

# THE TOURNAMENT OF ROSES, ROSE PARADE

## History of the Rose Parade

This uniquely American event began as a promotional effort by Pasadena's distinguished Valley Hunt Club. In the winter of 1890, the club members brainstormed ways to promote the "Mediterranean of the West." They invited their former East Coast neighbors to a mid-winter holiday, where they could watch games such as chariot races, jousting, foot races, polo and tug-of-war under the warm California sun. The abundance of fresh flowers, even in the midst of winter, prompted the club to add another showcase for Pasadena's charm: a parade would precede the competition, where entrants would decorate their carriages with hundreds of blooms. The Tournament of Roses was born.

"In New York, people are buried in snow," announced Professor Charles F. Holder at a Club meeting. "Here our flowers are blooming and our oranges are about to bear. Let's hold a festival to tell the world about our paradise."

During the next few years, the festival expanded to include marching bands and motorized floats. The games on the town lot (which was re-named Tournament Park in 1900) included ostrich races, bronco busting demonstrations and a race between a camel and an elephant (the elephant won). Reviewing stands were built along the Parade route, and Eastern newspapers began to take notice of the event. In 1895, the Tournament of Roses Association was formed to take charge of the festival, which had grown too large for the Valley Hunt Club to handle.

The Tournament of Roses has come a long way since its early days. The Rose Parade's elaborate floats now feature high-tech computerized animation and exotic natural materials from around the world. Although a few floats are still built exclusively by volunteers from their sponsoring communities, most are built by professional float building companies and take nearly a year to construct. The year-long effort pays off on New Year's morning, when close to 750,000 attend the parade and over 300 million viewers around the world via television enjoy the Rose Parade.

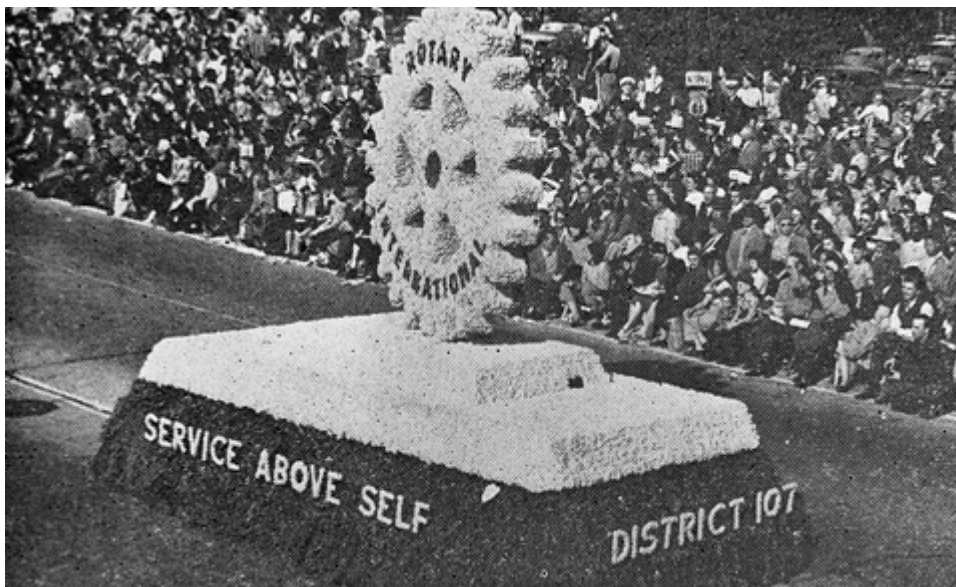
## History of Floats promoting Rotary International in the Tournament of Roses, Rose Parade.

The Rotary Club of Pasadena, located in the city which has hosted the Rose Parade since 1980, entered three floats into the Rose Parade in 1927, 1942, 1946 and 1966. Unfortunately due to the United States Entrance into WWII, in December of 1941, the 1942 Rose Parade was cancelled. The 1927 Float Entry seen below, depicted the

International aspect of Rotary, the theme of the Parade was "Song in Flowers."



The 1946 Rose Parade saw the second entry by the Rotary Club of Pasadena, the float was entitled "Service Above Self" and the Rose Parade theme was "Victory, Unity & Peace."



In 1966, the Rotary Club of Pasadena, entered its final float in the Rose Parade. The Float Theme was "A Closer World Through Rotary" and the Rose Parade Theme was "It's a Small World" with the Grand Marshall (for his first time of two times serving) was Mickey Mouse!



