



Garden Grove Strawberry Festival Association

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STRAWBERRY FESTIVAL PARADE AND CONTESTS ARE A 51-YEAR TRADITION FOR FAMILIES

-- Parade is Saturday, May 23rd & contests held each day of Memorial weekend event --

GARDEN GROVE, CA (May 15, 2009) -- Moms and dads who won the Garden Grove Strawberry Festival's Berry, Berry Beautiful Baby Contest or its Redhead Roundup when they were babes, now enter their own sweet-faced cherubs into these same contests. Parents who strutted high down Garden Grove streets when they were in school, now cheer on their own children as they musically march in the Saturday festival parade. These traditions have been renewed annually in Garden Grove every Memorial Day weekend since 1958. And these traditions are what have helped the festival become the second largest community festival in the western U.S. drawing in over 250,000 attendees from Orange, Los Angeles and Riverside counties.

"I hear it all the time, " says festival board president Bill Catlin, "People tell me: 'I wouldn't miss the festival; I've come every year since I was a kid.'" For some it's almost an obsession. Jack Wallin has been on the festival board for 51 years and still helps set up the rides. KOCE news anchor Ed Arnold and Young and the Restless star Kate Linder have waved to fans in so many festival parades, they've lost count. "I may have been in it 20 times, I'm just guessing, but I love it every time," says Linder. "The Strawberry Festival Parade, for me, marks the beginning of summer with my first strawberry shortcake of the season. How could I ever miss the experience of being part of this wonderful event!" Both Linder and Arnold will be back again this year along with eight other celebrities for whom the festival parade is a first.

"I've been to many parades but this is the first time I'll be riding in one," says Chris Warren, Jr. from High School Musical. "I'm very excited!" He'll be joined by Celebrity Grand Marshal Cloris Leachman who got hooked on parades this year when she held the same title in the Rose Bowl Parade. *Dancing With The Stars* fans will be excited to see her, as will fans of Max and Charlie Carver from *Desperate Housewives*, Morgan York and Shanica Knowles from *Hannah Montana*, Marisa Ramirez famous for her roles on *The Young and the Restless* and *General Hospital*, and K-EARTH 101's popular morning show host Gary Bryan. Characters Snoopy and Road Runner will also be there to charm the children.

Twenty-four healthcare heroes will be cheered by the crowd which in past years has numbered over 80,000. Also honored will be festival Senior King and Queen, Tiny Tots King and Queen, Man and Woman of the Year, Miss Garden Grove and her court, and festival board president Bill Catlin and his family.

Fourteen bands will be in this year's parade which starts May 23rd at 10 a.m. at 9th Street and Chapman, proceeds down Chapman, then Euclid. Schools represented are Garden Grove HS, La Quinta HS, Santiago HS, Rancho Alamitos HS, Los Amigos HS, Norwalk Youth Band, Sierra Intermediate, McGarvin Intermediate, Bunch Middle School, Valley HS, Long Beach Junior Concert Band, Colegio de Bachilleres, Santa Ana Winds Youth Band, and Sound Waves Band. No parade is complete without waving dignitaries, service club floats or cars, scout troops, and sprinkled among them, clowns and six awe-inspiring equestrian groups.

All this happens on Saturday morning, then that evening at 7:30 would-be idols try out their voices in the Strawberry Idol Karaoke Contest held in the festival's 550-seat amphitheater. Sunday at 11 a.m. competition begins for the best Berry, Berry Beautiful Baby, and on Monday for the loveliest redhead in the sizzling Redhead Roundup contest.

The 51st annual Garden Grove Strawberry Festival *Honors Healthcare Heroes* Memorial Day weekend May 22 through 25, 2009 at Main and Euclid in Garden Grove. Entrance information and event details can be found at www.strawberryfestival.org.