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Lafayette celebrates the past 50 years, enjoys the present and looks to the future

By Pippa Fisher



Mayor Don Tatzin walks with the parade. Photos Pippa Fisher

well as city committees and commissions - that contribute to the "virtuous cycle" and make Lafayette a better place.

A few speakers reflected on the challenges facing the city today such as that of affordable housing.

Lafayette resident Fred Ravazzo, who has lived in Lafayette for 84 years, remembered his childhood in the 1930s, being raised by his Italian parents who had moved out to Lafayette from San Francisco to farm, growing tomatoes. "It was wide open country," he said.

When Mayor Don Tatzin gave his closing remarks he got a standing ovation as the crowd showed their appreciation for a man who exemplifies Lafayette volunteerism, having given his time to the city for over 33 years.

Following the indoor gathering came the main event, with booths, live music from Dave Martin's House Party band, a kid zone and a seemingly endless stream of barbecued ribs and chicken from Back Forty Texas BBQ.

Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Jay Lifson was hard at work making sure things went smoothly. It certainly came together seamlessly but, in the Lafayette way, it couldn't have happened without volunteers.

"The city of Lafayette counts on the chamber to plan and manage community events. This event was a team effort with many of our community partners stepping in and volunteering," Lifson noted.

Later a parade featuring a marching band, horses and even a train made its way from School Street along First Street to the delight of the crowd.

A time capsule, which was filled to ensure a glimpse of Lafayette as it is today, is saved for the future. Proclamations and announcements from Tatzin rounded out the event.

"The goal was to create a special day, casual and fun, that we all could remember," Lifson said. "Our residents were invited to remind us of the past, celebrate the milestone and think about the future."

The "Love Lafayette" slogan seemed particularly apt at the party celebrating Lafayette's 50 years of incorporation as a city. In the sunshine both young families and old-timers enjoyed the joyful celebration but at a meeting beforehand during which many shared memories and thoughts on the city, the recurrent theme seemed to be volunteerism.

The Lafayette Library and Learning Center Community Room was filled to capacity and then some, with people standing and spilling out of the room. Many ex-mayors and current and ex-council members shared memories along with residents, recalling simpler times.

Many explained that they moved to the city for the schools and relatively affordable housing 50 years ago. Several commented on the world-class restaurants that now line Lafayette's streets. And many spoke of the numerous volunteers within the city - schools, sports as



An 84-year resident, Fred Ravazzo, recalls simpler times living in Lafayette.

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