#### History of the Rotary Rose Parade Float Committee, Inc.

While watching the 1979 Pasadena Rose Parade on Television, Jack Gilbert, who was President of the Rotary Club of Wilshire, in Los Angeles, California, and subsequently chairman of the Rotary Rose Parade Float Committee, had an idea. Rotary would be celebrating its 75th Anniversary in 1980. Jack believed that by entering a float in the 1980 New Year's Day Rose Parade, Rotary could communicate its message, "Service Above Self" to millions of people worldwide.

Jack shared his vision with other Rotarians, who supported the idea. Seven Governors in Southern California agreed to underwrite the cost of the float and make up any shortfall not covered by Club contributions. Fortunately, the Clubs contributed \$35,000 which covered the full cost of the original float.

This first Tournament of Roses experience led to the formation of the Rotary Rose Parade Float Committee which now receives contributions each year from 7 California/Nevada Districts and from Rotary Clubs throughout the United States and Canada. A list of the contributors for the 2012 float is at the website. The Committee has entered a float every year since 1980. See the history page of our website [www.rotaryfloat.org](http://www.rotaryfloat.org) for pictures and descriptions of all of our floats.



The theme of Rotary's 75th Anniversary Float was "Love Makes the World Go Around" and it won the National Trophy. "Anyone who makes it the age 75 deserves at least a few flowers on his or her birthday." This year Rotary got roses, thousands of them.

The rainbow colored float carried a revolving globe covered with white carnation petals, surrounded by a bouquet of Dutch Iris and silverleaf. A musical staff with notes bordered the sides of the float, leading to the Rotary emblem, colored with swarms of pompoms and cornflowers. The float's base was blanketed with 8,000 red roses. The float was valued at over \$40,000, but a price tag couldn't be placed on the favorable publicity attracted to Rotary International. The 1980 float was funded by Rotary Clubs in the Western United States.

The committee begins its work each January by swearing in its new Officers and Directors and by agreeing to accept (if invited by the Tournament of Roses) to enter a float in the next year's Rose Parade. In February, the committee learns the RI President's theme for the upcoming Rotary Year and the theme of the Rose Parade. The Committee tries then to design a float promoting Rotary with a theme that sends a Rotary Message while all the time knowing that the design and the theme must fit within the overall Parade Theme, as the Tournament has the final say.

In March, a design and theme are selected and presented to the Tournament of Roses for approval. The Tournament can reject a design or a theme and then it is back to the drawing board. Usually, and thankfully, the Tournament has only asked us to tweak our design or revise our theme so we have been very lucky. We then sign a contract with a float builder and they proceed to build our float.

Each float is built on a simple flat steel structure which has four wheels, an engine and a seat for the driver. The float is then "assembled" using wood, steel, rebar, chicken wire and then sprayed with a very light foam substance which hardens and then can be sculpted to the shape of the float. The float is then painted in the colors of the organic materials to be used to cover the float completely. The float is "completely built" by late August or early September.

During the summer and fall months, the committee begins its fundraising campaign and solicits funds from Rotary Clubs and Districts of the USA and Canada. The Committee has been granted an exemption by Rotary International to do this, in recognition of the value of float as a public relations project for Rotary International. The economic recession has hit the float's efforts hard and we have raised sufficient funds to pay the float builder but may need to raise more after the parade. A HUGE PERSONAL THANK YOU TO THE RECSWUSA who contributed \$500! The only EClub to contribute and the Committee and yours truly, Maureen McKinley, thank you with all our hearts!

### Float entries for Rotary where the chair of the Committee was a "McKinley"

My father, John M. McKinley (PDG 5260 1991-1992) got involved with the Float Committee the year after his service as governor. He thought it was a wonderful way to get the word out about Rotary to the world for the least amount of money. He started at the bottom of the committee working with the decorating volunteers and gradually moved up to position as Chair in the year 1996 for the 1997 Rose Parade. However, my father was a clever man and knew that it would take a lot of work, so in 1995 when he became vice Chair he informed me that I was going to be working on the floats and filling all shifts that the Committee members did not want to do. I learned then that there were four Saturdays before Christmas where the dry decorations were prepared in two four hour shifts. Then after Christmas (December 25) from December 26 through December 31 there were three four hour shifts where the actual organic materials were placed on the float and the remaining decorations also prepared. It just happened to turn out that the early morning shifts, starting at 7:00a.m. and the late evening shifts ending at 11:00p.m. were the most unpopular, so those were the shifts I had to work.

