

A Brief History of the Upper Arlington Fourth of July Celebration

This overview covers main elements of Upper Arlington's Fourth of July Celebration and is not intended to be a detailed history. The narrative and the attached list are created from newspaper records, the book *History of Upper Arlington*, and first-hand accounts. Content additions and corrections are welcome.

Fourth of July Organization

The first UA Fourth of July Celebration was organized by the Upper Arlington Civic League in 1923. The Civic League was in charge until the Upper Arlington Civic Association was formed in 1932 and took over in 1933.

From newspaper accounts in the early years, it seems that the General Chairman was selected each year by the UA Civic League/Association. Committee chairmen and committee members were then selected. It's not clear that there was an ascension plan as we know it today. In the early years, the General Chairperson was an individual and only that person is mentioned in the records. In later years, perhaps around the 1990s, spouses (when applicable) were also considered General Chairpersons and were reported that way. However, only one of the spouses represents the 4th of July as a UA Civic Association Director. The transition to a couples-chairmanship was probably an informal happening. In this list the General Chairs are listed as couples starting in 1990.

Field Day

Beginning in 1917 an event called Field Day was organized by Grandview, Marble Cliff and Upper Arlington. It took place in June each year and was a celebration of the tri-village communities and their residents. Events included a parade with floats and bands, sports contests, picnics, fireworks, music and dances. But, newspaper articles make no mention of Independence Day themes or purpose.

Field Day and UA's Fourth of July Celebration were similar events for different purposes. In fact, for a few years both events took place and were just two or three weeks apart. There really isn't anything to suggest that Field Day was an early version of the official UA celebration of the Fourth. It is safe to say that Field Day served as a model for the Upper Arlington Fourth of July Celebration which started in 1923.

Themes

In the early years it seems that themes were not a priority or perhaps the organizers didn't even think about it. When there was a theme it was more like a marketing slogan. For example, in 1926 it was reported that the celebration was being postponed until the Fall due to so many residents leaving town for the holiday. This prompted a theme/slogan that was used for several years, "A Stay at Home Fourth", that was used with publicity for citizens not to travel.

The first theme found in newspaper records was in 1932. There are many years after 1932 when a theme was not found in the records. In the 1950s float builders were encouraged to develop their own themes. From the Tri-Village News: "In formulating a theme, remember that the Arlington community is observing both Independence Day and homecoming" and "suggested themes for floats are homecoming, July 4, America, Ohio, family, neighbors, church, school and service." Themes were regularly reported starting in 1960.

Parade Grand Marshals

A parade marshal is a person who is in charge of arranging and assembling the participants in a parade. In the earliest years of the UA parade, marshals were named for each division as well as a Grand Marshal who was in charge of the marshaling (staging) area. At times the Grand Marshal led the parade from the staging area down the parade route. The Grand Marshal was often considered part of the planning committee. This may be the reason that the Grand Marshal wasn't regularly mentioned in the newspapers. Today, the Grand Marshal is a parade dignitary with a ceremonial role.

Cannon Salute at Dawn

Starting with the first celebration in 1923, a cannon salute took place at dawn to awaken the citizens, often accompanied by a flag raising ceremony. This continued until safety and fireworks regulations made it prohibitively difficult to arrange. It isn't clear when the last time this occurred but it was probably in the 1970s or 1980s.

Paul Revere's Ride (the morning wakeup call)

The tradition of Paul Revere's ride began in 1938. Vehicles with loud speakers drove through the neighborhoods to wake-up the residents. It was a call to assemble and that the Celebration is to begin.

Spirit of 76

The Spirit of 76 is a painting by Archibald MacNeal Willard an American painter who was born and reared in Bedford, Ohio. Willard painted *The Spirit of '76* in Wellington, Ohio. The painting depicts a Revolutionary War scene; however, he was inspired to create it after he saw three boys – two drummers and fife player – in a Fourth of July parade. The Upper Arlington Fourth of July recreation began in 1935 by Warren Park (piccolo/fife), Ted Wells (flag bearer), Bill Grover (drummer) and Russell Means (drummer boy). This is according to *History of Upper Arlington*.

Fourth of July Picnics and Cookouts

There is a tradition of mid-day feasts on Independence Day dating back to the late 1700's after independence in 1776. In the early years of UA, the organizers placed emphasis on mid-day picnics and sunset meals with friends. It was often even placed on the day's agenda. With UA's love of traditions, it is easy to believe that today's tradition of Fourth of July cookouts is due to the efforts in the early years.

