

Cover Story



Photograph by George Sakkestad

Choir members from the Los Gatos Christian Church helped ring in the holiday season with song at the Dec. 6 town tree-lighting ceremony.

Los Gatos catches the holiday spirit

By Shari Kaplan

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Despite an ominous drizzle of cold rain the night before, the morning of Dec. 7 was sunny and warm without a cloud in the sky.

The rain wasn't enough to dampen the spirits of celebrants at the town's tree-lighting ceremony Friday night at Los Gatos Town Plaza Park. And the Saturday sunshine provided the perfect setting for the Los Gatos Children's Christmas and Holiday Parade, which annually kicks off the holiday season and has been a town-wide tradition for nearly half a century.



Photograph by George Sakkestad

The Saratoga High School Marching Band played its way down the parade route.

As in the past, this year's parade was a spectacle for the eyes and ears of the thousands of spectators lining the route, from babies sleeping in little red wagons to whole families sprawled out among their lawn chairs and picnic baskets. Many folks even brought their dogs to the parade, some of them decked out in canine-size reindeer antlers and jingle-bell collars.

And then there were the fanciful floats and organized groups who participated, much to the delight of the spectators came to look at, wave to, photograph those in the parade.

In one of the most eclectic arrays this side of the Tournament of Roses Parade, some 250 parade entrants made their way down N. Santa Cruz Avenue and W. and E. Main Street before concluding at Los Gatos High School.

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Photograph by George Sakkestad

The Grinch wasn't about to steal this Christmas! This year he was all smiles as part of the Los Gatos Swim & Racquet Club float.

Among them were dozens of decorated cars, trucks, fire engines and limousines; flat-bed trailers turned into fantastic winter wonderlands; costumed characters galore; daredevil bicyclists; motorcycle cops performing figure-eights; bagpipe bands; school marching bands and dance groups; baton-twirlers; Boy and Girl Scout troops; service-animal raisers walking their dogs; a regiment of Hungarian Hussar horsemen and women; and, of course, the Italian Gardeners' Cucuzza Squash Drill Team—a hilarious crowd favorite. Last but not least, the perennial parade favorite was Santa Claus himself.

Santa was on hand for the tree-lighting event the night before, and he was back on Saturday, ho-ho-hoing beneath his fluffy white beard and returning the waves of all the starry-eyed children.

And that makes it official—Christmas has returned to Los Gatos.

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Photograph by George Sakkestad

This young dancer bent over backwards to take part in Saturday's parade.

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