

The Patriot Ledger

Quincy kicks off holiday season with 66th Christmas parade

By **Katherine Isbell**

The Patriot Ledger

Posted Nov 25, 2018 at 12:00 PM

Updated Nov 26, 2018 at 5:00 PM

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QUINCY — It's Christmastime in Quincy.

After a weekend of festive events, including Santa's arrival by parachute, the 66th annual Christmas Parade rang in the holiday season Sunday afternoon.

The rain cleared just in time for the start of the parade, and families lined the Hancock Street sidewalks to watch, bundled up to brave the chilly temperatures.

The parade was led by members of the Weymouth Police Department, riding on motorcycles, and the department's Honor Guard in honor of Sgt. Michael Chesna, who was killed in the line of duty this summer.

The start of the parade featured members of city government, including Mayor Thomas Koch, waving to bystanders. The Quincy Police Department towed a police boat with carolers on board. Marching bands from Quincy High School and North Quincy High School took part, along with bands from other towns, including Burlington, Somerset, Marblehead, Acton and Boxboro. Red Sox mascot Wally the Green Monster also made an appearance.

Members of the Aleppo Shriners made their way up Hancock Street, some riding in their “mini-haulers” and some in small drifter vehicles. Other Shriners were dressed as clowns, riding in miniature cars and on a train.

Other organizations taking part in the parade included the Red Cross and the Salvation Army. Local military members collected donations along the route for Toys for Tots. Girl Scouts also participated in the parade.

The parade’s theme, “Do You Hear What I Hear?,” was chosen by Dolly DiPesa of Quincy. It was one of 46 submitted to the Christmas Festival Committee’s annual theme contest.

Elves, snowmen, the Nutcracker and the Grinch were featured on floats. Montilio’s Bakery’s entry had a gingerbread house theme, and members of the South Shore YMCA danced atop their rolling “Rockin’ Holiday” display.

The parade concluded with an appearance by Santa Claus, who was riding atop a Quincy fire truck.

“It’s a great way to kick off the holiday season,” said Linda Reich of Quincy. “We’ve never missed it.”

Reich was at the parade with her sister, Donna McGaughey. They came prepared with plastic bags for the children in their family to use for candy thrown from the parade’s floats.

Reich and McGaughey are far from the only ones who make the parade an annual family event.

“We come every year,” said Aimee Kellstrand, who brought her children, Joshua, Kaitlyn and Abigail. “It was awesome.”

Beth Condon of Weymouth was at the parade with her daughter, Caitlin, age 9; her sister, Laurie Murphy; her nieces, Sam and Kensie Murphy, both 14; and her nephew, Michael Murphy, who is 10.

“It’s a family tradition; this is the 15th or 16th year we’ve been,” Condon said. “I used to do it when I was little.”

Laurie Murphy really liked the bands and the inclusion of Toys for Tots in the parade. Her daughter, Sam, said her favorite part was the clowns. Caitlin Condon said she enjoyed seeing the Hallamore Clydesdale horses walking up Hancock Street.

Dolly Bandera chose the parade, despite the cold weather, over a vacation to warmer temperatures and sunshine.

“I should be in Florida right now, but I decided to stay a little longer to come to this,” she said.

Bandera is a former Quincy resident who now calls Dennisport home. Her son still lives in the city.

“I think the camaraderie, everyone getting together, is so great,” she said. “It was a great parade. It always is.”