

Parade Kicks Off the Holiday Season

Almost 30 groups participate in Montville's annual event

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With wreaths draped around their necks, reindeer antlers placed behind their ears and blankets with red bows draped across their backs, Rosie, Sunny, Darby and Teddy stood alongside their riders last Sunday as they prepared to march in the 14th annual holiday parade.

The parade is the only time of the year where normally busy Route 32 is shut down for the four horses along with Santa, motorcycles, floats and even the Grinch.

"The horses are so patient with all of the stuff we put on them because we do go to a lot of shows and the training we do at home also helps prepare them for the parade," Mary Fischer, owner and trainer at Bit By Bit Stable, said before the parade began.

With a clipboard in hand, Montville Lions Club member Linda Linda stood in front of the

Montville Funeral Home of Church & Allen parking lot carefully coordinating the parade line up. The New London Motorcycle Club, the Red Cross, Dime Bank and the Lions Club mascot "Monty" were all part of the 26 groups marching in the parade. She said the effort it takes to "make sure that everyone is where they are supposed to be" is worth it in the end when the parade begins and the floats make their way down Route 32.

At the 5 p.m., start of the parade, Linda could be seen waving at the floats as they departed the parking lot of the Montville Professional Center.

"You're gonna do great," she shouted at a group of children on a float. "Have fun!"

Before the parade a group of cheerleaders from the Montville Youth Football League practiced their cheers and cartwheels. With orange and black ribbons looped through their ponytails, some of the squad's youngest mem-

bers could barely contain their excitement when asked if they were looking forward to seeing Santa.

Hallie, 7, and Gabriella, 4, both said they wanted to find Santa riding on his float during the parade and ask him for an iPod touch and a Nintendo DS video game system, respectively.

In the same parking lot, the Mohegan Fire Company boat was bursting with presents and the fire engine decked in Christmas lights.

Last Sunday was the first time the Daisy members of the Montville Girl Scouts marched in the parade.

With trays of face paint and small brushes in front of her, Daisy Troop Leader Carintha Gilliland sat on the curb of the professional center painting on red reindeer noses and white snowman faces.

To help pass the time before the parade, four Daisies who already had their faces painted white with coal-colored eyes and

lips, created holiday wreaths out of green foam sheets and stickers in the shape of red holly berries and gold bells.

"I might give one to my friend and hang one on my tree, but I'm not sure," Evey, 5, said.

On the Jammin 107.7 float, grandma had been run over by a reindeer.

The older model Volkswagen beetle was spewing bubbles from the back and faux smoke from the front. A pair of legs clad in peppermint striped stockings and black boots emerged from under the front of the car — a sign near her legs read "Poor Grandma."

The parade route ended at the Montville Town Hall where participants celebrated with a tree lighting ceremony and awards for the parade's entries.

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