



Community Events



Lynn Mikelatos and Alex Stamakinley display a poster and flags in front of The Greek at the Harbor Restaurant. They are helping to coordinate the 32nd annual Greek Festival, to be held June 25-27 at the Camarillo Airport.

Greek Festival celebrates proud heritage

by Tim Pompey

Lynn Mikelatos is not Greek, but she may as well be. She met her Greek husband Makis during a cruise to Greece. Together they co-own The Greek at the Harbor Restaurant. She's been involved in some form or fashion with just about all the Greek Festivals celebrated at the Camarillo Airport in the last thirty years. And she's very proud of her family's Greek heritage. "It's such a rich culture," she says. "The Greeks have so much fun and have so much to share."

The Greek Festival has been celebrated at the Camarillo Airport since 1978. Its purpose is twofold: as a fundraiser for St. Demetrios Greek Orthodox Church and as an invitation to the public to learn more about and participate in Greek culture. The church itself serves about 200 families but its connection to the local Greek community is much larger. Lynn estimates maybe 25,000 people in Ventura County have some connection to Greece and Greek culture. In turn, Greek culture has had an important impact in our local communities. So much so that, on June 22, Board of Supervisor Kathy Long will present the Festival a Proclamation declaring June 20-27 as Greek Heritage Week.

Alex Stamakinley, Public Relations Coordinator for the Festival, talks about her own upbringing in a staunch Greek family. "They're a proud people. My father was always pointing out the importance of Greek culture to me. I learned it from him and now I've passed it on to my son."

The Festival is being held June 25 - 27 at the Camarillo Airport. Admission is two dollars for adults. Children 12 and under are free. Free admission coupons are available on the Festival website (www.vcgreekfestival.org) and all military families, firefighters and sworn officers will be admitted free all

weekend with an ID or badge.

This year Alex emphasizes that the Festival will be more family oriented, including a Mommy and Me fashion show and dance lessons. There will also be what she terms "OPA" time in which select discounts will be announced throughout the day at various booths. Music will be provided by a traditional Greek band from Orange County called The Olympians. And, for a five-dollar raffle ticket, the grand prize will be a drawing for a free trip for two to the island of Crete.

But the real attraction at the Festival is the mouth-watering food. Things like loukaniko sausage, flaming saganaki cheese, spanakopita, and hummus, to name just a few samples. Plus, new this year, will be succulent lamb chops and Greek fries sprinkled with feta cheese and oregano. And, of course, who could overlook the spicy aroma of fresh gyros sandwiches.

So, who cares if Lynn is not Greek? You can tell by talking to her that she has certainly adopted her second homeland with gusto and the Festival is her cultural outreach to the community. She would like people to enjoy themselves and, as she describes it, "Be Greek for a weekend." With all this food and fun, why not? Being Greek might just make my day, especially if it includes baklava. Now that's what I call a big yummy opa!

Ventura Film Festival opening night events

The 2010 Ventura Film Festival opening night and main event is 6pm, Thursday, July 1, at the Majestic Ventura Theater. The event showcases the screening of Renzo Gracie - LEGACY. The film by Gethin Aldous is a documentary about mixed martial arts pioneer Renzo Gracie and is presented by Brazilian Jiu Jitsu - Gracie Barra Ventura. 3 time world champion and MMA fighter Fabio Leopoldo will be available for autographs and questions.

Musical entertainment will be provided by Sade Champagne and the Ventura Film Festival Breakdance Team and Ventura's own, Todd Hannigan.

Tickets are \$25 for an all access pass or \$10 at the door with priority given to those who have purchased the all access pass.

To register for this event go to <http://venturafilmfestival.org/rsvp>.

There will be a pre-gathering and limousine pickup at 5pm at 394 Lounge (394 E. Main St.) and an after-party following the film at 394 Lounge immediately after the question/answer session.

Salute! A festival to celebrate finely crafted beer and food

by Nanci Cone

To raise awareness and money for FOOD Share, Ventura County's only regional food bank, Joby M. Yobe, co-owner of Ojai Beverage Company and Christine Hansen, President & CEO of Thirty-Three Productions, Inc. present Salute! - a premiere beer and food pairing event for the general public and VIPs between 11am - 5pm on Saturday, June 19 at San Buenaventura State Beach in Ventura.

