

# Washington Borough, N.J., shows off its patriotic pride with pre-Independence Day parade

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By JD MALONE

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WASHINGTON | The engines whooped, the aerial trucks ripped the heavy air with blasts from their industrial horns, and hundreds of sets of lights whipped and blinked at the crowd lining each side of Belvidere Avenue and Broad Street during Saturday's Washington Celebrates America Parade.

Dominating the crawling ribbon of participants, and its soundtrack, were dozens upon dozens of emergency vehicles from the borough, township, Glen Gardner, Oxford, Franklin Township, the Forest Fire Service, Hampton and others.

The all-ages crowd waved American flags, shouted at familiar faces and cheered the Cub Scouts, the Hackettstown Community Band and the kilt-clad St. Ann's of Hampton Pipes and Drums band.

The two dozen pipers and drummers played "God Bless America" as they marched across the intersection of Broad Street and Washington Avenue in a modest drizzle. The rain dampened the band's plaid but not their spirit as the crowd opened a few umbrellas, crept under awnings or just stood and enjoyed the rain.

"This is a nice crowd," tenor drummer Lynne Kennedy said. "They clapped and listened, and didn't disperse when it rained."

The town also hosted the STS Orange Crate Derby -- with 14 cars and their drivers showing off their stripes, wild paint jobs and in one case searing yellow flames during the parade -- a battle of the bands, a concert and, of course, fireworks.

The borough's restored, cream-colored 1942 fire engine rumbled through the parade. The old wagon, with its graceful curves and a waterfall grill, was very much the picture of elegance before the fleet of modern, brick-shaped engines, tankers, ambulances, wreckers and aerial trucks.

Lemonade sold for 50 cents a cup at a Belvidere Avenue stand, but half that at stands off the main drag. Yard parties, post-parade mingling and a barbeque bash peppered the borough's side streets.

The pipes and drums settled in the front yard of a home in the first block of Carlton Avenue where they quaffed beers and swapped stories. The band has played in seven straight Washington Celebrates America parades.

Glenn Donnelly and his dad, Jerry, both drummers, drove about two hours to march together in the troupe. They'll play several other parades and festivals this summer throughout northern New Jersey.

Washington, though, is one of their favorites.

"I just love the town. This is a great hometown parade," Linda Zdepski, St. Ann's bass drummer, said. "This is Americana."

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