During the four Saturdays before Christmas, dried flowers are cut for the petals, bark stripped, seeds gathered and separated from any "fluff" and then some petals are then cut into teeny bits. Starting on December 26th, the seeds and dried flowers are put on with glue on the actual float. During the week the "live" flowers are prepared, the flowers vials sanitized - filled with water and stoppered, and then the live petals and/or other materials, leaves and seeds, are glued on the float. The live flowers in the vials are placed on the floats usually starting on December 29th with the roses going on last on December 31st. Throughout the years, the Rotary Float has used tree bark, seeds, palm leaves, pampas grass, wild grasses, tomatillos, potatoes,

cabbages, kumquats, orange/lemon/lime peel artichokes, artichoke flowers, salt, pepper, pine trees, and rice. All are just a few examples of the organic materials including hundreds of varieties of flowers. I have personally decorated over 10 floats and have worked with and as a member, director and Chair of the Committee for over 16 years.



The 1997 float titled "Caring for the World's Children" provided an opportunity to reveal the shining achievements of the PolioPlus campaign. The float featured three medical officers on three different continents, each surrounded by children who have been immunized against polio and other childhood diseases. Colorful flowers, animals, vegetation and monuments depicted the different cultures where immunization efforts have been carried out. The float was constructed by Charisma Floats. John McKinley, PDG, Chair, La Canada Flintridge RC, District 5260



In 2008, I was fortunate to become the Chair of the Rotary Rose Parade Float Committee, The Theme of the Parade was "Hats off to Entertainment". The theme of the float was "Make Dreams Real"

The theme was based on RI President D. K. Lee dream and deep desire to provide all the world's children with clean water, health care, education and happy and peaceful lives. The float design was based on Shakespeare's romantic comedy, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, one of his most beloved and entertaining plays. The float depicted a beautiful garden setting with three exquisitely decorated fairies. Seven women representing the Southern California and Nevada district of Rotary International rode on the float in celebration of the year 2009, which marked the 20th anniversary of women involved in Rotary in the United States.

Raul Rodriguez designed the float which was constructed by Charisma Floats and was decorated by 900 hundred volunteers from Rotary, Rotaract, and Interact clubs. Maureen McKinley, Chair, District 5300



The theme of the float was "Inching Towards the End of Polio" and it was the Winner of the Princess' Trophy for the most beautiful float under 35 feet

Rotary International's 33rd consecutive entry in the Tournament of Roses Parade, "Inching Towards The End of Polio," celebrated the work of Rotarians worldwide as they strive to eradicate the paralyzing and deadly disease. The 22 foot tall Inchworm featured a MD's head mirror, stethoscope and medical journal emblazoned with the caduceus. The 35-foot long "inchworm" was nestled in a field of flowers with eight riders from Rotary balanced among the dueling purple butterflies.

Multiple floral arrangements featured white moraras, white, red and hot pink tulips, yellow billy buttons, yellow daffodils and white roses. Deck floral highlights included use of pink, hot pink, light lavender, dark lavender, red, yellow roses and gerberas. The bottom edge of the float was trimmed with white catts, roses, carnations and gypsophilia. Gene Hernandez, PDG, Chair, Chino RC, District 5300

## Conclusion

For more information on the Tournament of Roses please go to their website at [www.tournamentofroses.org](http://www.tournamentofroses.org). For more information on the Float you can visit our website at [www.rotaryfloat.org](http://www.rotaryfloat.org).

If you are ever in Pasadena between Christmas December 25th and New Year's January 1, please contact me at [uclachady@aol.com](mailto:uclachady@aol.com) and I can arrange a tour of the floats being decorated in the warehouse where the Float is located. IF you wish to decorate we have volunteer signups at our website starting August 1, of every year. If you miss out on signing up, and just come by the float site, we may be able to let you decorate if we have the work.

### **LATEST NEWS!!!**

Just this past week, RI President Elect Tanaka, announced at the International Assembly his theme for his Rotary year 2012-2013 "Peace through Service." Today, January 20, 2012, the Tournament of Roses announced its Rose Parade theme for the 2013 Parade - "Oh the Places You'll Go!"