

Salem children enjoy a July Fourth parade of their own

Historic district takes to the streets with bikes, scooters and wagons

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4th of July Kids Parade: Atticus Heimerdinger, 4, takes part in the annual Court-Chemeketa 4th of July Kids Parade on Wednesday.

Written by **Tiffany Vu**
Statesman Journal

On Independence Day in the Court-Chemeketa Historic District, children took to the streets.

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More than 100 people walked or rode decorated bikes, scooters, wagons and electric mini-cars in the annual Court-Chemeketa 4th of July Kids Parade.

Stanley Bashaw of the Knights of Columbus led the parade in full regalia, as he had for four years, on a circuitous route through McRae Park and the surrounding streets before ending up at their starting point, 18th and Court streets NE, where the participants were rewarded with popsicles as the temperature rose.

For Leon and Caroline Widdall, who moved to the United States from London, England six years ago, marching in the parade is a great tradition but feels just slightly odd sometimes.



Stanley Bashaw, a member of the Knights of Columbus, leads the children during the annual Court-Chemeketa

“The strangest part is when our oldest child Cameron, who’s 4, refers to the American flag as ‘our flag,’” Leon Widdall said. “We’re still getting used to that.”

But the Widdalls love the parade and love the neighborhood. “We love the community feel,” Leon Widdall said.

Jenny Hoelter, who organizes the annual parade with her husband Peter, counted 121 participants in the parade, which traveled

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Parker Heyen, 4, decorated his bike with American flags. / TIMOTHY J. GONZALEZ / Statesman Journal

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throughout the Court-Chemeketa historic neighborhood — the biggest parade thus far. This year many of the participants included riders from Kidical Mass, a children's and family bicycling group in Salem.

The Hoelters inherited the parade when they bought their house in 2010 and found that the previous owners and parade organizers, Chuck and Nikki Bachman, had left them a box full of parade supplies. The Bachmans had run the parade since 2004.

"We have three kids between (the ages of) 3 and 9, so it's perfect for us," Peter Hoelter said. "It's such a beautiful neighborhood. (The parade) reinforces that this is a really livable neighborhood."

Peter Hoelter added that planning isn't much work, since he and Jenny already know a lot of the participants. Most of the publicity is limited to sending out an e-mail to the community list and placing a sign in their front yard.

That sign was what attracted Spider-Man and Spider-Boy — aliases Steve Naylor and his son Jonathan "John-John" Naylor-Lowell — to the parade, marching in full costume. Jonathan's friend Nathan Mensinger came with them in the guise of Han Solo.

"It's a little bit fast," Naylor-Lowell said of the parade, which was his very first. "I like to run really fast. I like to see people (cheering on the street), because it makes me go fast."

Participants were allowed to march at their own pace, but Naylor-Lowell's friend Mensinger also felt the need for speed. "I feel really good going really fast on my scooter," Mensinger said. "I don't want to be late for the popsicles."

And with that, they zoomed off.

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