



## **Guardian Angels return to Bay Area for world conference due in part to Solano chapter**

By Lanz Christian Bañes

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Hundreds of Guardian Angels are expected to flock to the Bay Area at the end of the week.

The occasion is the organization's annual world conference, drawing chapters of the volunteer patrol group from London, Tokyo and across the United States, said Omar Martinez, leader of the Solano County Guardian Angels.

"It's kind of like (the Pow-Wow)," Martinez said, referencing last week's waterfront event sponsored by the Vallejo Intertribal Council.

The Solano County Guardian Angels helped patrol that event, Martinez said.

The world conference will allow different chapters with various histories and experiences to come together. For example, there will be some of the older Guardian Angels who helped found the initial group in New York about 30 years ago.

"They want to empower you, to tell you how it was and how it is now," Martinez said.

In recent months, the Solano County Guardian Angels have grown and become much more active, Martinez said.

Martinez attributed this mostly to the decline of the Vallejo Police Department, which suspended most of its K-9 program and its SWAT team this past weekend.

Indeed, Guardian Angels founder Curtis Silwa has said it is largely because of the Solano County Guardian Angels that the conference is being held in the Bay Area, specifically in San Francisco.

The local chapter not only patrols within Solano County, but has also traveled to cities such as Oakland, which recently laid off 80 officers and dealt with the aftermath of the verdict in the Johannes Mehserle case.

The San Francisco conference begins Friday and continues throughout the weekend. For more information about the local chapter, visit <http://scguardianangels.tripod.com>.

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