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LAPD Band

BY MICHAEL ELLINGTON

Do you know what it's like to march with a band in the Rose Parade? Have you ever gone beyond the traditional Christmas tree and ornaments for the season, all the way into building miniature Yuletide villages? This month's profiled member, flautist Suzanne Duffy, has those stories and more.



Suzanne grew up in Burbank on Walnut Street, not far from the city's premier outdoor entertainment venue, Starlight Bowl. Her parents, Charles and Louise Duffy, provided just the right environment for a budding musician. Her father had a beautiful baritone voice. He loved to sing English and Irish folk songs. Her school-teacher mother played some piano. Her older sister, Trish, played flute, but stopped in high school, leading Suzanne to pick up where she left off.

She first encountered and fell in love with the sound of the flute in seventh grade, while attending John Muir Junior High School. Her first flute teacher was Mrs. Benno. After a year's instruction, Benno referred her to a young woman who played piccolo with the LA Philharmonic, Louise DiTullio.

Tenth grade found Suzanne at Burbank High School and a member of the marching band. That group's musicianship and overall excellence won them a coveted spot in the annual New Year's



Day pageantry that is Pasadena's Tournament of Roses Parade. The year was 1962. Here's how she remembers it: "The Rose Parade route is several miles long. On the day of the parade, we had to be at school at 4:30 AM. When we got to the parade, it was still dark and really cold. Our uniforms were made of wool. Mine was too big so I had clothes under it. This was great when we got out of the bus and walked around. However, by 10, it was a clear, gorgeous day and about 80 degrees. I was boiling hot! It was so exciting thinking we were actually there, marching and playing! There were so many people at the curbs!"

Apparently, at the end of the parade, band members were offered \$5 or tickets to the Rose Bowl Game. This was to be the first collegiate football game NBC would broadcast in color. Suzanne professed no interest in the Minnesota Golden Gophers vs. UCLA Bruins matchup, and took the money instead. (Anyway, the Bruins lost 21-3.)

San Fernando Valley State College beckoned shortly thereafter and, of course, Suzanne joined its orchestra. She graduated from Pierce College with

an RN degree. She worked in the Obstetrics Dept. at Tarzana Hospital for eight years, and later secured a position as a school nurse with the Los Angeles Unified School District for 21 years. Along the way to her BA in Music, she excelled as a Flute Performance Major.

Suzanne holds down a flute chair in the Los Angeles Police Concert Band, and she plays bass flute in an orchestra of ALL flutes, called "The Song of the Angels." The group is made up of woodwinds from piccolo all the way down to subcontrabass flute. The 30-player ensemble covers the same range as the traditional piano keyboard.

A special side interest for Suzanne involves stained-glass windows. She's made several for her home. Intricate Christmas villages also have a special place in her heart.

For more information about The Band, see our website at www.lasown.com and contact Jim Starr, Executive Director - email: sngcop@aol.com. For greatly appreciated donations, please go to www.lapolicefoundation.org, and in the 'Comments Box,' put "For The Band." ♦

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