

All Things Lincoln Take over Redlands with Pilgrimage Shrine Open House

By Kristina Hernandez, Redlands Daily Facts - Posted: 02/04/17, 3:29 PM PST

Sophia Langan secured “the perfect spot” on Eureka Street to view the Lincoln Pilgrimage as it made its way from Redlands High School to Smiley Park.

This year’s event — held Saturday — marked the first time the Moreno Valley woman’s grandchildren took part in the long-standing tradition, which celebrates President Abraham Lincoln’s life and legacy.

Langan wanted to walk in the pilgrimage, but a bad knee sidelined those plans. Still, she happily captured scenes from the event on her smartphone, as did others waiting for hundreds of Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts to arrive at the park.

“We feel so honored to be here today to participate,” Langan said with a smile.

The California Inland Empire County Boy Scouts of America hosts the pilgrimage every year. For the 78th annual affair, organizers partnered with Lincoln Memorial Shrine to host the event in Smiley Park as opposed to the Redlands Bowl across the street.

The partnership did two things — place the lessons on all things Lincoln and the Civil War in a more intimate setting and get visitors excited for the Shrine’s 45th annual Open House, which took place immediately following the Pilgrimage’s close. Close to 400 participants took part in the pilgrimage, said event chairman Mark Shaffer,

The pilgrimage included remarks from Mayor Paul Foster, who thanked everyone for attending Saturday’s event, and a Lincoln re-enactor who spoke about the president’s compassion for animals.

A prayer and the placing of flowers at the bust of Lincoln inside the museum marked the pilgrimage’s close, but the festivities continued for a few more hours with the open house.

Activities for all ages included re-enactments of Civil War-era medical care, an artillery demonstration from the 1st Pennsylvania Light Artillery, and the reciting of the Gettysburg Address by Lincoln presenter Robert Broski.

The shrine was opened for tours and the viewing of the museum’s latest exhibit featuring a new timeline of Lincoln’s life and pieces related to the history of slavery.

Within an hour of the open house, 500 had already visited the site, said Maria Carrillo, the shrine’s associate archivist.

“I’m surprised every year at how many people come to this event,” she said. “We’ve been doing this for 45 years and it seems to be growing each time.”

The pilgrimage and the open house marked the start of Lincoln season in Redlands. Things come to a close on Feb. 12 with the 2017 Lincoln Dinner in the Orton Center at the University of Redlands, 1200 E. Colton Ave. Doors open at 5:45 p.m. Dinner follows at 6:30 p.m.

Historian Catherine Clinton, author of “Mrs. Lincoln: A Life,” is the keynote speaker. Her talk, “The Loss of Lincoln,” will examine Lincoln’s assassination and how the nation and his family mourned his loss, according to a news release.

Dinner tickets are \$47 for Lincoln Memorial Association members and \$57 for the general public. Reservations may be made by emailing heritage@akspl.org or by calling 909-798-7632.

To learn more, go to www.akspl.org.