

John Westra Celebrates 35 Years Riding Unicycle In USA's Oldest Neighborhood 4th of July Parade

John Westra has been riding his unicycle in the USA's oldest neighborhood 4th of July parade for 35 years! His son Michael, a former passenger on his shoulders, is carrying on the tradition!

[large]John Westra of Ada Michigan is celebrating [b][color=#ff0000]35 Years [/color][b] of riding a unicycle in the [b][color=#ff0000]USA's oldest continuously running (74 years) neighborhood 4th of July Parade[/color][b], the Hollyhock Lane Parade in Grand Rapids, MI[/large]

Thirty Six years ago, John Westra's Great Aunt gave him a unicycle for his birthday, not understanding the degree of difficulty between riding a unicycle and a bicycle. Because of his love for his Aunt, John worked hard to learn to ride it. He rode it in his neighborhood's local Hollyhock Lane Parade for the first time, 35 years ago in 1973 and has been riding it in the parade every year since.

This tradition was so important, John took leave each year while serving in the US Air Force, to come home and ride in the parade. John even timed knee surgery last year so he wouldn't miss the parade!

Both his sons, Joshua, age 22 and Michael, age 19 have ridden on his shoulders in the parade. His son Michael has been riding his own unicycle in the parade for the past eight years, carrying on the tradition!

The Hollyhock Lane Parade and John riding his unicycle with his sons has become a tradition. A story about them, called Patriot Alley, is even featured on the America.gov "Telling America's Story" web site. <http://www.america.gov/st/pubs-english/1997/March/20050606140938pssnikwad0.6340753.html>

Since moving to Ada ten years ago, John has been riding in both the Hollyhock Lane Parade and the Ada Township 4th Of July Parade. John currently serves as a Trustee of Ada Township, where he is up for reelection. On more than one occasion John has used his unicycling to promote his political values, carrying signs that read:

"Good government is a lot like unicycling, it requires balance."
"America Needs A Balanced Budget!"

John's goal is to ride his unicycle for 50 years in the Hollyhock Lane Parade. "After that I'll take it one year at a time!"

<http://www.votewestra.com>