

Freedom parade marches on at North End

By Michaela Kennedy

The 17th annual North End Fourth of July parade kicked off Tuesday morning at 10 a.m. with blue skies and robust energy. Spectators parked their cars in a field near 933 East Shore Rd., the parade's starting point, as participants lined up waiting for the fanfare to begin.

Children of all ages and sizes ruled Independence Day on East Shore Road. Little girls on pink bicycles, boys on tractors, and teenagers on dirt bikes trooped together down the street. Engines from the fire department and the marching Jamestown

Community Band added flair to the festivities. A golf cart decked out in the patriotic tricolor followed in their wake, flanked by scooters and spider bikes with balloons and streamers. All showed pride in their hometown USA with embellished vehicles, signs, and costumes.

Grand Marshal Jean Green, with a wide grin, attended to last-minute details minutes before the parade began to move.

John Holmes, 12, of Holmstead Court maneuvered a tractor tugging a wagon filled with celebrators. Holmes, a native of the island's north end, has gone to the parade every year since he can remember, but this morning was his first time to drive his father's tractor in it. When asked what he especially liked about the event, Holmes replied, "Everything. The parade itself."

Vincenzo Moretti and Vaughan Nelson-Lee, also 12, checked over their float, which was transporting a red, white, and blue rocket. Both boys were dressed in colors to match the rocket. Moretti pulled the float with a tractor. "Last year, we had the rocket, but it was standing straight and no one noticed it," he said. Determined to be noticed this year, Moretti revised the float and added 'rocket fire' to the faux missile, a light at the bottom with a fan blowing tissue paper. The second time around, the display, complete with flags and tweaks to the rocket, brought the attention of the float judges, who awarded the boys with medals for Best Float.

Moretti noted that credit for the float should be given to "the rest of the Moretti family."

Lisa Watson from Los Angeles stood to the side enjoying every minute. "I love it. I grew up in the Midwest, and this is hometown stuff," she said. Watson was visiting the island with Eric Lutes, whose brother Scott lives a short distance from the parade. Lutes joined the parade playing bagpipes and donning a Superman T-shirt.

The parade marches down the street every year, then back to the start-off point at the home of the Green family. From its inauspicious beginnings in 1989 with young children banging on pots and pans, the north end tradition of Independence Day is yet another showing of what's great about Jamestown.



Photos by Andrea vonHohenleiten

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