The festival will feature local and national craft breweries with food from regional restaurants and music from some of Southern California's musical talent. "There will be plenty of action and lots of gustatorial delights to help FOOD Share," says President & CEO Bonnie Weigel. "We are an organization that collects and receives food year-round, distributing to more than 150 partner agencies throughout Ventura County. FOOD Share provides food to more than 54,700 people each month countywide through programs such as Senior Brown Bag for low-income seniors and Snack Attack to provide nutritious after-school snacks to students. This event will help us continue to feed the ever-growing population of our hungry friends throughout the County" she adds. Ms. Hansen notes, "I am doing this event because it is my mission to bring dreams to reality for my clients and for my local community." And, as Mr. Yobe puts it, "I want to share my passion for finely crafted beer and food while helping give back to the community."

Guests will spend the day enjoying nearly 300 craft brews and almost 100 delicious selections from fantastic purveyors of fine food and craft beer, all for one ticket price of only \$60 per person. A \$135 VIP ticket includes early entry for a two-hour private reserve beer tasting with invited brewers, special beer and food pairings and access to the private VIP lounge. Each ticket includes a souvenir 4 oz. tasting glass, four hours of unlimited beer and food tasting (yum!) and live entertainment. To purchase tickets, get the latest news, and more festival information, visit their website at www.salutebeerfestival.com.



Ventura 4th of July events

Street Fair

Ventura's downtown area comes alive on Independence Day, when the 30th Annual 4th of July Street Fair brings more than 300 artisans to a dozen-block area of the cultural district.

Booths will offer handmade arts and crafts and food from local restaurants, while live entertainment, a children's pa-

rade and children's activities will bring a festive atmosphere to the event, which lasts from 11 am to 5 pm.

Starting the celebration at 10:30am will be the "Pushem - Pullem" parade. The parade begins at Cemetery Park. The parade participants decorate wagons, strollers, bicycles and anything that is not motorized by can be pushed, pulled or pedaled.

Free shuttle service will take place from the Ventura County Government Center parking lot closest to Telephone & Hill Streets, beginning at 11am and continuing until 5pm. The shuttle drop off point at the Street Fair will be at California & Santa Clara Streets by the Ventura Visitors & Convention Bureau.

July 4 Family Festival and Fireworks Show at Ventura College presented by the Ventura Rotary Club

The Ventura 17th annual 4th of July Family Festival and Fireworks Show will be held again at the Ventura College athletic field, at the west end of the campus near the corner of Telegraph and Ashwood Ave. This safe and sane outdoor family style event begins at 5pm (after the street fair) with activities and entertainment for all 7,000 attendees. Bring blankets, lawn chairs and jackets, and begin with a picnic on the grass. Enjoy live entertainment by Ventura's own Men on the Moon dance band, hooping performances and lessons, juggling, dancing and more. Catch up with family, friends and neighbors as you unwind and wait for the fireworks.

A dozen food vendors are ready to supply snacks, coffee or a complete meal, and there are supervised games and contests for the kids as well as a huge open grass area for all to run, jump and play catch, or to just hang out. No glass, pets, or alcohol are allowed inside the event, so bring any home cooked food in plastic containers. Our traditional fireworks and music extravaganza begins at 9pm. This year's 20 minute presentation of "America the Beautiful" by Pyro Spectaculars features more than 2,400 pyrotechnic shots. After the fireworks show, the gates are opened and the area is immediately lighted, enabling a quick and efficient departure with Ventura Police providing traffic control at all the major intersections.

Free parking for the event is available in several on-campus parking lots and in the adjacent neighborhoods. There is no parking on the event field. The suggested handicap drop off point is in front of Trinity Lutheran Church at 196 N. Ashwood Ave., which is about 400 yards from the picnic area.

Ticket prices are \$6 for adults and \$4 for children when purchased in advance. A family pack of 6 admissions (any age) is \$25 in advance. Individual tickets are \$2 more at the gate and the family pack is \$10 higher.

Discounted pre-sales tickets are available starting on June 24 at all Ventura City McDonalds and Vons stores. Also available at the Street Fair on July 4th.

The Ventura Rotary Club has been serving the local community for over 90 years. With more than 100 members from all walks of life, the club provides a forum for individuals to join their talents, skills and desires toward service projects that make a difference.

The Ventura College Foundation is co-presenter of the Fourth of July Celebration.

More information is available at www.VenturaFireworks.com.

Breeze:

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