



# Bonsall Woman Rides in Rose Parade

“There is no way to prepare for riding in an event like the Tournament of Roses Parade,” reflects Debbie Herzman, a Bonsall woman who rode with and made the Indian costumes for the Calizona Appaloosa Horse Club, which participated in the event for the first time on New Year’s Day.

The club had ridden in parades in Norco and in Moreno Valley, but nothing of the scope of the Rose Parade, one of the most venerable and well-known parades in the U.S.

“The amount of people. All of the

action going on. Good luck trying to prepare for that!” says Herzman. “When the crowd gets going, it’s like going through a gantlet. One of our members bought a one man band to get the horse used to the noise. But there’s nothing you can do to prepare for all the floats,



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the people and the noise.”

In spite of the fact that the float directly in front of them broke down during the parade and delayed them for half an hour, the club members enjoyed themselves so much that they want to do it again next year—if they can.

Besides riding with the Calizona club, Herzman also belongs to the Vista Palomar Riders, the national version of the Appaloosa Horse Club and ETI (Equestrian Trails International).

She rode a friend’s horse named Rocky, a 13-year-old.

The ten members of the equestrian unit rode behind the City of Torrance’s float (“Garden of Dreams,”) and in front of the Burbank float. When the Torrance Float broke down a third of the way through the parade, it was just short of 10 a.m.

“We stood there. We played to the

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crowd. People ran out of the crowd to have pictures taken with the horses. When you're stuck, you're stuck," she says. "You have to give credit to the people of Pasadena and the road crew. They take care of everything. They do their jobs. Everything is laid out for you. They made it totally easy. I give them a lot of credit."

The Tournament of Roses Parade is actually the finale of a week's worth of activities that includes the Equestfest 2009, which was held on the Tuesday before the parade. There was also a reception for the equestrians on Monday.

As with all parade participants, the Calizona Appaloosa Horse Club stayed in Pasadena the night before the parade—members were up long before the dawn, at 4 a.m., to be staged and put into the parade formation.

"We were up to enter the parade at about 7 a.m.," Herzman recalls. "Before you see us come around Colorado Boulevard, we have three blocks where we are going through camera crews and bleachers."

In between 4 a.m. and 7 a.m. she had to not only get her own horse and costumes put together, she had to do it for six other horses.

"I was running between horses quite a bit, putting war paint on the horses, and on the warriors."

That was the beginning before the beginning. The actual parade route is six miles long and takes an average of two hours to traverse—unless someone breaks down.

"It is total people the whole route, whether in the grandstands or sitting on the ground," she says.

The riding unit included eight women and two men. Horses were caparisoned and riders were decked out in Native American regalia of the Northern Plateau Plains style, specifically that of the Nez Perce tribe.

The Nez Perce are credited with developing the breed until just shortly before Chief Joseph tried to lead his tribe to escape from the U.S. cavalry in 1877.

Most of the tribe's horses were confiscated by the army. The breed was diluted until its recog-

nizable features were almost lost. Then early in the 20th century, more and more breeders became interested in the Appaloosa, and it made a comeback.

Herzman made seven of the ten costumes in the equestrian unit. They replicate costumes the Indians used on special occasions, such as festivals where they would honor their horses. She makes them with trade cloth (a wool cloth) elk skins and French and Czech beads. Each costume is worth between \$15,000–\$20,000—if you could buy it. She hand picks the elk skins.

"When I buy furs and hides I usually like to see them in person first. When I put the costumes together I have a look that I'm striving for," she says.

The costumes have all won first or second prizes at National Appaloosa Horse Club world championships.

She spends three to five years on each costume before she is happy with it. "It's like a living creature. You keep adding to it," she says. She started riding with the club in 1974 and began doing costumes a few years later.

The costuming is strictly a hobby, or as she calls it, "an addiction, obsession or whatever you want to call it. When the money is not going for the horses, it's going for the costumes. Some people have therapy—I have beadwork."

She has never considered doing it as a profession. She is one of a rare few who make the costumes. She knows a few others, but they are scattered far and wide.

"It's one of those things where—if you get into it as a business—the fun would go out of it. Then you have to satisfy everyone else for their needs instead of doing it because you like it. I could probably go into the business and sell everything I have, but that's not that appealing," she says.

Participating in the parade was the reward for many years of work.

"It was something totally different—to be able to get out there and show them off in the Native American costumes," she says. "It was a once in a lifetime deal, even managing to get selected for it. That was a long

process."

They submitted their application to be in the parade in May. In August they were told they would be in the line-up.

Herzman lives in Bonsall right off Gopher Canyon Road on an acre with her horses and barn.

She does parades to promote the Appaloosa breed beyond the show ring. "A lot of people who don't have horses like to look at them, to see the Appaloosas in their costumes. Parading is more eye-appealing to spectators if it gets more colorful. That's how they envision the horses. They want to see the mystique of the horses."

## ~ ROAD

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close knit and loyal to each other.

"I go around to a lot of road stations in the county," says Michael Drake, the public affairs officer for the Dept. of Public Works. "You find a lot of camaraderie here. These guys are family."

"We are public servants and the community is a real concern," adds one of the men.

All of the road crews throughout the county support each other. If another crew needs help, the other crews give it.

At 2 a.m. if a tree goes down in the rain, the Bonsall/Fallbrook crew will get the call. If it happens on Christmas Day, they will show up to move the tree.

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If you see a tree or other obstruction on a county road, call the county operations office at 877-684-8000. The after-hours or holiday emergency number is 888-565-5262.

Issues can also be reported via the department's Web site: [www.sdcounty.ca.gov/dpw/roads](http://www.sdcounty.ca.gov/dpw/roads) (click on the "roads home," then on the Service Request Form link in the middle of the page next to the photo. These messages are immediately delivered to the DPW service desk with a backup copy coming to Drake's office.

You'll find information on road conditions, particularly during an emergency, by visiting [www.sdcounty.ca.gov/dpw](http://www.sdcounty.ca.gov/dpw) and "click" on "roads."

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