St. Patrick's Day marches on

Gerald McKinstry and Aman Ali
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Moments before Alicia Quigley stepped into a vintage red convertible for a trek along the St. Patrick's parade route in Eastchester, the 83-year-old woman said there's a reason why the festivities remained so popular.

"Everybody loves a parade," said Quigley, a parade honoree and a town native whose family settled in Tuckahoe from Waterford, Ireland in 1886. "It's time to honor the Irish."

Throughout the Lower Hudson Valley's towns and villages, thousands of revelers today showed their colors - you know exactly which one - and watched the legions of bagpipers, dancers and marching bands.

It was all about paying homage to Ireland's patron saint.

Eastchester

In Eastchester, which is celebrating its fifth consecutive parade, the crowds get bigger by the year, said John Phelan, president of the Eastchester Irish American Social Club, sponsors of the event that kicked off at Immaculate Conception Church in Tuckahoe and proceeded a few miles up Route 22 to Lake Isle. Eamon Fitzpatrick was the grand marshal.

The beauty, Phelan said, was that the day paid tribute to Irish and Irish- Americans while including all of Eastchester and its civic groups.

"It's really the town's (parade). Look around - everyone is here," Phelan said. "It's as much a town parade as it is a St. Patrick's parade."

June Malone tailgated with a dozen or so family and friends along the route, before a planned excursion to JC Fogerty's restaurant in Bronxville.

"It's nice seeing how much it's grown," June Malone said. "It's a good opportunity to get the family together. It's good for the different generations."

Sleepy Hollow-Tarrytown

It's not often that St. Patrick and the Headless Horseman line up near each other for a march - unless of course you're at the Sleepy Hollow-Tarrytown St. Patrick's Parade.

The two were among the legions of Hibernians, pipers, politicians and other marchers who led the celebration from downtown Tarrytown along Route 9 to Sleepy Hollow as thousands watched. Janine Rose was the grand marshal.

"It's similar to the ones in our hometown," said Louis O'Sullivan, who was with her husband, Fergus, and three children. The O'Sullivan's are natives of Counties Clare and Cork and have been living in the village for 8 years. "It's great to have. You don't have to go too far. ... It shows how many Irish people are in the town."

Jim Killoran, an assistant parade aide, always enjoys wearing the green, white and orange sash for a good cause.

"It's a day to celebrate my faith," Killoran said. "For us, this is a day we say 'we've made it.' "

Buchanan

The sounds of drums and bagpipes reverberated throughout the neighborhood on Tate Avenue in Buchanan as residents stepped outside their homes to watch the village's annual St. Patrick's parade.

"You gotta love the bagpipers and of course the beautiful women," joked Jim Sloat, who stood on his driveway as the parade passed by his home.

A few hundred people came out to watch the parade, which ended at the Veteran's Pavilion. Grand marshalling the parade was Harry DiPietro, owner of a local deli.

"Harry does a lot for the community," said Sherry Jahoda, the parade's chairperson. "We wanted to honor him because he's been here for years and just a wonderful person."

Twenty-seven groups participated in the parade including several local Boy and Girl Scout troops and school bands. Jahoda said parades like yesterday aren't just about the holiday but also celebrating the community.

"We're a small village and this is a way to get the community together, be outside and enjoy everyone's company," Jahoda said. "Everyone loves nice weather and everyone loves a parade."

Sitting on lawnchairs in the shade during the procession were Cortlandt Manor residents Jack and Gloria Milmore.

It was the second St. Patrick's Day parade that weekend for the couple, who attended Peekskill's on Saturday.

"I love how the parade is right in the middle of a residential area so it's very warm and cozy," Jack Milmore said.