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"Make Music Day" Celebration is a Rollicking Hit for Lafayette Residents

By Adam Blake



Photo Adam Blake

Canopy tents, tie-dye tapestries, and colorful blankets garnished Lafayette's Plaza Park lawn as locals braved the heat to come together and celebrate live music. Lafayette was not alone however; people from all around the world took part in the festivities for international "Make Music Day" on June 21.

The Lafayette Chamber of Commerce and Lamorinda Music organized the event, which included mini-ukulele lessons, music crafts, izzyA's frozen custard truck, free popcorn, and of course live music. Lamorinda Music storeowner Colleen McCormick also arranged for live acts to play at eight restaurants and two senior living facilities around town to expand the celebration.

"I think it went well considering that it was a Tuesday night and super hot outside," McCormick said. "It seemed like a good turn out for a first time

event with very short lead time since we only decided to do it a few weeks ago."

Make Music Day's origins go back 34 years to France where the Ministry of Culture established the national holiday to celebrate free, live music throughout the country. "Fete De La Musique" has since spread throughout the world and is celebrated in over 700 cities across 120 countries.

Three weeks prior to the event, McCormick suggested Lafayette participate in the holiday to Executive Director of the Lafayette Chamber of Commerce Jay Lifson and Lafayette City Manager Steve Falk.

"We both were enthusiastic and said, 'of course.' This is Lafayette. This is a music town," Lifson said.

At the center of the festivities was local Tom Petty tribute band The Big Jangle, who served as an energetic, highly entertaining backing group for live Karaoke. Lifson initially came up with the idea of doing live Karaoke last year and seized this opportunity to bring it to life. Karaoke singers (and musicians) signed up from a list of 100 songs the band could play-Lifson referred to friend and lead guitarist Paul Cotruvo as "the human jukebox."

Twenty-five brave souls took the stage including several local celebs such as Stanley Middle School Music Teacher Bob Athayde and founder of BAM (Bay Area Music) Magazine Dennis Erokan. Lifson got to experience five minutes of rock-stardom himself with a nostalgic rendition of "U.S. Blues" by the Grateful Dead.

"Yes, I am just an old Dead Head and wanna-be hippie," Lifson said.

The night seems to have succeeded in bringing out many community members' "inner-rock star" and according to Lifson there has already been talk of Lafayette celebrating the event again next

summer. Even Falk goit into the spirit of the evening, crooning in his fedora hat.

Colleen McCormick shared that her highlight of the night was when local journalist Mike Zampa and Falk led the audience in a cheerful sing-along, capturing the communal essence of Make Music Day.

"I loved when the folks in the plaza stood up and all sang together, especially God Bless America. Mike Zampa is really good at getting a crowd excited about singing," McCormick said.



Lafayette's Mike Zampa and City Manager Steve Falk get in the spirit of Make Music Day. Photo Peggy Spear

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