Miss Arlington

The Miss Arlington program began in 1949. It was part of the Fourth of July Celebration and organized by the Fourth of July Committee. This is probably because the UA celebration was modeled after the Tri-Village Field Day which had a similar contest. Eventually the Miss Arlington contest was separated from the Fourth of July Committee but was still run by the UA Civic Association. The contest was aligned with the run-up to the Fourth of July and the Queen and her court were a feature in the parade. In 1998 the program was changed, was renamed the Junior Director Community Service and Scholarship Program, and was open to young men and woman; thus, ending the Miss Arlington program.

Sources

The Norwester newspaper 1917- 1922

The Community News newspaper 1922 – 1929

The Tri-Village News newspaper 1933 – 1954

The Upper Arlington News newspaper 1955 – 2013

History of Upper Arlington, Marjorie Sayers, Editor, 1977

First-hand accounts

Upper Arlington Fourth of July

Year	General Chairpersons	Theme	Grand Marshal
1923	Anthony Ruppensburg Upper Arlington Civic League was the organizer of the celebration through 1932		
1924	Anthony Ruppensburg President Upper Arlington Civic League		
1925	The day's activities included athletic events, Beautiful Ohio pageant (parade), picnic dinner, fireworks and a dance.		
1926 - 1929	According to "History of Upper Arlington" UA did not have a celebration from '26-'29. There are no newspaper records found or reasons for not having the event.		
1930	Anthony Ruppensburg		
1931	Anthony Ruppensburg		David S. Benbow Mayor of Upper Arlington
1932	Anthony Ruppensburg	George Washington's 200th Birthday	David S. Benbow Mayor of Upper Arlington
1933	Dr. Link Murhpy UA Civic Association formed in 1932 and organizes the celebration starting in 1933.	Every Home a Flag	David S. Benbow Mayor of Upper Arlington
1934	Harry M. Miller	A Stay at Home Fourth & Every Home a Flag	Mayor of UA
1935	Dr. Link M. Murhpy	A Stay at Home Fourth & Every Home a Flag	Col. Robert T. Whitfield
1936	Hobart R. Munsell	A Stay at Home Fourth & Every Home a Flag	Col. Robert T. Whitfield
1937	Grant Sain		Col. Robert T. Whitfield
1938	F. W. Grover	A Stay at Home Fourth & Every Home a Flag	Col. Robert T. Whitfield
1939	John A. Dawson		
1940	Harlan O. Davis	Stay at Home Fourth	
1941	Frank L. Barnes		Dr. Wayne Brehm
1942	Glenn L. Myers	Independence Day the Arlington Way...A Celebration Amid Homes and Neighbors	
1943	Dr. Wayne Brehm		
1944	Norman E. Gatsch	Put Our 4th -- First!	Cmdr E. M. Sampson Upper Arlington American Legion Post
1945	Harold F Zeig	Good Old Arlington Way	Cmdr Carl Stetzer Upper Arlington American Legion Post
1946	Col. Rawl M. Edgar		Herbert Horn
1947	Herbert E. Horn		Cmdr Star Windsor
1948	James L. Saeger		James F. Scherin
1949	C. Henry Emanuelson		Cmdr Robert Watts
			Miss Arlington Sharon Lee Ruh Miss Arlington Contest first year

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1950	Frederick T Potter		Charles J. Copeland	Constance Sutton
1951	Chet Long		Sam Lambert	Kay D. Kelsik
1952	E. W. Blower	200th Anniversary of Betsy Ross & The First American Flag	Elwood Lephart	Ola C. Ramme
1953	John S. Stevens		Ben Jacoby	Carolyn A. Secret
1954	John B. Koch		Dr. Ben Jacoby	Judy Beck
1955	L. Allan McKnight		Cmdr William L Montgomery American Legion Post 443	Judy Magly
1956	F. Edward Adams (Ruth)			Kay Kauer
1957	Fred "Curly" Morrison		Tony Drabek American Legion	Carol Coddington
1958	George Sigafoos (Joan)			Patty Albanese
1959	Herschel Atkinson (Betty)			Patsy Kelley
1960	Lloyd Stout	Our American Heritage		Susie Mueller
1961	Lyle Irvine	Faith, Freedom and Flags	Honorable John W. Bricker United States Senator, Governor of Ohio	Theresa Brown
1962	Dean Dugger (Bette)	Symbols of Freedom	Wayne Brehm	Priscilla Daugherty
1963	Eugene Yontz (Dotty)	Great American Moments		Lynn Wilson
1964	Chuck Hyatt (Bunny)	Our American Dream		Sally Daugherty
1965	Dick Bull (Shirley)	America the Beautiful		Jean Ann LeBel
1966	Waller C. Bloom (BJ)	The American Way	Del Starky	Christine Nuernberg
1967	Phil Corey (Nancy)	Our American Heritage		Bonnie C. Schoenborn
1968	Roy Haddox	Our Golden Year (UA's 50th Anniversary)	Dr. Link Murphy Civic leader, Early organizer UA 4th of July celebrations	Debbi McNeal
1969	Jack Heintz (Jane)	Great American Traditions	Parker Z Blosser Former Upper Arlington Mayor	Libbie Pfefferle
1970	George Renkert (Jenny Lou)	American Panorama	Stu Collins Long time UA resident. Became ill and wasn't able to serve as Grand Marshal	Becky Harris
1971	Jack R. Smith	Our Treasured Freedom	Roland P. Sharer Long time UA resident, volunteer, civic leader	Candy Wood
1972	Dick Ritchie (Sandy)	America on My Mind	Walter B. Heischman Upper Arlington Superintendent of Schools	Nancy Nelson
1973	Ken Underwood (Jan)	American Memories	C. William O'Neill Chief Justice Ohio Supreme Court	Deanna Williams

