

Upland man is on 'Patrol' in Hollywood



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ONCE a year, an Upland man brings some old-school glamour to Hollywood Boulevard.

Gary Goltz leads a parade in tribute to the California Highway Patrol and the classic TV drama "Highway Patrol," to which he brings a 1955 Buick outfitted like the car driven on the series by Broderick Crawford.

The parade is called 10-4 Day, a play on both the signoff for radio communication and the Oct. 4 date.

For me Monday was 9-4. Goltz picked me up at the newspaper at 9 a.m. for the drive to Hollywood and deposited me back in Ontario at 4 p.m.

Arriving with two vacationing law-enforcement friends from Seattle, Jake and Diana Magan, Goltz wore a trenchcoat and fedora, much as Crawford did in his hard-bitten role as Chief Dan Mathews.

When Goltz entered the newsroom, in character, I told him I needed five minutes to wrap things up.

He barked: "10-4."

Once in the car, hat off, Goltz proved to be a good traveling companion. He's got a gravelly voice and retains some East Coast bluster from his Pittsburgh upbringing, but he's a nice guy, and only slightly nuts.

Head instructor of a judo club and a successful businessman now semi-retired from the home healthcare field, Goltz who serves as president of the US Judo Association made a hobby of "Highway Patrol," one of the first syndicated series, which ran from 1955 to 1959.

He runs a website, www.highwaypatroltv.com, with photos, trivia and a guide to all 156 episodes, and he collects toys and other memorabilia connected to the show.

What does his wife think of his obsession? "She's resigned to it," Goltz said.

His car is outfitted to look like the ones in the series. It's even got a logo on the doors mimicking the one on TV - which is probably what saves Goltz from being arrested for impersonating an officer.

Because the series was set in an unidentified state, the better for viewers to identify with the stories, the logo is fictional.

"It's a facsimile they came up with," Goltz said. "People will point and say, 'I remember when the CHP used that logo.' No, they don't."

He bought the car in 1995 for \$6,500 and has sunk more than \$100,000 into maintenance and upgrades, including air conditioning. The dash has knob controls and a plate reading "Unit 2150," which was Crawford's car number on the show.

An Upland resident since 1985, Goltz regularly attends parades and car shows and helps raise money for causes such as the CHP's 1199 Foundation. He created 10-4 Day in 2004 with Councilman Tom LaBonge as a tribute to the CHP's 75th anniversary.

Goltz has met the "Adam-12" and "CHiPs" actors, bantered onstage in character with Dan Aykroyd mimicking Joe Friday from "Dragnet," led the Hollywood Christmas Parade and met the last two L.A. mayors.

He's been featured in newspapers and magazines and once showed off his car at an outdoor concert to Neil Young, who was reportedly wowed.

Goltz said he put Young's then-new "Mirror Ball" CD into his CD player and Young enthusiastically grabbed the hand-held radio microphone and sang along.

Ordinary mortals like the car too. On our drive Monday on the 10 and 101 freeways, other motorists drove alongside us and peered curiously, usually smiling. More than one took a photo.

"I love driving in L.A. traffic because of the reactions," Goltz said later.

Goltz is careful how he uses the car. His car has lights, sirens, a whip antenna and a two-way radio - although he can't communicate with anybody over it.

Upon arriving at the L.A. Fire Museum a brief ceremony took place before a parade of two dozen vintage CHP and LAPD vehicles followed Goltz up Cahuenga and along Hollywood Boulevard.

Six of us squeezed into Goltz's car.

In the front was Goltz, a French TV reporter and Larry Wilcox from "CHiPs," the 1977 to 1983 series about the CHP in which he co-starred. In the back was a 14-year-old "Highway Patrol" fan named Brandon Davis outfitted in trenchcoat and fedora, myself and oldies disc jockey Shotgun Tom Kelly. Kelly probably wished he'd called shotgun.

We parked in front of Grauman's Chinese Theater and had a second ceremony at Crawford's star on the Walk of Fame.

I can't say that the masses turned out for 10-4 Day, but the parade certainly caught the attention of tourists. At the stop, dozens of people swarmed around Goltz's car and around Wilcox, who posed for photos and signed autographs.

Goltz spoke through his handheld radio as Dan Mathews and played a CD with seven versions of the "Highway Patrol" theme song.

Presiding was LaBonge, the councilman. Jon Locke, an actor who was in seven episodes of "Highway Patrol," was introduced, as were the CHP chief for L.A., Steve Beeuwsaert, and Gary Kness, a civilian who was first on the scene at the 1970 Newhall shootout in which four CHP officers were killed.

The event was dedicated to Art Gilmore, a veteran Hollywood announcer who narrated every "Highway Patrol" episode and appeared at the six previous 10-4 Days.

Gilmore, who died Sept. 25 at age 98, intoned a variation of these words to launch each adventure:

"Whenever the laws of any state are broken, a duly authorized organization swings into action. It may be called the state police, state troopers, militia, the rangers or the highway patrol. These are the stories of the men whose training, skill and courage have enforced and preserved our state laws."

The event over, everyone raced back to the Fire Museum, lights and sirens going, for a cake-related emergency.

I buttonholed LaBonge for comment.

"Gary Goltz is a great guy," LaBonge said alliteratively. "He's a great guy because he followed his dream. He loved the old 'Highway Patrol' TV show and he did something about it."

Besides that, "he's a pretty special guy and he's a good citizen," LaBonge said. "I wish he lived in L.A."

At lunch at Canter's Deli, Goltz made a startling admission. I had asked him his second-favorite TV show, and he'd said it was "The Fugitive."

"Actually," he added, "I might like it better than 'Highway Patrol.' It's more serious."

He's even visited an alley on Larchmont Boulevard where the title sequence was filmed.

But "Highway Patrol," which he first encountered at age 5, remains his focus. "It was tight, it had action, drama, cars and Broderick. It had everything. In 25 minutes, he always wrapped it up. No loose ends," Goltz said with satisfaction.

On the drive to Canter's, Goltz said this 10-4 Day went much better than in previous years.

"I think the rain improved it, actually," Goltz mused. "The trenchcoats, the rain, the windshield wipers - it was like an episode of 'Highway Patrol.'"

10-4!

