

Charlie Buck is a true public treasure

Published: May 27, 2013 Updated 11 hours ago



Lon Allan
The Tribune

•

By Lon Allan — Special to The Tribune

Much like the appearance of Punxsutawney Phil in February to let us know whether spring would arrive early or late, I had my own “barometer” to a regular-occurring local event.

I looked forward each year to Charlie Buck, who reminded me it was time to start thinking about the city’s annual Colony Days celebration. It told me it was time to start working on another of those 80-page special historical editions published during the weeklong festival.

That celebration is always observed on the third Saturday in October. Charlie, as most everyone knows, is the band teacher at the junior high school. So with hardly a month of school under their collective belts, Charlie would begin getting those youthful musicians ready for the Colony Days Parade. And by the second week of October, he would have them marching on the streets surrounding the City Administration Building, honing their marching skills. It was probably much easier years ago, before the bridge was built across Atascadero Creek in front of the school and the roadway blocked off to through traffic after the 2003 earthquake that damaged City Hall.

I know a number of merchants around the downtown who loved that “joyful noise” from Charlie’s band students as their practice parade route often took them over to Entrada Avenue and then back over to the junior high campus.

I would get ahead of the musicians so I could enjoy whatever march they were playing, and always got a friendly greeting from Charlie as he passed by.

Charlie Buck has been our own music man for more than three decades.

And in addition to all those young people he taught to play musical instruments, he has been the front man of the Atascadero Community Band for a very long time, making those free concerts at Atascadero Lake Park on Tuesday so very special.

Charlie faces his musicians in those concerts, and probably doesn't get the chance to look back and see the smiles on the faces of those who were driven there from the local convalescent homes, or see them tapping their feet to a John Philip Sousa march.

Charlie is retiring from the classroom, and this will be his last summer as conductor of the Atascadero Community Band, although I suspect we'll see him sitting in the trombone section as often as he can.

Thank you Charlie Buck, for filling our summers and our hearts with such wonderful music.

Lon Allan's column is special to The Tribune. He has lived in Atascadero for nearly five decades and his column appears here every week. Reach Allan at 466-8529 or leallan@tcsn.net.

Read more here: <http://www.sanluisobispo.com/2013/05/27/2523810/honoring-a-community-music-maker.html#storylink=cpy>