

First Del Mar Beach Party - 1964

Lee Shippey's column in the Del Mar Surfcomber dated September 24, 1964 is the source of my information that the Beach Parties started thirty-eight years ago. Lee wrote, "Speaking of thank-yous due, I think we should thank the committee which arranged the Civic Association's First Annual Beach Picnic. It seemed to me good evidence that we all like one another and are proud of our city, even if we do disagree sometimes. It was the gayest, friendliest community gathering I ever saw in Del Mar. Why, even the community singing which wound it up was harmonious."

These memories are particularly poignant to me, because my wife, Christine, promoted the idea for a picnic in September to celebrate "getting our town back," after the Thoroughbreds have gone home. She challenged me to do something about it, now that I had just been elected to the City Council. I pursued the idea with my neighbor and friend, Swede Throneson, and the First Annual Beach Picnic started to take shape.



Christine Pearson, Darlene Mckim

The first year the food was catered. The menu was subsequently improved immeasurably by the culinary efforts of Jess Breceda, who operated a little restaurant on Highway 101 called "The Hitchin' Post."

Jess rented a house from Swede on the sand spit in Cardiff, and had dug a deep pit for barbecuing. The Civic Association paid for the beef, Jess barbecued it and six hundred members of Del Mar families enjoyed every bite.

The beef was extra flavorful due to the old orange wood cut by Remington Jackson and Bill Muhl. After scavenging for fuel, Jackson assumed control of the beer bar, complete with palm leaves.

Benches were borrowed from the Fairgrounds, and ferried to the 19th Street location, first by dump truck, then by trailer and tractor under the bridges and down the length of the beach. Jockey Ralph Neves, who had just built his home on the south side of 19th Street, provided an extension cord for power. Desi Arnaz and his kids, who lived on the north side of 19th Street, were enthusiastic participants.

Joe Frivaldsky and Dick Wheelock carved the beef with great dexterity. The lemon cake, which is still being served as a Del Mar specialty, had its beginnings in the 1960's.

Volley ball competition, sand castle-building contests, three legged races and balloon toss challenges provided the sport for the day. One year there was a long distance surfboard race

starting at the north end of Torrey Pines Beach. Steve Fletcher and Terry Lingenfelder were young contestants. *Surfcomber* editor John Webster was an innovative correspondent, creating events, such as the surfboard race, which he could then report on in the paper.

And there was music. Gaylord Marcello played his accordion at the first picnic, and after dark, the singers gathered around the fire.



Terry Lingenfelder

Billy Owens, Dick Rosendale, and Bob Ourette brought the benches from the Fairgrounds and took them back the next day. Barbara Rosendale, Harriette Watters and Janee Frivaldsky

worked with Christine on the menu. Freda Reid will remember one year that the ladies made a delicious fruit ambrosia and stored it in the big refrigerator at the market in the Plaza until time to serve it.

Darlene McKim's yearly assignment was to manage ticket sales.

There were many others who participated throughout the day, for this was truly a community event. However, it gets harder to recall names from so long ago. But isn't it grand that the tradition is still going strong, thirty-eight years later?



Mrs. Ivar Rosendale and Mrs. Joe Frivaldsky purchase chicken legs from Chuck Seymour, the Menlo Farms meat manager for second annual Del Mar Beach Party.

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