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ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER

Irvine residents prep for the Fourth

BY SARAH de CRESCENZO

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Fourth of July celebrations are made of traditions.

However they celebrate, whether with close friends in the backyard or watching fireworks with thousands of strangers, residents are getting ready for the weekend's festivities.

It's been more than 30 years since the Ranch Homeowners Association began putting on a private picnic and children's parade to celebrate Independence Day.

It all started with a group of residents chatting at a T-ball game.

"They began thinking that it would be great to start a Ranch July 4th get-together," said coordinator Mackayla Wong.

They gathered to plan at the home of Dennis and Jane Bruckler, who got the word out via the neighborhood's monthly circular, the Ranch Roundup. About twice the expected number of children turned out for the fun.

That first year, along with the parade, there were cookies and soda. (At the time, Dennis Bruckler worked for Royal Crown Cola). Patriotic crepe paper was hung as decoration.

The 732-home community continues the tradition today with the parade, picnic fare and old-fashioned activities, including a cake walk, sack race and balloon toss.

A highlight is the annual Boston Tea Party-themed relay race, in which children race backward to fill a water bucket.

How do you celebrate the Fourth of July? Does your community or family have a special tradition? Share it with the Irvine World News for potential inclusion in a future issue by sending a description to sdecrescenzo@ocregister.com. Pictures welcome. Please include your full name and a phone number.

Contact the writer: 714-796-2221 or sdecrescenzo@ocregister.com

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