

July 4th parade brings town together

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By Adam Zewe
Staff Reporter

An eclectic crowd gathered around St. Mary of the Assumption Church Friday morning, preparing to march down Old Lancaster Pike in the 18th annual Hockessin Fourth of July Parade.

Throughout the church parking lot, antique automobile enthusiasts polished chrome, firefighters tested the lights on their trucks, Miss Delaware Teen USA straightened her tiara and Jim Mitchell checked on his cows.

Mitchell, owner of Woodside Farm Creamery, brought a farm-themed float to the parade complete with hay bales, a barn and two Jersey calves lounging inside a hay-strewn pen.

"You don't see too many cows going down Old Lancaster Pike these days," he said.

A DeLorean, an example of the car made famous by the movie "Back to the Future," is also a rare sight on Old Lancaster Pike, said Chris Wilson of Newark, leaning against the hood of his 1981 DeLorean DMC-12.

His silver DeLorean was parked between a 1938 Ford pickup truck and a 1964 Chrysler Newport and, while the quasi-futuristic car may have looked out of place, Wilson said the car is an antique because it is more than 25 years old.

He said the DeLorean was a nice addition to the lineup of classic cars.

"You can see the different craftsmanship and how far ingenuity has come," he said.

One of the oldest cars in the parade was a Stanley Steam Car, built in 1916, and driven by John Hopkins of Columbia, Md.

Hopkins grew up in Hockessin, but moved away from the community in 1963. Despite the 90-mile drive to Hockessin, Hopkins said he would not miss the parade because he still feels like he is a part of the community.

Hopkins fired up the boiler of his steam car and prepared to cruise one mile down Old Lancaster Pike with the 45 other groups in this year's parade.

Watching the classic cars roll down the street was the best part of the parade because it brought back memories of a simpler time, said Add Blatchford of Hockessin.



The parade itself is classic - a tribute to small-town America and friendly people working together - and shows that values are still alive and well in Hockessin, said Blatchford.

"This brings people together. It gives the community a tighter bond," he said.

Tightly packed along both sides of Old Lancaster Pike, hundreds of people waved at the cars as they passed, or stretched out hands to snatch airborne pieces of candy tossed by politicians.

The steady stream of elected officials who marched by, shaking hands and handing out stickers, was a clear reminder that it was an election-year parade, said Monique Judd of Hockessin, who used the parade as an

opportunity to learn who is running for office and to meet the candidates.

Her four children were more interested in the candy the politicians were throwing into the crowd.

"It is just fun to come outside, see who lives here and participate in the community," said Judd, dodging a barrage of flying Tootsie Rolls.

As the final floats and cars approached Valley Road and the end of the parade route, Pat Barto of Hockessin said she could not help but feel patriotic as she watched all that red, white and blue.

"The parade is important so we remember the beginning of our country and what we had to go through," she said.