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1974	Hank Lisheid	Great American Pastimes	Salvatore (Papa) Presutti Long time UA resident, restaurateur, civic leader	Kitsy Carr
1975	Bill Hadley (Paulette)	Great American Landmarks	Chalmers P. Wylie Congressman	Jane Warne
1976	Bruce Frank (Marilyn)	We the People Salute	Fred R. Taylor OSU Basketball Coach	Elizabeth Pusser
1977	Jay Schoedinger (Joyce)	America on Parade	Paul A. Griffith UA City Attorney and civic leader	Cheryl Simon
1978	John Guy	An Arlington 4th	David W. Shelby Principal UA High School	Susie Russell
1979	Al Blackwood (Cathy)	A Musical 4th	Dr. Robert J. Murphy & Lowell F. Riley Vaud-Villities Producer-Director, Musical Dir.	Jo Ellen Granzow
1980	Howard "Skip" Brehmer (Barb)	Pride in Our Past...Faith in Our Future	Bob & Hazel Ginther UA High School Music Director and Band Dir.	Debbie Simon
1981	Bill Mielke (Patty)	Faith, Freedom & Family	The J.T. Edwards Family 31 people from four generations; business and civic contributions	Carol Ann Smith
1982	Tom Hayward (Jean)	Potrait on an American Town	Robert Noble Civic leader	Michelle R. Johnson
1983	Jeff Gudenkauf (Susie)	America, We're Making it Great	Jimmy Crum Sportscaster, advocate for children's causes	Carrie Clark
1984	Carole Chard (Bill)	Salute to Our Senior Citizens, Our American Heritage	No Grand Marshal Walter Heischman (Grand Marshal '72) recognized as prominent senior citizen on a float with other senior citizens.	Molly Scott
1985	John Ryan (Jane)	Yankee Doodle Dandy Fourth	Wayne Woodrow "Woody" Hayes OSU Football Coach	Christy Guffey
1986	John Finn (Bebe)	UA Loves Liberty	Ellis Island Immigrant Descendants (1)	Julie Hammond
1987	Tom O'Shaughnessy (Jane)	Celebrate Our Constitutional Rights	Vietnam Veterans (2)	Kelly Fitzpatrick
1988	John Hoffman (Terri)	Summer Vacation	Beverly H. D'Angelo Actress	Teri Stoffel
1989	Dan Magnuson (Susie)	Salute to Sports	State Champion Coaches (3)	Nikki Follo
1990	Randy & Debbie Yontz	New Era	James A. Rhodes Governor State of Ohio	Stacy Biegel
1991	Mac & Gretchen McNeil	Dreams Come True Under Red, White & Blue	John Haney UA Fire Chief	Elizabeth Houser
1992	Ed & Marcie Seidel	UA The Golden Discovery	Homer Mincy Upper Arlington Superintendent of Schools	Robin Rastettler
1993	Dick & Debbie Wood	A 75 Carat Celebration (UA's 75th Anniversary)	Jimmy Crum Sportscaster, advocate for children's causes	Beth McGuire
1994	Gene & Sandy Warman	An A-Bear-ican Parade	John Pietro Northam Park Softball Coach	Regan Walsh
1995	Ron Johnson	America - Let the Spirit Continue	Peter & Marjorie Sayers Civically active UA family, Marjorie was Chairman and Editor of "History of Upper Arlington"	Mandy Warman
1996	Brian & Mary Loe	Let the Good Times Roll!	Harley Rouda Founder HER Realty and civic leader	Kristi Slager
1997	Bob & Sandy Tullett	UA at Play	Ken Thompson Former Director UA Parks and Recreation Dept.	Katherine Jokiniemi Miss Arlington Contest last year

