

Towson 2011 Independence Day Parade

By Buzz Diehl

“Where’s Jerry?” was a common question I heard as I began to register the antique cars arriving at our usual Burke Avenue assembly point for the 2011 Towson Area Independence Day Parade. I assured everyone that he was fine, just taking a well-deserved break from the parade duty that he’s performed for the last 25 years.

As Jerry recommended, I arrived early to begin placing identifying numbers on each vehicle and recording the vehicle information and owner name. As it got nearer to the parade step-off, the number of vehicles increased and Ruth Synodinos joined me in doing the recording task and in making multiple copies of the participant list for distribution to the announcers at the two reviewing stands. Each year the parade features a Towson area community. This year it was Ruth’s community of Hampton.

Arriving drivers and their passengers spent the time prior to the start of the parade placing flags and other decorations on their vehicles and chatting with fellow participants. By parade time we had 27 vehicles registered, one of the largest turnouts in recent years. The cloudy skies kept the temperature moderate, and a slight

breeze kept the flags waving and the parade participants comfortable.

With the traditional 10:30 am fly-over of A-10 Warthog aircraft from the Maryland Air National Guard, the parade officially began. The “Bike Rush” of children riding on their decorated bicycles then followed, with our elected government officials, riding not far behind in some rather colorful vehicles of their own – new Mustang and Camaro convertibles. Governor O’Malley, Lieutenant Governor Brown, Senators Cardin and Mikulski and Baltimore County Executive Kamenetz were among those greeting their constituents along the parade route.

Shortly thereafter, our 27 antique vehicles, released two or three at a time by the parade officials, were interspersed among the many marching bands, organization floats, specialty commercial vehicles (the Turkey Hill Cow and the Oscar Mayer Wiener-mobile) action figures, cartoon characters, fire equipment, military organizations and scout groups that made up the impressive number of parade units. So the parade announcers could identify the vehicles and their owners that followed, we drove the first antique car and my wife Barbara delivered the participant lists.

It was a delight to drive the parade route, exchange waves with the children and adults and experience the enthusiasm of the crowd as they watched our antique cars go by. What a tribute to this great nation and to the freedoms we experience as citizens.

Antique car participants were Barbara & Buzz Diehl, 1966 Pontiac; Mary & Henry Preston, 1961 Metropolitan; Hattie & Bob Cofiell, 1965 Mustang; Bud Sammis, 1936 Ford; Rob Penfield, 1930 Ford; Thomas Thompson, 1973 Chevrolet; Franklin Gage, 1959 Buick; Donald Wiseman, 1965 Mustang; Chuck Talbert, 1939 Ford; Joan & Walt Meyers, 1953 Pontiac; Jerry Ross, 1954 Kaiser; and Bill Hyde, 1958 Chevrolet.

Also in the parade were: Jim Turner, 1953 DeSoto; Henry Chaudron, 1955 Pontiac; Young & Andrew Gerstmeyer, 1930 Ford; Terry & Dan Matterazzi, 1956 Corvette; George Spicka, 1969 Chevrolet; Ruth Synodinos, 1947 Cadillac; Bill Schmuck, 1956 Buick; Pat Wenderoth, 1928 Studebaker; Diane & Pat Varricchio, 1963 Falcon; David & Mike Dodge, 1947 Packard; Nancy Toner, 1965 Mustang; Dennis Mueller, 1930 Ford; Zack Mueller, 1958 Chevrolet; the Gnau Family, 1931 Ford Model A; and the Doyle Family, 1930 Ford Model A.



Pictured clockwise from the top left: The early lineup of antique vehicles along Burke Road; One of the many marching bands that strolled by; Pat Wenderoth’s 1928 Studebaker is always a parade favorite; The flyover of National Guard A-10 Warthogs that starts the parade; Waving at the crowd who also displayed many flags.

