



Monster Mashup at Halloween Parade

by Mathilda Gregory, Editor-in-Chief

Attendees at this year's Hardy Falls Halloween Parade had front row seats to more than just spooky fun as two rival high school marching bands clashed to the musical accompaniment of the classic Halloween song, "Monster Mash.

The 47th annual parade held on Saturday, October 17th, started calmly enough, following the traditional route down Main Street from the parking lot at First National Bank (now known as FNB) to the library. Children and adults, most in costume, lined the street to cheer as the marchers went by

As in years past, Boy and Girl Scouts led off the festivities. Next came some floats created by local businesses, all vying for the coveted "Hardy Hollow Weener" trophy

Trophy competition was stiff, with Cooper Grocery, Mountain View Boutique, Falling for Books, Spun Sugar Cards and Candy, and first-time participant Murphy Bowling Lanes, all putting in good showings. Parade-goers were treated to a variety of ghosts, goblins, or, in the case of Murphy Lanes, bowling ghouls. However, the judges agreed that Hardy Hardware/Horton Air Conditioning Repair's "Nightmare on Main Street" and The Country Time Bar and Grill's "Time For The Walking Dead" were definite standouts among the participants

In the end, The Country Time "walked" away with the trophy, thanks to their enthusiasm and commitment to some incredibly realistic zombie costumes. Although one little girl dressed as 'Elsa' apparently wet herself when bartender Deacon Black stopped to talk to her (necessitating that he leave the parade for several minutes to reassure her), most of the other spectators seemed to enjoy being frightened by the local "walking dead.

"They scared the heck out of me," admitted Police Chief Jacqueline Kline, one of this year's judges. "Mary Alice Norton especially was totally committed to her role.

Hannah Frederickson, owner of The Country Time Bar and Grill said she would "display the trophy proudly" and when challenged by Calvin Hardy and Joe Horton, promised to mount a vigorous defense of the victory at next year's parade

In addition to the Scouts and the Halloween themed floats, fire trucks, police vehicles, veterans, equestrian riders, and a few classic cars from Claude Beecher's Beecher Auto Sales all traversed the two-mile stretch between the bank and the library.

As always, one of the highlights of the parade for attendees was the handfuls of candy thrown into the crowd by all of the participants. Spun Sugar Cards and Candy, the parade sponsor again this year, provided more toffees, chocolates, and hard candies than ever before, so the marchers were throwing them out by the handful.

“It turns out we placed a double order by mistake,” said Margo Truelove, co-owner of Spun Sugar. “We gave everyone tons of candy to throw.

“It was raining candy!” exclaimed six-year-old Clifford Barton. “I was just opening my mouth waiting for it to fall in! I got so much stuff--I can’t wait to get home and eat it all!

Sophie Barton, Clifford’s mother, refrained from comment.

Except for the “wetting” incident, everything proceeded peacefully enough until it was time for the Hardy Falls High School marching band and the Eastern River Academy marching band to face off at the judges’ area. This year, the town council had decided both schools should perform “Monster Mash,” with council members judging the best performance. Members of the winning band would each receive a twenty dollar gift certificate to Spun Sugar.

It sounded like a good idea, but, “We didn’t take the intense school rivalry into consideration,” said Mayor Barclay Ruffio

As readers of *The Hardy Falls Gazette* will remember, Eastern River Academy beat Hardy Falls High at the region’s annual “battle of the bands” competition this year. It was the first time Eastern River had beaten Hardy Falls High in twenty-five years.

Unfortunately, it appears that a certain amount of boasting followed the Eastern River victory, throwing salt into an open wound. Witnesses have said that Eastern River band director, Danny Williamson, even confronted Hardy Falls band director, Gerald Green, at the Country Time a few days before the parade. He was “trash talking” and telling Mr. Green that the Eastern River band would walk all over Hardy Falls High in the “Monster Mash” competition.

When the Hardy Falls High School band, which had marched to close the parade, arrived at the judges’ area, the Eastern River Academy band, which had marched earlier, was waiting. Hardy Falls was supposed to perform second, but director Green had his band launch into their “Monster Mash” rendition immediately and did not give way to Eastern River.

“*We’re* the Hardy Falls band,” shouted Green. “*We* play first, not those prep school wannabees.

Mr. Williamson, angry and using language entirely inappropriate for the small children in the crowd, had his band move forward and start to play as well. In mere moments, the sounds of “Monster Mash” clashed through the town as the two groups stood on either side of the judging area, facing each other.

“I thought the Hardy Falls trombone players were gonna, like, pull off those slider things and stab the other guys,” said Austin Grant, a student at nearby Pocono University. “Band was never that exciting when I was in high school.

“I never want to hear that song again,” said Mayor Ruffio

Things disintegrated further when other students from the two rival schools in attendance began pelting each other, and the bands with candy picked up along the parade route. Reportedly, they were all trying to force members of the other school to leave, with disastrous results.

As candy flew through the air, spectators caught in the crossfire started running for cover, children dumping bags of treats in the street along the way.

“I got hit in the head with a toffee!” cried Margo Truelove. “They could have put my eye out!

Mrs. Truelove also said she was thinking of banning all of the students from her store, but, “That would definitely cut into the bottom line, and defeat the purpose of donating all of this stuff.

Finally, the Hardy Falls police force managed to wade into the fray and establish a truce between the warring factions.

Happily, other than the bruise on Mrs. Truelove’s forehead, and a Hardy Falls tuba player who turned his ankle when he tried to run from the mayhem, there were no other injuries.

After Chief Kline and Officer Harry Newman, III, pulled apart the band leaders, who had literally gone for each other’s throats, they were able to bring order back to the bands—with some help from outraged parents.

Chief Kline said the incident, as well as the names of all of the participants in the candy battle, would be reported to the two schools involved. She also said she was fining the band leaders each \$500 for disturbing the peace.

“Fortunately, nobody got hurt, and the parents are probably glad a lot of the candy got dumped anyway,” said Chief Kline. “But the paperwork is going to be a nightmare.

Sounds appropriate for Halloween