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1998	Rod & Lynn Ebright	Here's Looking at U...A	Miss Arlingtons from Past 50 Years	The Miss Arlington program lasted for 49 years: 1949 to 1997
1999	Tim & Kathy Collins	That UA Shine in '99 - Polishing Off the Century	John Cooper OSU Football Coach	
2000	Ed & Laurie Avery	UA2K Leading the Way	Past UA Mayors	
2001	Cathy & Jeff Ferritto	Land of the Free, Home of the Bears	Golden Bear State Champions	
2002	Chris & Cindy McGovern	UA Honors It's Heroes	UA Police & Fire Departments	
2003	Tim & Libby Tarrier	Remember Why It's the 4th of July	2002 OSU Football National Champions from UA	
2004	Jerry & Patti Roadcap	Independence Day the UA Way - One Big Family	Phil Dirt and the Doziers Music band with ties to UA	
2005	Jeff & Jenny Schoning	UA's Fanatical 4th, Celebrate the Tradition	Carlisle Handley (4) UA's Most Fanatical Fan, Lead his neighborhood's float building for many years.	
2006	Bill & Robin Hall	America's Super Heroes	Chris & Stephanie Spielman Chris: OSU and NFL football star; Stephanie: leader in breast cancer research fundraising	
2007	Brian & Dawne McGuire	Traveling Through the Generations	Past UACA Directors	
2008	Randy & Kathy Mueller	UA Celebrates America's Idols	Tim & Glenda Huffman Owner Huffman's Market	
2009	Mike & Melissa Fleming	UA...There's No Place Like Home	The Cameron Mitchell Family Restaurateur	
2010	Jeff & Becky Scholl	It's a Buckeye 4th of July	Dr. Jon Woods OSU Marching Band Director	
2011	Andy & Carolyn Weeks	Bring Your "A" Game	Bill & Marci Ingram, Lisa Ingram, Greg Guy Founding family of White Castle Restaurants	
2012	Drew & Lissa Wade	Sweet Freedom's Song	Jeni Britton Bauer Founder Jeni's Splendid Ice Creams	
2013	Mark & Lisa Berens	Boulevard of the Stars	Abby Johnston Olympic Silver Medalist in Diving	
2014	Mike & Kris Ferraro	You Are A Grand Old Flag	Bill Richards Director Emeritus Honor Flight Columbus	
2015	Larry & Jennifer Jupp	Peace, Love & the 4th of July	Dan Kockensparger Retired UA Firefighter; Ohio Task Force 1's Search & Rescue Team; Historian UAFD	
2016	Mike & Lisa Fitzpatrick	Built to Lead, Called to Serve	Dr. David & Carole Shuller Lives committed to cancer research and treatment	
2017	Tyler & Julie Millisor	Reflections	Spirit of '76 The Revolutionary War musicians that have led the parade since 1935	
2018	Brent & Angie Theaker	A Cherished Past, A Golden Future	Past UACA 4th of July General Chairpersons	
2019	Jim & Annie Stair	The Best is Yet to Come	Dr. Paul Imhoff Upper Arlington Superintendent of Schools	
2020	Brandon & Stacy McIntire	United We Roar	Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the fireworks and the traditional parade were cancelled. The Front Porch Parade was created. Two parade routes - the Independence and the Freedom - traveled 25 miles through UA. There was not a Grand Marshal.	

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2021	Brandon & Stacy McIntire	We're Back & We're 4thin' for Good!	Kip Greenhill City Council Member and Upper Arlington High School Principal
2022	Sam & Sandi Porter	Stars, Stripes & Trailblazers	John Bergmann U.S. Army Veteran
2023	Steve & Michelle Gdovin	Upper Arlington Traditions	Mike Borders Upper Arlington Special Olympics
2024	George & Susie Pattison	Back in Black and Gold	Margie Pizzuti Civic Champion and Collaborative Community Leader

Notes:

- (1) 1986: Ellis Island Immigrant Descendants: Lena Elsbree, John Menke, Enerina DiPaolo
- (2) 1987: Vietnam Vets: Randy Smith, Jim Cooper, Dick Shward, Bob White, Joanne Duncan, Dave Lucas, Alan Feltner, Dave Buschar
- (3) 1989: 14 state championship coaches including Walter Heischmann (Baseball 1937) and Marv Moorehead (Football 1967, '68, '69)
- (4) 2005: A contest held to find UA's Most Fanatical Fan. Applications received from the public and winner selected by General Chairs.