

# PROTESTS AROUND THE PASADENA ROSE PARADE



The 119-year old Rose Parade of California has always been a popular way for many Americans and foreign tourists to enjoy the New Year celebrations. The festival includes a colorful flower display and its general extravagant nature is reminiscent of its original purpose, to inform the world about California. Ever since the first parade in 1890, the acts of equestrian groups, bands and float builders have been broadcasted all over the globe. The 2-hour event should be no different this year with just one difference, the fact that one of the floats is set to be dedicated to next year's Olympic Games in China. This has caused quite a stir amongst the critics.

The floats are generally constructed from chicken wire and steel then garnished with flowers or other colorful materials. One of this year's intended floats, commemorating next year's Olympic Games in Beijing, shall cause particular interest. Float building is a multi million dollar industry and this particular float is set to be built by rich Chinese Americans. Thus, it has little to do with the people of China itself.

This has not stopped the protests as many critics have pointed to China's human rights records to say the country should not be represented at the event. The fact that China still occupies Tibet has given the critics even more ammunition for their protests. The spiritual group Falun Gong was the first to speak out in protest against the float. Falun Gong was recently banned in China, many believe unnecessarily, and now demands the removal of the float. In order for the Rose Parade to maintain its tradition of color, romance and celebration, perhaps removing the Beijing float would not be such a bad idea.

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