

## The Face of Fillmore

By Sherry Shepard

The Fourth of July is without a doubt one of my favorite holidays. I love a parade! I love the way Fillmore takes on the appearance of a Hallmark movie with flags decorating the length of Main Street, the crowds of holiday enthusiasts in the park, eating lunch, visiting, enjoying games and other activities. I think of those who got up early to sound reveille, eat a delicious pancake breakfast and begin the Freedom Mile. The fireworks that culminate the day are always a huge hit with hundreds of people there to “ooh” and “ah” at a truly amazing display.

Memories of July 4<sup>th</sup>'s in the past are among memories we reminisce about and share with family members and friends. I'd like to share a few. May be this will revive a few of yours.

We had lived in Fillmore nearly a year when our first Fourth Celebration happened. No one warned us about the 21-gun salute that the National Guard fired off. There was no sleeping in that morning.

It wasn't long until our family was also involved in the celebration.

I remember the huge Relief Society-prepared dinners in the park. There was only one hamburger booth and most families enjoy a full meal. I remember cutting up cole slaw for 300+ people and adding the sticky dressing. No pre-cut packages of it in those days. I swore at that point I would never again eat cole slaw.

I remember in 1976 with the Bicentennial Celebration, our two little girls dressed in colonial attire on a float.

A few years later our oldest was a member of the prestigious Millard Marching Band. She was always short and was issued the smallest of the uniforms. It took all of us to get her ready. Two of us held her band pants up to her arm pits while the third tightened a belt around her waist, hoping that would hold her pants up as she marched down Main Street.

I remember one evening at the fireworks as we sat in our car and watched a terrified dog run past. My brother commented, “I think he is going to your house.” Sure enough. When we arrived home, there he was at the bottom of our basement entrance, shivering with fright. It took quite a while to coax him to go to his own home.

Since that time, we improved our method of watching fireworks, sitting on lawn chairs in the back of the pickup with popcorn and a cold drink.

When grandkids came along, they enjoyed the festivities with us. We loved the Children's Parade the year one of our granddaughters just got her training wheels. With her bike lavishing decorated, she was so excited to be in the "Big Race". And that is just what she did – try to set a new land speed record. We watched as Grandpa ran down the street after her to her to make sure she didn't wreck.

As years passed and we purchased ATV's, our schedule changed: parade, food in the park and an ATV ride with my brother's family. The first year as we went up Dry Wash and on up to Cottonwood, my brother's wife wrecked and broke her ankle. She has just earned her RN and laid in the trail crying because she didn't want to be her first patient. Luckily, a dune buggy came by and substituted as the ambulance to take her to the hospital.

To make her feel better, we had a shirt made for her that said, "I almost survived the Paiute ATV Trail."

The next Fourth of July we were riding on the Gooseberry Trail. She fell off the back of the ATV her son was driving into a black mud puddle. All you could read on her shirt was, "I almost survived...."

Another annual ritual for our family has been to help Paul Stevens celebrate his birthday. Paul and Greta were among our first good friends when we moved to Fillmore and have "taken care of us" throughout the years. Greta has even been known to tell people they adopted us.

Paul called me a few weeks ago with a concern that I am sure is shared by many. He worries about the children at the parade getting hurt as they rush to pick up the candy that is thrown into the audience. I want him to know that lots of warnings about this were given before parade time. In the city newsletter it says, "[Safety Note: Please monitor your children during the parade. Keep away from floats.](#)" I also know that parade participants are asked to toss the candy clear to the sidewalk and away from any moving vehicles. We all are working to keep our children safe.

July 4<sup>th</sup> is Paul's birthday. It seems that as a youngster he thought all of the excitement and celebration was for him. As we celebrate our country's birthday, we also wish Paul a happy 98<sup>th</sup>!

