and to do all other Acts and Things which Independent States may of right do. — And for the support of this Declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes and our sacred Honor.

Wm. Hooper  
Joseph Hewes,  
John Penn  
Barton Grinnith  
Lyman Hall  
Geo. Walton.

John Hancock  
Samuel Adams  
Wm. Paro  
Hos. Nane  
Charles Carroll of Carroll Co.

Edward Rutledge Jr.

Thos. Mifflin  
Thomas Lynch Junr.  
Arthur Middleton

George Wythe  
Richard Henry Lee  
Th. Jefferson  
Wm. Harrison  
Th. Nelson Jr.  
Francis Lightfoot Lee  
Carleton Braxton

John Hancock  
John Morton  
Geo. Taylor  
James Wilson  
Wm. Hoop  
Casar Rodney  
Wm. Hoop  
Thos. Mifflin

John Hancock  
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