

Parade

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Caroline Wallach, Olivia Berns and Mia Turturici enjoyed last year's parade festivities.

"One day, Alice found a Point Dume guy who came out to the street and just started reciting the Gettysburg Address on July 4," Grahek said. "So we decided to do something special to commemorate the day."

To the initial puzzlement of many, Grahek had already expressed his patriotism by assembling a giant, red-white-and-blue flag made of Christmas lights and PVC pipe on his tennis court and mounting it in some trees on his property. An old-fashioned parade seemed to be the natural next step.

Grahek hauled out his bulldozer to lead the parade, Carpenter made up some flyers and sought city permits ("I didn't even know you needed permits," Grahek said sheepishly) and the First Annual Fourth of July Point Dume Parade proceeded at a stately pace down Birdview Avenue, Cliffside Drive and Fernhill Drive. Carpenter rode a neighbor's horse and a couple of vintage cars showed up to toot their horns down the parade route. Elderly magician Phil Foxwell performed magic tricks for a handful of locals in the parking lot at the end of the parade.

"It cost us \$500 that first year for a permit, insurance and to hire the Sheriff's deputies as security," Carpenter said. "And the cost really hasn't gone up that much. Since the second year, the deputies do it for us gratis."

By the second year, the parade participants — and the cheer-

ing audience — had doubled, so Grahek thought it might be time to enhance the ceremonial offerings. He installed a barbecue grill and sound system on a flatbed truck. The parade concluded in the parking lot at the Point Dume Marine Science Elementary School, where folks grilled hot dogs and enjoyed a picnic.

By the third year, the parade had expanded even more, and organizers thought it was time to offer competitive prizes for the most patriotic presentation.

"We designed these big ribbons like the kind they give out at horseback riding competitions," Grahek said. "Over the past 12 years, we've given out hundreds of them and people really fight for the blue ribbon. But everyone who participates gets an honorable mention."

Anyone can enter the parade and contestants are judged by age category and most fervent adherence to expression of Stars and Stripes. Apparently, the most heated competition lies with those who are over 64 years and under six years. Over the years, Grahek and Carpenter have seen any number of two-legged, four-legged and wheeled participants, including horses, dogs, pigs, goats, bicycles, tricycles, motorcycles, skateboards, strollers and vintage cars approaching their centenary.

"Our judges look for the most patriotic, of course," Grahek said. "But they also look for originality

and uniqueness."

This year, judges include Malibu residents Wailani O'Herlihy, Dick Joy and Bill Swarthout.

Carpenter is no stranger to parades. She comes from a military family (both parents served during World War II, in the Air Force and Navy), she played the clarinet and oboe in her junior high and high school marching bands, and she rode in her first parade on horseback in Homer, Alaska, many years ago.

Over the years, Grahek and Carpenter enlisted most Point Dume residents to help out in putting out flyers and recruiting participants. Carpenter said flatly that the parade wouldn't happen without the "tons of volunteers" who help shepherd the event.

This year, participants will line up at 9:30 at Birdview Avenue and Sweetwater Mesa Road, and the parade starts promptly at 10 a.m. As a reminder that the parade symbolizes the birth of America, Grahek has insured that four World War II veterans — all female — will lead the parade off, who will ride in a 1930s Pierce Arrow touring car.

A few years ago, City Councilmember Laura Rosenthal approached Carpenter about making it a citywide parade, but Carpenter demurred.

"This is a very home grown event," Carpenter said. "My heart is really into the small town thing."



Vinny Muselli and his horse, Rascal, helped lead the 2013 Fourth of July Parade in Point Dume.



The annual parade also honors veterans who live in the Malibu community.

Photos by Julie Ellerton / TMT

Equestrian life

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added Trancas Riders & Ropers (TRR) President Shari Bernath-Latta. "There are only a few sports you can do your entire life. You can swim, you can play golf, you can play tennis and [you can] ride horses."

For residents today, it's hard to imagine a time they could only rely on horses to get from point A to point B.

But horses have been an integral part of Malibu dating back to the time the area was called Humaliwo by the Chumash Indians.

"[Back then, you] could pretty much ride a horse anywhere... [There were] true ropers, people who were cowboys," said Rod Bergen, TRR president from 2004 to 2009.

"Horses were here long before the majority of people," said Gina McCloskey, owner of local barn Rancho Sea Air.

Dating back to the early 1900s, horses were the backbone in transporting people from the East Coast out to the West Coast. And in the 1950s, cowboys and ropers flocked to TRR, one of the oldest clubs in Malibu.

Founded in 1952 by the Decker family and located on Merritt Drive (around the corner from Malibu High School), TRR continues to be a watering hole for horse-lovers. Riders come from throughout Southern California to use the TRR facilities, especially for trail riding.

"[We get] riders from all over, from Palmdale to Agoura to Ojai," said Bernath-Latta.

She notes that throughout the years, TRR has held many different roles in the neighborhood. In the 1970s, there were many large groups going on trail rides. In the 1990s, TRR supported the U.S. Pony Club and gave lessons at the facility. Today, they are "open to anything," from local Arab shows to Olympian training to Western Dressage clinics. The TRR arena has been host to renowned equestrians such as Buck Brannaman and David Wightman.

While serving as president, Bergen used his state certification as a police instructor to lead clinics on "Horse Human Bomb-proofing," where he taught students how to handle and settle down their horses.

Up until this year, TRR conducted about 14 horse shows. However, Bernath-Latta does not have enough volunteers to help her maintain that number, so this year's number is down to eight. Upcoming events include a jumper show on July 13 and a hunter show later in July.

McCloskey, whose Rancho Sea Air barn uses TRR, devotes her time to the equestrian lifestyle because she "enjoy[s] seeing the kids ride, and for the enjoyment of riding [and] being out in nature." She prefers her riders, usually aged three to 14, to enjoy the spirit of equines and "to not go to the show just to win a ribbon."

"We try to encourage supporting each other and the kids not being so competitive, and who has the most expensive

horse... We have fun at the local [Trancas] Shrimp Shows, and the kids dress the horses up," McCloskey said.

McCloskey has kept the tradition of riding in her family since her father, German equestrian legend Egon Merz, sold his wristwatch to put a down payment on the property of Rancho Sea Air in the 1940s. Merz went on to teach Elizabeth Taylor for "National Velvet," stabled The Pic, trained Ronald Reagan and three of his horses, and held fox hunts at their facility. Of her current 40 riders, she trains children from Santa Monica, Pacific Palisades, Beverly Hills and the San Fernando Valley.

Drew Leonard and his wife, local Realtor Janice Leonard, own a Malibu equestrian facility with about 20 stalls, and have used their facility for everything from equine therapy to children's lessons to breeding. Drew said Malibu equestrians never hesitate to come together in times of need.

"Throughout the last 20 years that [Janice and I] have been in Malibu, we have been through a lot of natural disasters. Everyone in the equestrian community chips in to help each other," Leonard said.

He added that during the 1996 fire, he helped evacuate 60 horses from neighboring facilities.

To learn more about Malibu's equestrian community and Trancas Riders & Ropers, visit <http://trancasridersandropers.org>



Milan and Snickers, from Rancho Sea Air



Trancas Riders & Ropers has been a gathering spot for the local equestrian community since 1952.