

Bee Line Ride

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Driving through the community last Saturday, all you could see was a swarm of busy "bees" — volunteers who were doing their best to clean up the town. Literally, thousands of volunteers — many even coming from other communities -- picking up trash, pulling weeds or planting sunflower or poppy seeds.

Pacifica's Earth Day activities opened with a 9 to 11 a.m. work detail and then party time afterwards with many activities held on the Linda Mar Beach for people of all ages. The guest of honor this year was the 'bee'.

"Our job is to raise awareness about the environment. This year we do it with the bees," said Lynn Adams, President, Pacifica Beach Coalition. "This year we have sunflower and poppy seeds. Every year we feature an animal and we learn about it and care about it because that's what is going to save the world. That's the mission of the beach coalition. It takes everyone to care about the environment."

Every year since 2009, when Lynn drove people around town in her car, she has put together a tour for community and county representatives. In recent years, the car has been upgraded to a bus. This year I was included in the tour and joined with 20 other people, many of whom were participating in their first Earth Day activity.

"You don't understand what is happening here until you see it. I can talk to you about the environment and what the beach coalition and volunteers are doing until I'm blue in the face, but you have to see it yourself how much effort is being done by the thousands of volunteers and how much joy they are having," said Adams. "You have to understand the concept of how much value this effort is to our community."

"This is a remarkable accomplishment. It's so successful, thanks to all of the volunteers," added Adams. "There are communities who would give their eye teeth to have even a fraction of what we have here that isn't paid for by the community through city funds. This is a donation to the city by these people who are dedicated and are so passionate about the environment. We put in so many hours and so much time just to educate the general public."

The PBC held assemblies at the elementary schools. They brought in speakers who are experts on bees to inform the children to get them involved with Earth Day activities.

Unofficially, it's estimated that the cost to the city, if it had to pay, for just Saturday alone would be \$100,000. That's with over 7,000 volunteers working at a pay of \$20 - \$26 an hour.

This year's tour took us to various sites. First stop was the Linda Mar Park and Ride lot, where we found Tribune staff picking weeds. My thanks to the staff for their great work of helping to beautify the community. Then it was on to Linda Mar School, location of Pacifica Gardens, a 30,000 square-foot urban agricultural project where saw volunteers growing and harvesting food. A stop at the Community Center, we found people taking weeds out of the planter boxes with plans to replace with native plants acclimated to our area.

Throughout the tour we were fortunate to have as a rider, a bee expert, who along with Lynn shared their knowledge of the bees. John Hafernik is a professor of biology at San Francisco State University and a

Board of Directors member for the California Academy of Sciences.

At our final stop we saw more than 40 volunteers at Rockaway Beach doing restoration all along the hillside. It was at this site that Lynn had the representatives take the "bee" pledge to "bee the change and bee an earth hero."

"This is powerful stuff," said, Lynn, smiling. "I ask that you, everyday going forward, use your voice to help the environment. Help the ocean, help our community and help the bees."

Comments from a couple of representatives following the tour:

"I read in the Tribune all the time about the beach coalition, but I had no idea how much it takes care of this city," said Shirlee Gibbs, who was participating in an Earth Day activity for her first time. "I've lived in Pacifica since 1956. I was amazed at the cleaning at Rockway Beach and the efforts of the volunteers. It was amazing.

"Earth Day is a project in which the Lions Club could get involved. I've invited Lynn to talk with our members," added Gibbs, past president of the Lions club, who admitted she learned a lot about bees on her ride.

Councilmember John Keener, who spent a day last week walking a stretch of Highway 1 picking up trash, praised the work of the PBC and the volunteers, saying, "The PBC is not only cleaning up the beaches, but now has shifted into picking up litter in our neighborhoods. I learned from personal experience that there is trash everywhere. Cigarette butts are everywhere. We picked up hundreds of them on our highway walk."

"Keener, a long-time environmentalist, added, "I did not know how extensive the efforts were from the PBC. Talk about the number of volunteers they actually have! What a bargain it is. The City supports them to the tune of \$3,000 and we get all of this activity. It's amazing. To all those volunteers today, I say 'thank you'. That's what this day is all about. We're honoring the volunteers and we thank them," concluded Keener.

Joshua Cosgrove, member of the Board of Directors for the North Coast County Water District, accompanied on the tour by his children, Josiah and Elizabeth, said, "From the outside you can't see how hard Adams, the PBC and all its volunteers work. It's amazing to see the amount of work they are doing - picking up trash, planting plants and getting rid of weeds. It's amazing the number of resources they utilize."

A newcomer to the community, Assistant City Manager Lorenzo Hines remarked, "We learned today that we have a precious resource here that needs to be protected and maintained. It is very key to the culture of Pacifica. I was impressed at the passion I see within the community to maintain the city and our natural resources."

"I know the next time I see a bee I will direct it to a flower," Hines said, laughing. "I learned a lot about bees. I did not know there were 400 species. I realized today, but I guess I've known all along, but it sort of reminds you to how key they are to the state's agriculture and Pacifica's agriculture activity."

Congratulations to Lynn and her PBC team for a well-coordinated Earth Day event.